

## The Bible Class.

### *Notes on Last Month's Subject.*

XXIX.—THE JOY OF GOD'S PEOPLE.—*New Testament.*

AMONGST the causes or subjects of joy given in this, the final work of the Bible Students' Class, we get some that would only be accounted so by a Christian.

We are told to rejoice—

When reviled.

When persecuted.

When spoken against falsely.

When falling into various trials.

When brought low from a high station.

When partaking of Christ's sufferings.

Not only do we get these presented as subjects of joy; but, in the second division we get some as positively giving us occasion for rejoicing.

The apostles rejoiced when they suffered shame.

Paul rejoiced in suffering for the Colossians.

The Hebrews took joyfully the spoiling of their goods.

There must be some very definite reason why Christians rejoice in shame and suffering. The devotion of heart that can enable them to do so must be a very real power—the coming glory a very present hope.

Persecutions are common still, but are not of a character to bring their victims into world-wide notoriety of such form as was the case in the martyrdoms of old. They are of a constant and often petty nature, and are directed rather to break the spirit than to take away the life.

But those whose spirits are already broken may well endure them, for Christ's sake. It is true they are none the less real because they are not blazoned abroad, but Christ too is a very great reality in the recesses of a believer's heart; and the call now is "Having done all, to stand," and stand fast. Nay more: our subject teaches us that trials and troubles are not only not to be allowed to overwhelm us, but we are to overcome them, and to rejoice in them. Oh, what murmurers we are! and how little do we rejoice in what we called to suffer for Christ's sake.

The subject, then, teaches us that trial and suffering, when endured for Christ, are distinct occasions for joy.

But we have another occasion that frequently occurs. It is "in the Lord." At first sight it appears much easier than the other; and yet really to rejoice in the Lord requires to have the heart in real communion with Him, and the soul enjoying Himself: a condition in which many dear Christians are but seldom found.

Another thing that strikes us is the unselfish character of Paul's joy: in every case it really is for others. What an example for us!

Let us at least, then, gather up from our last subject these thoughts: that our joy is to be *unselfish*, that we are to rejoice *in the Lord* continually, and that we are to joy in *tribulation* also.

May God make us all more joyful believers, especially in these three ways, and the world will then take knowledge of us, that we have "been with Jesus."

---

## Bible Queries.

### *New Queries, Nos. 444-460.*

Q. 444. (1). In what manner did Hymenæus and Alexander blaspheme? (2). Can any one be guilty of blasphemy against the Holy Ghost? If so, are these the ones spoken of in 2 Tim. iii. 2? E. L.

A. (1) We do not know. (2) We should think so. Not specifically.

Q. 445. Explain 1 Tim. v. 24.

A. See B. S. for November: Q. 443, p. 372.

Q. 446. What is the "destruction and perdition" spoken of in 1 Tim. vi. 9? E. L.

A. Destruction both here and hereafter.

Q. 447. How is the expression "the chariot of Israel and the horsemen thereof" (2 Kings ii. 12) to be understood? M. P. L.

A. To signify that Elisha did actually see the manner of Elijah's rapture: hence his blessing.

Q. 448. What is the meaning of "blood" in Deut. xvii. 8? M. P. L.

A. As to which of two should die.

Q. 449. Are the angels or the stars meant by the "host of heaven"? (Neh. ix. 6). Z.

A. Probably the former, here; seeing "the heaven of heavens" is named.

Q. 450. How could Samson's taking a wife from the Philistines be "of the Lord"? Was he not directly uniting himself to God's enemies? Z.

A. When it says it was "of the Lord," it simply means that God overruled it for the deliverance of Israel; not that the marriage was sanctioned by Him.

Q. 451. Is there any allusion in scripture to the prophecy of Enoch, other than Jude 14? F. J.

A. No.

Q. 452. Does the "vocation" (Eph. iv. 1) refer to the closing verses of chap. ii., or to the verses that succeed in chap. iv.? H. F.

A. To the former.

Q. 453. Eph. v. 18.—Is literal wine meant here, or is the expression typical, as in other passages, of earthly joys? E. C.

A. Literal wine no doubt is included, though the passage may well be applied spiritually.

Q. 454. What is the principal teaching of Eph. ii.?—that Jew and Gentile are united together, or that all believers are united to Christ? E. C.

