

For Dominion Presbyterian. Bible Study. One Verse at a Time. Paper IV

The Quiet Hour.

Christian Living.

S. S. Lesson—Jan. 11th, 1903; Phil. 4: 1-13.

Golden Text: Phil. 4: 4. Rejoice in the Lord always.

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

Dear loved, v. 1. It is no shame to have a warm heart and to let it speak. Both home and church miss a great deal when they omit the language of true emotion, and congeal the streams of loving expression. If Christ dwell in us, the spirit of His love must fill our hearts with a new current of undisguised liking for our brethren.

Be of the same mind, v. 2. Harmony is of the very essence of divine truth. This is not that we are to think or believe or act, one the same as another. There may be wide diversity and yet real concord. If the mind of Christ be in us, we have the only real union, that of life.

Rejoice, v. 3. Our deepest religion is not hindered but purified by true joy. "On one occasion, William Guthrie, author of the Christian's Great Interest had been entertaining a company with mirth provoking anecdotes, and being called upon afterwards to pray, he poured out his heart with such deep-felt fervor to God that all were melted. When they arose from their knees, Durham of Glasgow, a grave solid man, took him by the hand and said, 'Willie, you are a happy man; if I had laughed as much as you did a while ago, I could not have prayed for four-and-twenty hours.'

The Lord is at hand, v. 5. The coming of our Saviour should be often in our thoughts. It is assigned as a reason for patience and love, Jas. 5: 8; 1 Pet. 4: 7. If Christ is soon to be seen in person, we should be getting ready to receive Him.

Be careful for nothing, v. 6. Easy to say, hard to practise. But Paul has done it. He is in prison and at any moment a death warrant may be signed, which will fling him to the wild beasts. He is also in penury, living on the gifts of his friends, yet he says he has all things and abounds. He has gained the key to the treasure of perfect peace. Most people are careful about everything. They are matured in fear and grow up in anxiety. How to succeed how to escape calamity, how to overcome wealth, how to conquer poverty—these are the worries of so many people. What a nightmare the fear of poverty is! Male tells of a man, who asked a wizard to call forth the great enemy in visible form. He did so and an empty purse fell out on the floor. When will we learn to cease our torture of doubts, and begin to live the life of trust?

Prayer and supplication, v. 6. If we will not pray, we cannot have rest. But prayer and care can never get on together. If we pray in all things, we cannot have caring care for anything.

The peace of God, v. 7. Not our own peace, but God's peace. God can step into our lives, if only we will open our hearts to Him by faith. And if He enters, He will surprise us with the blessing which He brings. His peace will far exceed even the highest device of men. It will surpass understanding. We must cultivate the presence of God, and live in Him as in an atmosphere.

Think on these things, v. 8. Christ is the mild teacher, and Christianity is the true

mind cure. Our thoughts are things, the most real things in our experience, and as a man thinketh in his heart, so he is. What a magnificent range is here given to our mind,—honesty, truth, beauty, purity, virtue, etc. Who shall complain of an emptiness of the sea. We must be changed in mind, if we are to be saved. "Transformed by the renewing of your mind," Rom. 12: 2.

I have learned... to be content, v. 11. Content has many counterfeits. It is not carelessness, that lives for to-day, with no thought of the morrow; nor indolence, that shrinks from the strenuous struggle of life; nor stupidity, that sees no way of bettering things; nor fatalism, that holds it's impossible to change things, right or wrong. He only has learned the secret of content who views his lot as ordered by a loving Father, and sets himself with all earnestness to make the best use of the powers and talents given him.

I can do all things in him (Rev. Ver.), v. 13. All through the pistle the same remedy is recommended. Collect the references to Christ in the letter, and see what good results are assigned to His dwelling in us. To be Christians, is to be in Christ, and to have Christ in us. We have to do nothing except submit to Him by faith, and God will do all things except compel a submission. Christ lives in us as long as we believe in Him. If we doubt, He dies. Like a gleam of light on placid water, a silver ray, so continuous that you cannot tell where light ceases and reflection begins, so it is with us if we only trust calmly in God. His light will break into beauty, so that we cannot tell where divine ends and human begins. We shall live in Christ and He will live in us. The bond of this blessed union is faith.

