

The Quiet Hour.

Paul at Thessaloni caand Berea.

S. S. Lesson 18th Jan; Acts 17th: 1-12.

GOLDEN TEXT: Psa. 119: 105. Thy word is a lamp unto my feet.

BY REV. GEO. B. MCLEOD, M. A. TRURO, N. S.

Came to Thessalonica, v. 1. What a world-traveller Paul was! And how many different sorts of people he would meet on his journeys. He would see the proud consul going through his Province with much display of soldiery, or the sick patient in search of health, or the commercial men, or the band of pleasure seekers. But Paul was on the road for far other purposes. He travelled for Jesus, and wished to represent the gospel of Christ. His one object was to bring glory to the name of the loved Master who had called him out of darkness into His marvellous light: Do we represent Christ as we travel through life?

Three sabbath days, v. 2. By working at his trade for self-support during the week, Paul sets us a noble example of independence, and also teaches us that in working for Christ we should guard ourselves against any charge of being mere money-makers.

Christ must suffer, v. 3. Think what we would lack if the Saviour had not suffered. We should not have known how great is the love of God to us. We should still be bearing the burden of our own sins. We should be deprived of His great example to encourage us and inspire us to bear our trials cheerfully and bravely. It was necessary, for our sakes that Christ should die, and so great was His love that He suffered willingly.

Rise from the dead, v. 3. It was as needful that Christ should rise from the dead as that He should die on the cross. He died so that He might obtain for us pardon of sin and help for right living. He rose that He might receive this pardon and help for us, and He lives now to give them to us.

This Jesus... is Christ, v. 3. These words point us, like an outstretched finger, to the Jesus of Bethlehem and Nazareth and Calvary, as our only Saviour. He is the only Teacher who can save us completely from ignorance and error; the only Leader under whose guidance we can never go astray; the only Example whom we can always safely follow: the only Sacrifice through whom we can receive pardon.

Consorted with Paul and Silas, v. 4. Worldly companionship has ruined many a young Christian, who has not followed the example of the converts of Thessalonica, and consorted with God's people. The friendship of the world is enmity against God. Again, some boast that they are strong enough to stand alone in the Christian life, but this boasting is often woefully punished.

Assaulted the house, v. 5. But the assaults of the crowd could not impede the progress of Christ. He was Lord of all, and ere many years passed, the citizens of this same place found out how true it was that Jesus had turned the world upside down. "In A. D. 390, the Emperor Theodosius, in revenge for some affront, ruthlessly massacred 1,500 of the inhabitants of Thessalonica. For this act, St. Ambrose, the great bishop of Milan, compelled the Emperor to do abject penance, refusing him communion for eight months

until he submitted." So the gospel of Christ proved to be stronger than the empire of Rome. The / who fight against God are engaged in a very one-sided battle, and they might as well submit at once, without conditions or delay.

Another king, one Jesus, v. 7. Who has so good a right to be crowned King and rule over men as Jesus? The winds and waves obeyed Him when He spoke. Disease loosed its hold on its victims at His word. His bidding brought back the dead to life. Evil spirits crouched in terror before Him, and bright legions of angels stood ready to do His will. He is the true King. And yet He says so graciously to us, "Come unto Me," "Abide in Me," "Follow Me." Who would not love and serve such a King as Jesus?

Went into the synagogue, v. 10. They walked into danger again. What a thrilling tale of adventure, if familiarity had not placed its cold hand upon our imagination! Yet Christian history is full of such bravery. Jesus makes heroes of people. Read such a life as that of James Chalmers, of New Guinea, and see him face death over and over again, without a shadow of dread and no change in his pulse.

Readiness of mind, v. 7. When we wish to do a thing, how easily we find reasons for doing it! And when we are unwilling, how quickly objections come into our minds! Our likes and dislikes resemble colored glass, which gives its own hue to objects seen through it. It is only when we are wise enough to lay them aside that we see things as they really are. And we need only to look at the teaching of Jesus fairly to see its beauty and value. Difficulties about the Bible usually vanish when we become willing to regard its teachings. Faith follows obedience.