A. Rather the former.

Q. 455. We sometimes read of the death of Christ, and sometimes of the cross of Christ. Is there any distinction? E. C.

A. Yes. The former is used in connection with the atoning side of His work; the latter with its separating power.

Q. 456. What was the condition of Nicodemus before he came to the Lord? Was he a quickened soul or not? R. D.

A. We should think that conscience *had* begun to work by the Spirit in his soul.

Q. 457. Which is the principal object in discipline?—to restore the one who has sinned, or to clear the Lord's name? R. D.

A. The second is the principal object; the first is secondary, though not to be lost sight of. Moreover, in point of time, the second necessarily has the precedence.

Q. 458. Explain 2 Tim. i. 16—18. Does not the passage seem to sanction prayer for those who are dead? S. L.

A. We know no proof that Onesiphorus was dead at the time.

Q. 459. (2 Tim. iv. 14). Do you think the apostle refers to some injury to himself personally, or to some hindrance thrown in his way as the servant of the Lord? S. L.

A. From Ver. 15 we should say most probably the latter.

Q. 460. (2 Tim. iv. 16). Does the apostle here refer to his first answer at Rome, and have we any scripture speaking more definitely of the occasion?

A. Yes. See Philipians i.

---

## *Notes on Former Queries.*

---

Q. 389.—(Luke xv. 25.) It has, I think, been overlooked that of Noah and his sons—Gen. ix. 1, 2, 3—“the Gentile world” constitute the elder son. “All that I have is thine” is clearly demonstrated in these verses; and although scattered at the tower of Babel, “the gifts and calling of God are without repentance.” God gave to Abraham and his seed a portion—the land of Canaan: in the fullest sense of the word they “wasted their substance in riotous living”; they will yet come back to the Father’s house, and He will receive them joyfully. A. E.

---

## Expository and Practical.

### *Bible Conversations.*

Communications received from E. M. B.—Yod.—Nemie.  
C. H. P.—G. K. B.—Edo.—T. H.

#### ROMANS XV.

E. M. B.—The following main points are all touched on in this chapter.—

God of patience and consolation,	...	Verse 5
God of hope,	... ..	” 13
God of peace,	... ..	” 33
Example of Christ,	... ..	” 3
Ministry of Christ,	... ..	” 8
Gospel of Christ,	... ..	” 19

Power of the Holy Ghost,	...	...	Verse	13
Sanctified by the Holy Ghost	...	...	„	16
Love of the Holy Ghost,	...	...	„	30
The glory of God,	..	...	„	7
The truth of God,	...	...	„	8
The mercy of God,	...	...	„	9
The grace of God,	...	...	„	15
The will of God,	...	...	„	32
We are to help others,	...	...	„	1
„ Please others,	...	...	„	2
„ Receive others	...	...	„	7
„ Admonish others,	...	...	„	14
„ Minister to others,	...	...	„	27
„ Pray for others,	...	...	„	30
„ Be filled with joy and peace	...	...	„	13
„ „ Goodness	...	...	„	14
„ „ Knowledge,	...	...	„	14
„ „ Blessing,	...	...	„	29

T. H.—The apostle here, in the first verse, I think means those that are strong in faith should bear with the weak; we that profess to be the Saviour's followers must not please ourselves in all things.

G. K. B.—Verse 1. The apostle identifies himself with the strong, but maintains the claims of conscience in the weakest of the saints. He put them in direct responsibility to Christ as Lord, and in view of the judgment-seat.

C. H. P.—Verse 1. In what way could any Christian say: “We that are strong,” or “spiritual” (Gal. vi. 1.)?

Ed.—It must be read in connection with the previous chapter.

Yod.—How eminently practical Paul is in these latter chapters. He has been teaching them the wonderful and eternal basis on which their faith is founded, and now he wants the practical outcome. What a lesson for us! We hear of

great and marvellous truths from God's word ; we assent to them ; probably we praise God for the gift. But the great thing is to embody them in our daily lives, making them the motive powers of our every action. This is one of the great purposes for which they are revealed.

E. M. B.—Verses 2, 3. There is nothing taught or commanded of God which is not presented to the conscience in immediate connection with the person of Christ. We are called to learn Him, that the mind which was in Him may be also in us.

