



The Happiest Man I Ever Knew

A Categorical Study of Stonewall Jackson by Tracy L. Bergquist.

The common pattern for the biographies of great captains of history has been evaluations of the power of the military leaders, the wealth of the business tycoons, and the thrilling deeds of the men of adventure. But these methods tend to study the subjects only on the surface. These characteristics are all on the exterior and they tell little about the nature of the personal character of the men. To discover the inner characteristics, or the “inner man” of the great captains, the biographer must search deeper in his study to evaluate the effect of the exploits of these great captains upon the men themselves. Such an evaluation may tend to overturn some of the current appraisals of men who are presently considered to be great. Some men have had great outward exploits, but their own inner lives were miserable, wretched failures. One example is Edgar Allen Poe, a man who wrote astonishing masterworks in poetry and prose, but who was an irresponsible failure in his family and national life and who was a miserable wretch in respect to his own personal happiness. Though he may have succeeded in causing some temporary stimulation to others from his poetry, he himself was a miserable failure. In shimmering contrast to such a life of personal misery, Thomas Jonathon (Stonewall) Jackson was one of history’s heroes who was accurately described by one of his contemporaries as “the happiest man I ever knew.”

Because there has been little categorical study of happiness, it is necessary for this paper to establish its own guidelines for the evaluation. For these purposes, happiness can be divided into two general categories, and, because the English language is lacking in vocabulary in this field, this paper will adopt the Greek names for these two types. The first type of happiness, *philos*, is the happiness that is derived from a rapport relationship. *Philos* is a result of reciprocal actions between people, and both people are causing happiness to the other by what they do. A good close-knit friendship can cause this happiness, as can also a marriage where the partners are passionately and madly in love with each other. But it is rare that this happiness is shared with more than a small, inner circle; and Stonewall Jackson only shared this type of happiness with his wife and a few noble friends. The basis for this type of happiness is the high, noble character of both parties in the relationship, and therefore, it is most rare. A person of base character will probably never even realize that such a happiness exists because it will be a relationship outside the realm of his experience. Just as few people never enjoy in full measure the happiness of a delightful marriage (and therefore they doubt that such a thing can exist), so it is rare that a man ever enjoy the happiness of *philos* happiness with friends in a full measure. But Stonewall was one of those rare men.

The second type of happiness that Stonewall Jackson enjoyed is called *agape*. *Agape* is derived from causing happiness to others, especially when it is caused under conditions where the second party lacks the ability to return the favor. This is a one-way type of happiness in which the giver causes happiness to another person who is relatively helpless to return the act of generosity or help. The given who is skilled in *agape* happiness is always the type of person who enjoys giving much more than they enjoy receiving. In fact, they usually consider giving gifts to others a privilege and regards receiving gifts as a rather embarrassing duty. Of course, such a person is most rare and enigmatic in a society in which people are constantly saying, “Give me, give me” and in which they are frantically climbing over each other to get to the top. Nevertheless, a few such nobleman manage to rise up, and the Owner of the universe manages to cause these men to have the wealth of mental riches that enables their desire to give to others to be fulfilled. Stonewall Jackson was one of these rare men who loved to give of himself to



others, and he possibly had as much *agape* happiness as any man in modern history.

These two types of happiness can be summarized by saying that *philos* is the happiness of appreciation, and *agape* is the happiness of giving. In the life of Stonewall Jackson, these two types of happiness were so constantly intertwined that it is impossible to study his life under these two categories. Instead, this paper will study his happiness in the five general categories of life, which were his relationships with his woman, his family, his nation, his duty, and his Supreme Giver.

Stonewall Jackson was married twice. The first being married to Elinor Junkin. Following Ellie's death in childbirth, he married Mary Anna Morrison. Especially with Mary Anna, Stonewall had one of the happiest marriages that has ever been recorded on the pages of romantic literature. Stonewall had the capacity to enjoy his marriage relationships both in the springtime of peace and in the winter storm of war. The happiness of his marriage can be divided into three sections; courting, peacetime years, and wartime years.

His courting relationship with Mary began as all happy, serious relationships should begin - highly informal with no thought of the relationship ever becoming anything more than casual. Jackson came to know Mary only as a "little sister" while he was courting Ellie and he treated her nobly by serving as her escort whenever she had no one else to accompany her to church or some other inconspicuous activity. The friendship was of such a relaxed and disinterested nature that no one was at all disturbed when Jackson left Lexington with his bride, leaving Mary Anna at her home. The shock of losing his first wife was a severe blow to Jackson, but he recovered by taking a tour of Europe. He came back refreshed and ready to begin a new life. He resolved that Mary Anna should share with him in his new cup of happiness and he began making visits to her. His gentlemanly conduct was a source of fascination to the young lady and a well of pleasure to her father. In other words, Jackson exercised *agape* happiness by giving pleasure to the woman and her father. Jackson was never trammled with distorted notions of Victorian, brittle piety concerning the fairer sex, but rather he thought of them as "unappropriated blessings" and "a great source of happiness." Jackson saw that Mary Anna did not long remain "unappropriated."

His happiness in the marriage was begun with a delightful sightseeing trip in which he toured the magnificent scenes of America, "looking through nature up to nature's God." Both Jackson and his young bride could share together in the appreciation of God's design in His creation, and this was one of the highest forms of *philos*, appreciation happiness.

