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MILTON GREENHOUSES

PHONE 151

The Sunday School Lesson

SUNDAY, MARCH 28th

THE CERTAINTY OF ETERNAL LIFE

Golden Text.— This is eternal life, that they know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom thou hast sent. Jno. 17: 3.

Lesson Text.—Col. 3: 1-4, 12-17; 1 Jno. 5: 11-12.

Exposition.—I. Union with the Risen Savior, Col. 4: 1-4.

To be "risen with Christ" is to be identified with Him in His death and resurrection as our Redeemer. Paul refers to Jesus' victory in Rom. 6 when he says "knowing that Christ, being raised from the dead, dieth no more; death hath no more dominion over him" (v. 9). We share that victory when we yield to Christ. But there is a great deal involved. Partaking of the resurrection victory of Christ means that we turn from sin, from trust in the carnal life, from all things displeasing to God in order to live wholly in the fellowship of Jesus (Rom. 6: 12, 13, 19).

"Christ sitteth on the right hand of God" is the seal of our redemption. He is there as the representative man (1 Cor. 15:45-47). In that holy office, He is the forerunner (Jno. 13:36; 14:6). His followers go in the direction He took and aim for the goal at which He arrived (Heb. 12:2). This gives guidance to life and service. It is impossible to go astray when we live always under this rule (2 Pet. 1:4-11). There will be no difficulty in setting our "affections on things above," if such is the case. What are those "things"? They are worship, obedience, holiness and righteousness, service to God, eternal living, glorious being. If we have these, the world will not be able to draw us away from Christ.

When Christ appears in glory at His second coming (Rev. 19:11-16) we shall also appear with Him (1 Thes. 4:13-18; 1 Jno. 3:1-3; Rev. 20:4-6). This expectation has its responsibility. If we are to have eternal glory we must live for it now in lives of Christian purity, purpose and obedience to Christ (Jno. 14:21-23).

II. Grace in the Heart, 12-17. "Put on." Yes, but before they can do that, many will have to put off. One cannot wear holiness and worldliness, bad habits and cruel tempers. They never dwell together.

her. If we are to emulate Christ in being merciful, kind, humble, meek and longsuffering we must cease their evil counterpart. Cultivate the good, in the Holy Spirit, and it will grow beautifully and graciously. Study to be forbearing and forgiving in matters of personal quarrels (v. 14). This pleases Christ. A vengeful spirit never honors the Christian life. The Saviour forgave His enemies (Luke 23: 34). We are to win our enemies by our love to them (Rom. 12: 20, 21). The peace of God is to rule in our hearts. We not only have peace with God (Rom. 5, 1) but happy is the one whose heart is garrisoned with God's peace (Phil. 4, 5-7). If such is the case we can be "thankful" (v. 15); that is, the heart will be filled with thankfulness and praise (Eph. 5, 18, 19). Added to these virtues is this, that we shall let the "word of Christ dwell in us richly" in all wisdom. If such be done then the grace of God will indeed enrich us in spiritual power, wisdom and good living. All is crowned with the summary in v. 17. If all is done in the name of the Lord Jesus, then life will be at its best, here and now, and will have the promise of a glorious life in the world beyond (1 Tim. 4, 8).

III. The Possession of the Lord Jesus, 1 Jno. 5: 11-12.

"He that hath the Son hath life." This is the key word of this passage. It is the supreme as it is the indispensable test of a Christian. It is God's mark upon a living soul. Whatever else we cannot see in a man, if a simple trust in Jesus is discernible, he cannot be received as a brother beloved. The possession of the Lord Jesus becomes a clear evidence of life, because He is the source, the fountain, the nourishment of life. While the branch is vitally in the stem of a tree, if the tree be alive, it will have life. And every Christian believer knows that CHRIST is alive—once and for evermore. In another aspect of this great and glorious truth, having the Son is not only a source of life, but the result of life. When a man receives Jesus into his soul, his faith is a sure indicator of a spiritual and mysterious force within him, in the power of which he is able to receive the Lord, which is the highest possession possible to man. But note that this means something very much more than to possess an intellectual knowledge of Him. It is something more than to admire His character, and to glory in His atoning work. It is to possess His disposition, to have His spirit. And

this possession involves the highest life. Eternal life, in this connection, does not mean eternal existence, merely, but eternal goodness; and eternal goodness is the paradise of the soul (Heb. 10: 14, 19-22).

To possess Christ is to attain a life of supremacy. It means to be, in the highest sense, a king. It means moreover to be possessed by self-oblivious devotion. "Not my will, but Thine be done." It should be observed here, that no man is named specifically in this great passage. "He that hath the Son hath life." God Almighty, when He speaks from the throne of revelation, speaks to all mankind. He does not by His Word, lay hold on the local, the conventional, the chronological, the transitory in man. Mark the decisive grandeur of this: for it intimates, a connection between our nature and our condition hereafter. Possession of Christ now is possession for ever (Jno. 3:36). He who has lived on earth 1900 years ago, died for our sins, rose again from the dead, ascended as a living Being to make us His eternally (Jno. 10: 28-30; Rom. 8: 35-39).

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