A Prayer.

This was the prayer offered by the late Dr. Joseph Parker before the sermon at the last Thursday meeting in the City Temple, from which he went home to die:

Almighty God, we thank Thee for Thy strong servants; for the men who have had something to say in Thy name, and have said it with tenderness and gentle suasion. We bless Thee for Thy servant Paul, for his massiveness and grandeur of soul; help us to enter into his purposes as he entered into the purpose of Christ, and may we be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus. We would not be strong in ignorance, in vanity, in selfishness; we would find all our strength in the grace that is in Christ Jesus.

Bless Thy servants who are here from all quarters, under all flags of a denominational kind, and unite their hearts in one great consent and sacrament of love. May we know nothing but Jesus Christ and Him crucified, and all things rising and flowing from that sacred source.

We bless Thee that we are here; we have seen the Lord at noonday for many a long year; yea, He has been a Light above the brightness of the sun, and to-day He will be more gracious than ever.

Come to us as penitent sinners, broken-down men who are drinking the cup of self-humiliation and self-accusation, and speak to us according to the greatness of Thy grace. May we see the cross, may we lay

hold on the cross.

"In my hand no price I bring,
Simply to Thy cross I cling."

Amen.

FOR DOMINION PRESBYTERIAN.

Bible Study. One Verse at a Time.

Isaiah 55 4; Paper V.

BY MRS. ANNA ROSS.

Prayer at the beginning, "Open Thou mine eyes, that I may behold wondrous things out of Thy law."

1st Clause. "Behold!"

"Ho!" at the beginning of the chapter, calls inattentive ears to listen. "Behold!" at the beginning of this verse calls inattentive eyes to look, lest we may miss what God knows we need to see.

What are we to look at?

We are summoned to look at that which the whole universe is regarding with interest and which we can least of all afford to disregard—at the great Redeemer, David's son and David's Lord as "given" to man. "Behold" Christ, and behold Him as God's unspeakable gift to us.

2nd Clause. "I have given Him"

That is not the whole of it, but it is enough at first. This has been a season of gifts. We understand well what a gift means. It is something we are free to take as our own. A gift is something we are more than free to take. To reject or neglect it, is felt to be a discourtesy to the one making the gift. The more promptly we accept of it, and the more heartily we appropriate and use it, the more do we honor both the gift and the giver. So free and more than free is God's gift of His own Son to us, "Behold! I have given Him."

We are accustomed to the words, but not to the thought. Comparatively few stop and look at it long enough to be able to take in the thought. Let us look at it calmly and intelligently until we have fairly grasped it intellectually as true for everybody, and then let it in deeper still as true for me. As it enters in to the heart as a reality for me, I shall be able to lift up that heart to the Giver and sing softly through: very reverence, "Thanks be unto God for His unspeakable Gift." "Behold! I have given Him."

2nd Clause completed. "I have given Him as a witness to the people."

God has given Him to us as a witness, to tell us from Him what we do not know, and what we must know, if this tremendous existence upon which we have entered is to be a victory instead of a failure. Do we want an eternal victory instead of an eternal failure? Then let us thank God for a Witness who can tell us what we need to know; and let our daily attitude toward that Witness be, "Speak Lord, for Thy servant heareth." Thus we are back again at the word of God, for it is in that book that Christ's testimony, and all that is preparatory to it, is written down for us. But it is more than a mere book now. It is the voice of God's appointed Witness.

3rd Clause. "A Leader and Commander to the people."

Thank God for this clause. Jesus Christ is more than a mere instructor. He is a living Leader under whom we can enlist. Man needs this. Man must have this if he is ever to make the best of himself. He needs a living, personal Leader, one who is his hero, one to whom he can be loyal, one for whom he can live. He needs this just as a dog needs a master.

A dog without a master is a pitiful object, and he feels it himself. He has not the dignity of a dog while he is sinking round