Jackson knew how to be just as tender in the home as he was stern on the field, and it was said that the most stern rebuke which would pass his lips at home when a wrong was done was such words as, "Ah! that is not the way to be happy." He was constantly pondering how he could make his wife happy, which is in striking contrast to some Puritanical sadists who seem only able to think about what fits in with their staid, moral standards. Jackson was impeccable in his conduct and immovable in his principles, but this was all in conformity with his goal of causing happiness to those he loved.

During these years of peace and sunshine, Jackson had the joy in his leisure hours of taking his young princess out for walks under the clear, moon-lit canopy of stars that covers the Shenandoah Valley. The testimony of his wife about Jackson's countenance and attitude in such romance was as follows: "Those who knew General Jackson only as they saw him in public life would have found it hard to believe that there could be such a transformation as he exhibited in his domestic life. He luxuriated in the freedom and liberty of his home, and his buoyancy and joyousness of nature often ran into playfulness and abandon that would have been incredible to those who saw him only when he put on his official dignity.



The overflowing sunshine of his heart was a reflection from the Sun of Righteousness, and he always said he could not love an earthly creature too much, we only loved God more.”

His marriage happiness was almost unbounded in the years of peace, and even the dark shadows of war were not able to dim his happiness. A total explanation of this could fill a volume in itself, so only one example will be presented as an illustration of a dozen similar to it that show his happiness with his wife despite a heavy weight of pressures that would have crushed most other men.

In the first weeks of 1862, the government politicians had taken it upon themselves to dabble in military affairs with which they had no capacity or ability or authority. It so happened that Jackson was the innocent object of this irresponsible blundering by the bureaucrats. The politicians gave Jackson orders that were so contrary to sound military principles and so disgusting to right moral conduct that Jackson determined that it was his duty to resign from the Army as a protest to such irresponsible leadership. To a noble soldier like Jackson, this was a tragedy worse than death, but Jackson did not flinch in the face of duty. While this turmoil was still in progress, Jackson had the opportunity to visit his wife. Most men would have come wallowing in the depths of despair and gloom. But, instead, Jackson found a hotel in which to spruce himself up after the hard ride, and he came to see his wife unannounced as a special surprise. The following is her account of her husband’s spirit while he was burdened with this heavy burden: “He came bounding into the sitting room as joyous and fresh as a schoolboy, to give his wife a surprise, for he had not intimated when he would return. As soon as the first glad greetings were over, before taking his seat with a face all aglow with delight, he glanced around the room, and was so impressed with the cozy and cheerful aspect of Mr. Graham’s fireside, as we all sat around it that winter evening, that he exclaimed, “Oh! this is the very essence of comfort!” The bright picture of homelife was exceedingly refreshing to him. Even in the greatest pressures, Jackson was eager to cause happiness to others at a time when most men are searching for sympathy.

Jackson was faithful in writing letters to his wife even when the obligations of military duty were piled high around him and he was fond of using pet names with her. For example, he wrote, “Do you remember when my little wife used to come up to my headquarters in Winchester and talk with her esopo? I would love to see her sunny face peering into my room again.”

Jackson’s second area of happiness, his family, never had the opportunity of blossoming for more than a few years, but it was prosperous in the short season that it did blossom. Dr. Dabney witnessed concerning him, “In no man were the domestic affections more tender and noble. He who saw only the stern, self-denying soldier in his quarters, amidst the details of the commander’s duties, or on the field of battle, could scarcely comprehend the gentle sweetness of his home life. There the cloud, which to his enemies was only night and tempest, displayed nothing but the ‘silver lining.’ In his household the law of love reigned.”

He took particular pride in the orderly and comfortable arrangement of his home, and he there enjoyed his greatest happiness. He especially was invigorated by working on his little farm and by listening to his wife read from their small library. Jackson had the capacity to explode with laughter at the amusing foibles of his loyal servants and to be “moved to tears” when he received news that an old servant had died. He had appreciation of his home in every detail.

Jackson had a delightful capacity to enjoy children and to make them happy, and he joyfully anticipated seeing any children. But his crowning happiness was when God the Giver blessed him with the birth of a healthy daughter. He wrote, “Oh! how thankful I am to our kind Heavenly Father for having spared my precious wife and given us a little daughter! I cannot tell you how gratified I am, nor how much I wish I



could be with you and see my two darlings.” And he did not fail to give detailed instructions on how his little treasure was to be trained to become a virtuous woman, whom the most noble prince would be proud to claim. Early in the spring of 1863 in the midst of Jackson’s preparations for the campaign around Chancellorsville which was to end his career, he wrote a letter which revealed that his fertile imagination relished the delights of peaceful, joyous, home life as well as it gloried in the adventure of combat. He wrote, “I am beginning to look for my darling and my baby. I shouldn’t be surprised to hear at any time that they were coming, and I tell you there would be one delighted man. Last night I dreamed that my little wife and I were on opposite sides of a room, in the center of which was a table, and the little baby started from her mother, making her way along under the table, and finally reached her father. And what do you think she did when she arrived at her destination? She just climbed up on her father and kissed him! And don’t you think he was a happy man? But when he awoke he found it all a delusion.”