A Prayer.

BY REV. J. H. JOWETT.

Our Father God, we bless Thee that the same gracious power which made the man Christ Jesus invincible is offered to us. We bless Thee that we need not be the children of weakness and of shame. By Thy grace, by the power of Thy gospel, and the indwelling of Thy Spirit, we can all be children of strength and of triumph. We bless Thee that Thou hast made it possible for us to turn even our disadvantage into opportunity, to convert even our temptation into conquest, to turn even seeming disaster into an occasion of great and eternal good. It is Thy purpose that everything should be to us the finger of God. It is Thy purpose that all our changing experience should only bring variety of benediction; that whether we are called to dwell in the sunshine, or to stand back in the chill of the shadow, we should find growth and blessing and spiritual peace and rest. If Thou shouldst lead us along an easy way where we have few burdens to carry, we pray Thee that our ease may not become our foe; and if Thou shouldst call us to difficult things, and to carry heavy burdens, we pray Thee that we may not, because of the weakness of self, turn aside from our task and desert Thee. But wilt Thou grant that the heavy burden may only result in closer clinging to Thee, and the heavy yoke cause us to seek the more intimate fellowship with Thee? Our God, make the whole of our life one perpetual climbing towards Thee. Amen.

Isaiah 55: 3

BY MRS. ANNA ROSS.

Prayer at the beginning. "Sanctify me through thy truth; thy word is truth."

1st Clause, "Incline your ear," and "And come unto me."

"Incline your ear." This is God's "Ho" over again, and yet a little different. He has caught the ear but shall he hold it? Shall He hold the attention long enough to get the precious invitation with its marvelous arguments really lodged in the understanding? So he pleads with the arrested passer by: "You hear me? Stop and listen, incline your ear, hear about my feast, come at my invitation." "God knows, in this world of pressing claims, the thought of this feast of His may never really enter the understanding, and He puts His urgency into this reiterated call. "Incline your ear and come."

3rd Clause, "And your soul shall live."

"Hear" another call to listen—this time perhaps not merely to the invitation, but to the words that constitute the feast. It is rather a repetition of the "Eat ye that which is good." It is our invitation to appropriate God's words as our own.

Coined with the invitation to hear is a promise. "What God has joined together let no man put asunder." "Hear," that is the command; and your soul shall live—that is the promise. "What good thing shall I do that I may inherit eternal life?" The answer is given here very briefly. "Hear, and your soul shall live." Soul life is promised to him who shall hear the words of God.

The same statement is made by our Lord Jesus in John 5: 23 "Verily, verily, I say unto you. He that heareth my words and believeth in that that sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation; but is passed from death unto life. "Look at what is here promised to him who hears Christ's words, and count that He who sent the message means what has been spoken. "Hear, and your soul shall live."

Life for attending to God's words, but what if we neglect them? "How shall we escape if we neglect them?"

What is it to hear God's words? and what is it to neglect them? These are questions that each one needs to settle clearly, for life hangs on the answer.

5th. "And I will make an everlasting covenant with you."

Life is not the only thing that is promised to him who hears God's word. Power is promised as well, even covenant hold upon God Himself. It is a great thing to have covenant hold upon a bank, and a property signed cheque as its token. It means power over that bank to the full extent of that cheque. It is a greater thing to have covenant hold upon God, and an appropriated promise as its token. That means power over God to the full extent of that promise. This is the "event" that the church has almost forgotten. "The secret of the Lord is with them that fear Him, and He will show them His covenant." Poverty stricken Christians there is wealth just here.

6th. "Even the sure mercies of David."

Thank God for that clause. It set us on the track of the "secret" spoken of in the one preceding it.

There are two ways of dealing with every promise of God that comes before us. We can "eat" it—take it joyfully as our own, and sit down with it before God saying to Him,