In a few months the delusion became a reality, at least in the sense that Jackson had the happiness of holding his baby daughter for the first time. Jackson was still at his military post of duty when the happy scene occurred, which Mrs. Jackson described as follows.

His face was all sunshine and gladness and after greeting his wife, it was a picture, indeed, to see his look of perfect delight and admiration as his eyes fell upon that baby! She was at the lovely, smiling age and catching his eager look of supreme interest in her, she beamed her brightest and sweetest smiles upon him in return, so it seemed to be a mutual fascination. He was afraid to take her in his arms, with his wet overcoat, but as we drove in a carriage to Mr. Yerby’s, his face reflected all the happiness and delight that were in his heart, and he expressed much surprise and gratification at her size and beauty. Upon our arrival at the house, he speedily divested himself of his overcoat, and taking his baby in his arms, he caressed her with the tenderest affection and held her long and lovingly. During the whole of this short visit when he was with us, he rarely had her out of his arms, walking her, and amusing her in every way that he could think of. Sometimes, holding her up before a mirror and saying, admiringly, “Now, Miss Jackson, look at yourself.”

Even in the final moments of his life as his feeble flame of physical strength was flickering, the sight of his young baby entering the room brightened his pale face with happiness, and he sang out with delight, “Little darling! Sweet one!”

The third sphere of Jackson’s happiness was his nation, Virginia. He had great capacity to enjoy the prosperity, peace, and freedom of his land, possibly more than any other man in modern history. Too many Americans today have the distorted idea that a great soldier is a blood-thirsty animal who thrives upon the glory of killing and slaughter. This is a terrible mistake. The greatest warrior is actually the hero who has such a developed capacity for enjoying the prosperity of peace, that he exerts all his ability to make the war as short as possible by his maximum effectiveness in his battle efforts. The great warrior is the soldier who views peace as the end, and he only condescends to war as a means of achieving that goal. Stonewall himself considered war to be the “sum total of all evil,” and he was horrified at the frivolous, irresponsible manner with which some Southern politicians were eager to enter into it. But once others had initiated the war, Jackson was resolved to obtain the victory which alone could grant liberty and happiness to his nation. He repeatedly expressed his heartfelt desires for peace with such words as the following: “I do trust that our God will soon bless us with an honorable peace, and permit us to be together at home again in the enjoyment of domestic happiness.” Jackson eagerly anticipated the day when Virginia would be blessed with independence, and he recognized the relationship of righteousness or personal nobility of its people with the peace of the nation. He wrote to



his wife on Christmas of 1862, “How I do want to see that precious baby! and I do earnestly pray for peace. Oh that our country was such a Christian, God-fearing people as it should be! Then might we very speedily look for peace.”

Jackson was happy even amidst the horrors of war, but his letters were rife with intimations of his desire for the blessings of peace, as long as the peace was not accompanied with ignoble shame. Jackson always treasured peace, but he recognized that liberty and responsibility to duty were riches of even greater value. He expressed his attitude to a Virginia friend in the following words, “I greatly desire to see peace - blessed peace. And I am persuaded that if God’s people throughout the Confederacy will earnestly and perseveringly unite in imploring His interposition for peace, we may expect it. Let our government acknowledge the God of the Bible as its God, and we may expect soon to be a happy and independent people. It appears to me that extremes are to be avoided and it appears to me that the old United States occupied an extreme position in the means it took to prevent the union of Church and State. We call ourselves a Christian people; and, in my opinion, our government may be of the same character, without connecting itself with an established Church.” In his way Jackson recognized even in government the gracious provision of the Giver on behalf of His people and their responsibility to acknowledge His graciousness.

Jackson had the capacity to enjoy good friendships with his compatriots in Virginia under varying circumstances. In time of fun and mirth he could keep pace with the most wild of them. One story that his wife accounted bears repeating here as an example of Jackson’s flexibility in mirth-filled social scenes. She wrote:

I recall a very amusing scene which occurred in Mr. Graham’s parlor, showing Mrs. Magill’s playful humor. A number of visitors, including several young officers, were spending the evening and as they were about breaking up, Mrs. Magill and a young captain of artillery began to fight a most ridiculous battle - the captain seizing a chair as his cannon and pointing its back at Mrs. Magill. The fun became contagious and soon everybody in the room took sides, drawing out the chairs as pieces of artillery, amid such noise and laughter that General Jackson, who as in his room up-stairs, came down to see what it was all about. Taking in at a glance the broad humor of the occasion, he said, sharply: “Captain Marye, when the engagement is over, you will send in an official report.” The uproar of this mirth-provoking scene was heard far out into the street, and would not have been suspected as coming from the preacher’s house, and yet if I mistake not, his reverence was ... one of the most furious combatants on the side of his mother-in-law.”

This shows one example of the talent which Jackson had developed for constantly seeing ways whereby he could cause happiness to others by what he did or said. His own happiness or comfort was an issue of small import to him because his mind was so fixed with the insatiable desire to cause his friends to be happy. The Giver of Heaven granted that his desire should be fulfilled, as is testified by Mrs. Graham, an elderly lady of Winchester, who wrote concerning one of his visits, “This was very gratifying to us. I don’t remember ever experiencing more intense happiness than during that visit and when I saw our dear general in his old place at the table, I could have screamed with delight! The children were very happy at seeing him.” Stonewall was one of the few men in history whose desires conformed with that ideal that King Solomon was talking about when he wrote, “The desire of the righteous is only good” (Prov. 11:23) and Stonewall also found the reality described by the words which said, “The desires of the righteous will be granted” (Prov. 10:24). Stonewall’s desire of causing happiness to his friends was good and it was fulfilled.

Jackson never failed to proffer wise counsel to his comrades when they desired to know the way to have



great happiness, yet he never tried to set up himself as a model nor tried to vaunt himself before others. In a relaxed conversation with one of his soldiers he counseled, “I hope you are a Christian. There is no happiness like that experienced by the child of God. You have an interest in my prayers.” This attitude is in sharp contrast to the pompous, phony, vaunted attitude of religious ministers in too many parts of our nation today, and it would be well for these ministers to study his example in hopes that they might somehow learn to emulate him.

Jackson never ceased to think about the welfare of his men. Once during the terrible, wet season of winter when the roads were veritable mudholes, a captain in the English army visited Stonewall’s command quarters. He arrived in the most miserable, drenched condition and he had held no expectation of any alleviation of his plight. But to his relief General Jackson himself took his coat and offered him sleeping quarters for the night. The English captain also reported the following incident that occurred the next morning, saying, “I returned up to the general’s headquarters to bid him adieu. His little room was vacant, so I stepped in and stood before the fire. I then noticed my great-coat stretched before it on a chair. Shortly afterwards the general entered the room. He said, ‘Captain, I have been trying to dry your great-coat, but I am afraid I have not succeeded very well.’ That little act illustrates the man’s character. With the care and responsibilities of a vast army on his shoulders, he finds time to do little acts of kindness and thoughtfulness, which make him the darling of his men, who never seem to tire talking of him.”

Jackson also had an unfailing compassion and concern for his wounded men. The supreme example of this was when Jackson was being carried away by ambulance from the battle of Chancellorsville. Jackson himself had several severely painful and ultimately fatal wounds in his hand, arm, and chest; and he was suffering intensely. Yet when Jackson heard one of the other men in the ambulance cry out in what Jackson supposed was unbearable pain, he insisted that the ambulance be stopped and that the doctors give relief to the young man. Dr. McGuire’s account of what really happened amplifies how deep was Jackson’s compassion for his men and his men’s devotion to him, for Dr. McGuire wrote, “At one time he (Jackson) put his hand upon my head and pulling me down to him, asked if Crutchfield was seriously wounded. When I answered, ‘No, only painfully hurt,’ he replied, ‘I am glad it is no worse.’ In a few minutes afterwards Crutchfield did the same thing and when told that the general was very seriously wounded, he groaned out, ‘Oh, my God!’ It was for this that the general directed the ambulance to be halted’ and requested that something should be done for Crutchfield’s relief.”

Stonewall Jackson’s character had a way of “rubbing off” unto his subordinates, and this system of elevating the character of friends is one of the noblest aspects of *agape* or giving happiness. In some ways this is greater than giving a friend a million dollars in gold. The friend might be able to spend the million dollars of gold on all forms of pleasure for several years, but when it is expended, it is forever gone. But when Jackson allowed his friends to be raised to his own height of nobility and happiness by following in his footsteps, he gave them a gift that would cause them happiness the rest of their lives. One incident with one of his subordinates, Lieutenant Smith, exemplified the end product of Jackson’s influence upon his soldiers. Jackson was talking with Smith despite the discomfort of his severe wounds and he commented regarding those wounds, “Many would regard them as a great misfortune, but I regard them as one of the blessings of my life.” Smith had learned to think as Jackson in being constantly aware that the Giver of the Universe controls all of the apparent disasters of life so that they boomerang for our good, so Smith remarked in return, “All things work together for good to those that love God.” “Yes,” Jackson responded, “That’s it, that’s it.” Jackson had passed on to Lieutenant Smith a principle that would cause him happiness the rest of his life whenever he applied it.



The result of this magnanimous conduct by Jackson was that he was loved by his men and respected by his fellow officers. Even the most beloved leader in the South, General Lee, was moved to say concerning him after the accidental shooting, “Give him my affectionate regards, and tell him to make haste and get well and come back to me as soon as he can. He has lost his left arm, but I have lost my right arm.”

The fourth sphere of Jackson’s happiness was what he called “duty.” To him the word had a sacred attachment that he valued above everything else in life. He was more happy in striving valiantly in the execution of his duty than he could ever be lounging on a soft bed of ease and comfort. The call of duty was the spark that set ablaze every fiery torch of his soul. When he was in the classrooms of West Point he deeply rooted the principle in his life, “Through life let your principle object be the discharge of duty.” About eighteen years later when Jackson was lying in great pain upon his deathbed, he was still repeating the command, “Do your duty.” In his mind, duty was not a troublesome chore that had to be performed under coercion. Rather, he regarded duty to be the program of action that the Supreme Giver of Heaven had perfectly designed for his life. The execution of this program of action was the source of pure delight to him. The more demanding and difficult were the problems set in his path, the more abundant he knew would be the provision of His Heavenly Father on his behalf to help Jackson perform his duty. Jackson learned early in life the truth of the principle, “You can be what you resolve to be.”

Jackson knew that His Heavenly Father would never fail to provide everything that he needed, and therefore Stonewall had unshakeable confidence in the most critical moments of his career. He had an ambition that lifted his soul out of the mire and blood of the scenes of conflict and which made him soar with the eagles in a happiness that is oblivious to the common man who only lives in a world of mechanical monotony. Henderson observed concerning Jackson in his early service in Mexico at about the age of twenty-two that, “To stand alone, in the forefront of the fight, defying the terrors from which others sank, was the situation which of all others he most coveted.” This same flaming desire stayed with Jackson till the moment that his Heavenly Father promoted him to higher challenges yet off this planet earth.

The enjoyment of the execution of duty is a talent that must be developed. Just as a two year old baby is incapable of raising the roof with shouts of excitement when a football team scores a touchdown on a spectacular long play, so an immature soul has no capacity for enjoying the excitement of the successful execution of duty in some arduous struggle. Stonewall was a soul who had developed his capacity for this appreciation.

The key to this great capacity for happiness was Stonewall’s recognition of the source of his success. He was constantly aware that the fountainhead of every good thing in his life was God the Giver. Jackson was never seeking to be ascetic or self-abnegating, but rather he was living the life which he knew afforded him the greatest possible happiness. In explaining this idea to his sister, he wrote, “Within the past few years I have endeavored to live more nearly unto God. And now nothing earthly could induce me to return to the world again. My life is not one of privation, as you sometimes see among Christians, but I enjoy the pleasure of the world, but endeavor to restrict them within the limits which nature’s God has assigned them.” In this way, Jackson acknowledged that the God of Heaven was the giver of all good things rather than being a jealous, selfish, old man who was pushing to make everyone act like pious freaks. Even in his battle reports, Jackson almost invariably made mention of the fact that all the glory should be given to God alone, because he knew that the victory was actually a gift from Him. Following the battle of Chancellorsville, Jackson commented concerning the victory, “Our movement was a great success; I think the most successful military movement of my life. But I expect to receive far



more credit for it than I deserve. Most men will think I planned it all from the first, but it was not so. I simply took advantage of circumstances as they were presented to me in the providence of God. I felt that He had led me, let us give Him the glory.”

Years earlier in his career following the first battle of Manassas, he wrote to his wife, “My Precious Pet, yesterday we fought a great battle and gained a great victory for which all the glory is due to God alone.” Despite Stonewall’s tendency to become elated and almost intoxicated with the joy of success, he never lost control of himself so that he became proud or tried to bring glory and honor upon himself. His genuine humility even in the brightest spotlights of fame and success were proverbial. He wrote to his wife a note which revealed his attitude concerning praise: “Whilst great credit is due to other parts of our gallant army, God made my brigade more instrumental than any other in repulsing the main attack. This is for your information only--say nothing about it. Let others speak praise, not myself.”

Because Jackson had this unique ability to appreciate the execution of duty for duty’s sake, he was independent of the praise and recognition of man for any happiness. He was perfectly content to let his case rest in the hands of an “ever-kind Heavenly Father” concerning any recognition among men. It was this recognition of the complete provision that had already been made for Jackson to execute his duty that gave Stonewall the invincible courage in the face of overwhelming odds. Once when Jackson was studying the distribution of one hundred and twenty-five thousand federal troops in their proud and powerful marshal array, even the heart of Longstreet was made to tremble as he said, “General, do not all those multitudes frighten you?” But Stonewall immediately retorted, “We shall see very soon whether I shall not frighten them.” Such boldness by a mere human would have been only foolishness if Jackson had not understood that the Father was going to provide everything he needed to execute his duty. But for this very reason, Jackson delighted in the storm of battle. The intensity of his excitement was almost beyond description. His spirit of animation was possibly at its highest zenith during the successful charge at Chancellorsville and the observations of his fiery excitement were recorded as follows: “During this splendid charge Jackson was the impersonation of military enthusiasm, dashing on at the head of his men with the words of command, ‘Forward!’ ‘Press on!’ continually ringing from his lips. He leaned forward upon his horse and waved his hand as though by its single strength he were trying to impel his men onward. As cheer after cheer rose from the Confederate line announcing new successes, his flashing eyes and glowing cheeks showed how deeply he was moved and he was observed frequently to look upwards and lift his right hand to heaven in prayer and thanksgiving.”

This same noble concept of duty that gave him courage and resolution on the field of battle also sustained him in every other area of life. Jackson considered that every part of his life was a part of his Christian duty. He even controlled his diet and eating habits according to his concept of duty and he established principles to govern every area of his life. These principles were not a burden to him, but rather they served as foundations for his life that kept him from being swept away by any of the storms of life that destroy most men. His concept of duty sustained him when his first wife died and it sustained him when his left arm was amputated. He had absolute confidence that the duty God had prepared for him was the most perfect schedule that could ever be devised for him and therefore life held absolutely no terrors to him. Instead, every day was a new adventure. He summarized this idea himself in a conversation with Mr. Lacy which was recorded as follows: “You see me severely wounded, but not depressed, not unhappy. I believe it has been done according to God’s holy will and I acquiesce entirely to it. You may think it strange, but you never saw me more perfectly contented than I am today for I am sure that my Heavenly Father designs this affliction for my good. I am perfectly satisfied that either in this life or in that which is to come, I shall discover that what is now regarded as a calamity is a blessing. And if it appears a great calamity, as it surely will be a great inconvenience to be deprived of my arm, it



will result in a great blessing. I can wait until God, in His own time, shall make known to me the object He has in thus afflicting me. But why should I not rather rejoice in it as a blessing and not look on it as a calamity at all? If it were in my power to replace my arm, I would not dare to do it, unless I could know it was the will of my Heavenly Father.”

Jackson was constantly aware that his Heavenly Father knew what the best program for his life was, and therefore Jackson loved his duty, knowing it was a gift from the Great Giver. As a part of his duty, Jackson enjoyed taking pride in his men and his men also greatly enjoyed taking pride in him. He had the genius for raising his men to his own high aspirations of duty. One of his soldiers wrote an account of Stonewall’s farewell speech to his Stonewall Brigade, the group of men whom he had loved as his own in the first months of battle. His account is a particular example of Stonewall’s ability to win the hearts of his men and Henderson recorded it, writing; “You have already gained a proud position in the history of this our second war of independence. I shall look with great anxiety to your future movements and I trust whenever I shall hear of the First Brigade on the field of battle it will be of still nobler deeds achieved and higher reputation won.” At this point in his speech, Jackson somehow rose up on his stirrups and tossed his reins on the neck of his war horse with an inexplicable mannerism which in itself had the power to thrill his men. With added vigor, Jackson continued, “In the Army of the Shenandoah you were the First Brigade; in the Army of the Potomac you were the first Brigade; in the Second Corps of the army you were the First Brigade; you are the First Brigade in the affections of your general; and I hope that by your future deeds and bearing that you will be handed down to posterity as the First Brigade in this our second War of Independence. Farewell!” For a moment the air was hushed with a silence that tingled with excitement, and then the men broke forth with three cheers that shook the Virginian forests and they followed these with more and more. This noble show of his men’s loyalty and affection was too much for Stonewall’s emotions to bear any longer, so he galloped away.

To Jackson’s soul, the joy of doing his duty was almost like the happiness of a man in passionately making love to the woman of his life. The parallel may appear ridiculous at first glance, but it is really not incongruous at all. The Great Giver of Heaven designs for his servants an exciting schedule of action called duty which they are free to carry into execution if they so desire, and the same Giver also provides one beautiful woman for each man to fulfill if he so desires. The Great Giver promises that if any man will faithfully execute his duty, he will have great happiness even as he will have happiness if he fulfills the woman whom God provides for him. However, if the man chooses to follow some other schedule of action of his own design, the end result will be a lesser amount of happiness at best and will usually simply be great misery, even as great misery follows in the wake of affairs with prostitutes or other women outside the Giver’s design. But the Giver offers great happiness to the man who executes or fulfills the duty that God provides for each man. The Great Giver’s gracious provisions of a woman and a duty for each man are probably the two greatest gifts that He provides and it is a tragedy when men choose to not fulfill or implement either of these priceless gifts. Jackson was one man who fulfilled both his woman and his duty, and he enjoyed great happiness as the fruit of his action.

As Jackson continued to execute his duty, it inspired his men to rise to his tall stature and their loyalty became increasingly fixed to him. On one occasion Jackson had been keeping the men constantly on the move for five days under hardships of poor food and insufficient provisions. Some of the men had marched fifty miles in two days, but they had still not lost their enthusiasm and loyalty to Stonewall. Near sunset, Jackson went ahead of his brave marching columns and stood upon a high rock to inspect them as they marched by. His face was glowing in the golden sunlight of the setting sun and the picture excited the men to commence the rebel yell in his honor. However, because the enemy was near and the secrecy of their march was vital, Stonewall motioned for them to keep silence. The men whispered the



command down the lines and it was obeyed. But this did not stop the men from madly waving their caps and beaming their praise of their brave leader with their eyes as they marched by. But when Jackson's own brigade which he had trained, the Stonewall Brigade, came in view, its enthusiasm could not be held in and they broke out with loud cheers and Jackson overlooked their breach of discipline and remarked to his staff with a countenance radiating his pride in the men, "Who could fail to win battles with such men as these?"

Jackson's happiness from the execution of his duty was probably only exceeded by his happiness in the fifth sphere, the appreciation of his Supreme Giver. Jackson had a capacity for appreciating God as the Great Giver that is beyond the imagination of most Americans. Stonewall did not worship God out of a sense of rigid obligation. Rather, to him, the Giver of Heaven and His Son, the Hero King (whose Greek name is usually transliterated into the English as Jesus Christ) were to him like personal friends who were much closer than brothers. Just as the greatest delight of the young bride is to do what pleases her husband, so it was Jackson's supreme delight to do what was pleasing to his Heavenly Father and to do anything that would bring glory and recognition to His Son, Iesous Christos. Jackson recognized that Iesous Christos had been appointed by the Father to be the King over the whole universe. Therefore, he knew that Iesous Christos was actually a much higher potentate or ruler than Jefferson Davis, Abraham Lincoln, the Czar of Russia, the King of England, or even Napoleon in his height of power and glory. Iesous Christos was the legitimate owner and ruler of ALL of the universe, including the miniscule provinces on planet earth. Therefore, Jackson always chose to render his ultimate loyalty to the King of kings rather than to any king or prince upon planet earth. The kings and princes on earth (such as Jefferson Davis, Abraham Lincoln, and General R.E. Lee) were only appointed by God the Father to maintain authority on this planet, subordinate to His ultimate authority (as Paul explained in Romans 13). To Jackson, the fountainhead of all his happiness was the King of Heaven, Iesous Christos and his Heavenly Father. Jackson's happiness in this sphere of appreciation of the Great Giver could be divided into two parts. First, Jackson had a great appreciation of the Giver's skill in His creation of the design in the universe. Second, Jackson had a great appreciation of God's goodness in His dealing with men.

Jackson expressed his appreciation of the Giver's design in nature on numerous occasions. He considered the beauty of nature to be the most glorious of all beauties, excelling anything that man has been able to create. He expressed this attitude in a letter to his wife in 1857, writing, "In my daily walks I think much of you. I love to stroll abroad after the labors of the day are over, and indulge feelings of gratitude to God for all the sources of natural beauty with which he has adorned the earth. Some time since, my morning walks were rendered very delightful by the singing of the birds. The morning caroling of the birds and their sweet notes in the evening awaken in me devotional feelings of praise and thanksgiving, though very different in their nature. In the morning, all animated nature (man excepted) appears to join in expressions of gratitude to God; in the evening, all is hushing into silent slumber and thus disposes the mind to meditation. And as my mind dwells on you, I love to give it a devotional turn, by thinking of you as a gift from our Heavenly Father. How delightful it is thus to associate every pleasure and enjoyment with God the Giver! Thus will He bless us and make us grow in grace and in the knowledge of Him, whom to know aright is life eternal."

Jackson had a well-developed taste for the arts and he never ceased to enjoy talking about the wondrous works of man that he viewed in Europe on his tour. But still he recognized that the beauty of the Giver's artistic ability as revealed in science towers far above any other beauty that man can compose. Even while Jackson was in the field in the midst of bloody conflicts, he still would write back to his wife about the loveliness and magnificence of the landscape of the Shenandoah Valley and he would tell her of his dreams of establishing his home in that beautiful valley after the Giver of Victory had granted



their nation its independence and peace. As he expressed it to his wife in a letter, “After God, our God, again blesses us with peace, I hope to visit this country with my darling and enjoy its beauty and loveliness.”

A reliable indication that a person has the capacity to enjoy the Great Giver’s design is the desire of that person to acquire knowledge. A person who actually loves the Giver’s genius will have the insatiable desire to learn what he can about that design in creation. Jackson manifested this kind of unquenchable hunger for learning even in his youth. He was raised an orphan in the homes of relatives, but whenever he had the opportunity, he would get the little schooling that was available and he persisted in his lessons against all difficulties. By sheer determination, he was able to secure an appointment to West Point. The difficulties he encountered there can be most appreciated by imagining a boy with about a ninth or tenth grade education attempting to enter Princeton University.

Again, it was only his dogged determination and midnight hours of study that gave him success in his quest for knowledge. Jackson desired to know everything that he could learn about the Giver’s creation and His character through all the studies of the arts and sciences and the Great Giver saw that his desire was implemented.

Although Jackson greatly appreciated the creation of the Great Giver with *philos* happiness, he appreciated even more the character of the Giver Himself. This was analogous to the appreciation of a young bride when her hero brings home a dozen roses. She may laugh or weep (for such is the incongruity of women) as she gazes upon these crimson blossoms over the joy of having them. However, her greatest happiness is not because of the beauty of the flowers, but rather she appreciates the character of the husband who would think about her enough to drive out into the countryside and secure permission from a farmer to pick these flowers for his bride. That noble character of her husband is what pleases her so that her cup of happiness flows over; the beauty of the gift is insignificant with the noble character of her noblemen.

Jackson had an attitude like this in regard to the gifts of creation. He appreciated all of the gifts, but he appreciated the Giver much more. One of his letters to his wife illustrated how he traced the source of all his happiness to his Heavenly Father, for he wrote, “I am so thankful to our ever-kind Heavenly Father for having so improved my eyes as to enable me to write at night. He continually showers blessings upon me and that you should have been spared and our darling little daughter given us, fills my heart with overflowing gratitude. If I know my unworthy self, my desire is to live entirely and unreservedly to God’s glory. Pray, my darling, that I may so live.”

A vital principle for appreciating the character of a person is to know something about the character of the person. For example, it would be legitimate for a man to say that he has a great appreciation for his own German shepherd dog because he may have seen his German shepherd faithfully perform the commands that the owner gave it, and he may have even seen the German shepherd rescue children when they were attacked by a stranger. It would, however, be ridiculous for this same owner to say that he had a great appreciation for a cocker spaniel that he has just seen for the first time. He knows nothing about this cocker spaniel and therefore it would be impossible for him to have any well-developed appreciation of him. For all he knows, the cocker spaniel may have rabies and may be a baby-killer.

In the same way, it would be ridiculous for an American to say that he has a great appreciation for the Great Giver of the universe when that American knows nothing about this person. This man may have an emotional attraction or revulsion toward the Giver, but without learning about the character of the Giver, he can have no bona fide appreciation of Him.



Jackson understood this principle, and he therefore diligently applied himself to learning all that he could about this Person. He chose a manner of study that was singularly efficient for his time. He did not associate himself with any religious sect, but rather he elected to carefully investigate all the religious creeds in the light of his personal understanding of the written Word of God. After this careful consideration, he formulated for himself what he believed to be the view that were most consistent with the Scriptures. In this way, he avoided most of the eccentric views that all religious sects hold. His wife and his letters definitely testify that he received “Jesus Christ as his Savior and Redeemer.”

Jackson had great enjoyment of Sunday because that day usually afforded him the opportunity of extra time in study of the Word of God and in listening to the preaching of the Word of God by faithful teachers. Even on the day that he was dying, he was interested in knowing who was preaching to the soldiers and in hearing what was their response to its truth. He was aware that some people misunderstood the principles behind his worship and he tried to explain. He had not a trace of asceticism in his whole soul, but rather he had great happiness from such courses of action as his intent study of the Word of the Giver on Sunday. As he explained, “So far from having to regret my course, it has been a source of true enjoyment. I have never sustained loss in observing what God enjoys.”

Because the Giver of the universe is also the Supreme King of the universe, Stonewall recognized the power of petitions made to this Giver. He saw that a petition that was granted by the President of his nation had great power in supplying money, supplies, and authority over men. But he knew that the President of the universe had the power to grant much more and he therefore encouraged his soldiers to make good petitions to this King of Heaven.

It was obvious that Stonewall had a great *philos* or appreciation happiness of the Giver’s character as revealed by his dealings on earth. Stonewall also had developed appreciation on earth of what the Giver had prepared for him to enjoy after he departed from this planet to live somewhere else in this universe. In fact, Stonewall eagerly anticipated taking on a new duty station somewhere else in this universe outside of planet earth. This was the reason that he was so oblivious to any fear of death. Death to him was merely a change of duty station from planet earth to some other group of planets and Stonewall knew that in this new duty station he would have greater access to seeing Iesous Christos, the Hero King, in person. Stonewall wanted to stay on earth as long as he could be of service to his nation and family, but his great desire was to take up a duty station on some other planet in heaven where he could see his Savior face to face.

On one occasion not long before his death, Jackson expressed this attitude to a friend and his explanation was recorded in the following words: “Nothing earthly can mar my happiness. I know that heaven is in store for me and I should rejoice in the prospect of going there tomorrow. Understand me, I am not sick, I am not sad. God has greatly blessed me. I have as much to love here as any man and life is very bright to me. But still I am ready to leave it any day without trepidation or regret, for that heaven which I know awaits me through the mercy of my Heavenly Father. And I would not agree to the slightest diminution of one shade of my glory there...no, not for all the fame I have acquired or shall ever win in this world.”

Stonewall was not putting on a pious show for this friend, but he was merely expressing the everyday thinking of his own mind. When he was sitting on his horse with bullets whizzing around his head, thoughts such as these were his companions, and they made him as relaxed in battle as he was relaxed in bed. This attitude is in marked contrast to the religious fanatic who blubbers that he knows that God will take care of him. Stonewall was of a different caliber from men who wildly speak words without responsibility. Stonewall’s words were honest to his action and his conduct during his days of slow



dying confirmed that his convictions never failed him in even the most severe trials.

On the night that Jackson was shot, he endured untold sufferings as the men tried to bring him back to a place of safety. The pain was so intense that even a man of his strength and endurance at times was tempted to give up. But he did not yield to this temptation and he later said, “It has been a precious experience to me that I was brought face to face with death and found all was well.” As the pain from the wounds increased in the days leading up to his death, still no word of complaint escaped his lips. The time finally came when it was necessary for his wife to reveal to Stonewall that he was soon going to die. Stonewall had mentioned to his wife years before that, although he had no fear of dying, he would appreciate it if he might have the opportunity of “a few hours preparation before entering into the presence of his Maker and Redeemer.” Therefore, the difficult job fell upon Mrs. Jackson of informing her husband that he was soon to depart from her presence and he was to be severed from all hope of winning the independence of his nation. Mrs. Jackson herself gave the following account of his response to this announcement. “When I told him the doctors thought he would soon be in heaven, he did not seem to comprehend it and showed no surprise or concern. But upon repeating it and asking him if he was willing for God to do with him according to His own will, he looked at me calmly and intelligently and said, ‘Yes, I prefer it, I prefer it.’ I then told him that before that day was over he would be with the blessed Savior in His glory. With perfect distinctness and intelligence, he said, “I will be an infinite gainer to be translated.”

All this and much more was the happiness of the man called Stonewall Jackson. The ancient proverb teaches that only a man himself can fully know the happiness of his own heart and no one else can fully share it. Therefore, it is reasonable to conclude that Jackson’s happiness was much more extensive than any records that we hold today concerning it. But even the scanty records we have confirm with strong evidence that his pastor knew what he was saying when he called Jackson “the happiest man I ever knew.” The challenge from Stonewall’s life is draped like a red flag in the bull ring, for some Christian man to dare to follow in that path of happiness that Jackson blazed and to explore this path beyond the junction that Stonewall reached. But until someone resolves to execute this course, Jesus Christos and Thomas Jonathon Stonewall Jackson will continue to hold the world record for this era in being the happiest men who have lived.