G. K. B.—Verse 2. Love is better than knowledge, seeking not its own things, but those of others.

Edo.—Verse 2. How often "let" occurs in the New Testament. Does it not imply hindering on our part? Christ will work in us, but we must "let" and not hinder His work.

G. K. B.—Ver. 3. Such was the perfection of devoted love in Christ. The zeal of His Father's house ate Him up, and as the image of the invisible God, He bore the brunt of all that touched God.

T. H.—All things that were written which the apostle refers in ver. 4, were for our learning, i.e. instruction, comfort or exhortation.

Edo.—Verse 5. What two lovely titles of Christ we have in our chapters this month. "God of patience," and xvi. 20, "God of peace." God has "all might unto all patience" to give us, let us ask and expect more. Col. i. 11.

G. K. B.—Verses 5, 6. If Christ Jesus engages the thoughts and mind of each, there will be the same mind. To have no other motive or object but Christ, this alone glorifies God.

Nemie.—Verse 5, God of patience and consolation ; verse 13, God of hope ; verse 33, God of peace. In Romans v. 1, we have peace of conscience through faith in Christ, verse 4, patience, then hope, and these in exercise produce peace of

mind and heart as in verse 5. They all spring from God, and rebound, as it were, towards Him. Thus He is God of patience, God of hope, God of peace.

Yod.—It is often forgotten that we can glorify God in everything. Now the Lord Jesus perfectly glorified His Father while upon earth, John xvii. And how did he do it? Not only on special occasion in displaying divine power, but a close study of the gospels will reveal glory at each step. So Paul here prays that after his example we may glorify the Father in our actions one towards another, that is to say in our every-day life and walk.

T. H.—Please explain verse 8, “Christ as a minister of the Circumcision.”

Ed.—It refers to our Lord’s Jewish position contrasted here with Paul’s ministry to the Gentiles.

G. K. B.—Verses 8—12. The Psalms, the law and the Prophets bore concurrent witness to that mercy towards Gentiles which the Jew found it so hard to allow. The first citation is general, the second joins them in gladness with Israel, the third asserts the universality of the nations praise, and the fourth speaks distinctly of Messiah’s ruling Gentiles, and of their hope founded on Him.

C. P. H.—Verse 12. Why is Christ sometimes called the “Root of Jesse,” and sometimes the “Root of David”?

Ed.—We do not know any particular reason.

T. H.—What beautiful inspiring words are contained in ver. 13: there is a depth of spiritual meaning which the believer alone can realize (Eph. i. 13, 14. Rom. viii. 34).—What a power the christian can be made to enjoy when in friendship with God.

C. H. P.—Verses 13, 24. How little we come up to what these verses speak of; we seem to rest satisfied with a condition so far short of God’s intentions for us. Should we not be a very bright testimony to those around if we were “filled with

all joy and peace in believing," "filled with all knowledge"? we often get the word "full" in Scripture, connected with what the Lord Jesus was, and what we ought to be; do we not?

"Jesus being full of the Holy Ghost, Luke iv. i.

Stephen was "filled with the Holy Ghost," Acts ii. 4.

Stephen was "full of faith and of the Holy Ghost," Acts vi. 5, and vii. 55: "full of faith and power" Acts vi. 8.

Barnabas was "full of the Holy Ghost and of faith," Acts xi. 24.

Believers are said to "rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory." 1 Peter i. 8.

Nemie.—How are we to understand the expression in verse 14, "full of goodness, filled with all knowledge"? Surely not in a literal and absolute sense?

Ed.—Of course it means only up to their measure.

Nemie.—Verse 16. What is meant by the "offering up of the Gentiles"? Is it the ascription of glory to God in verse 9. Praise and rejoicing, 10—12.

Ed.—See Num. viii. 11. It refers to their conversion and being brought to God.

G. K. B.—V. 18-21. The apostle's principle was to preach Christ where His name was unknown according to the word of Jehovah in Isaiah lii. 15.

T. H.—We find in verse 20, that the apostle was very zealous in preaching the Word. We learn that he was very anxious to go to places where the word had not been preached, *showing his great missionary spirit: what a beautiful example, how like the spirit of his Master.*

Edo.—Rom. xv. 20. Why would not Paul preach upon another man's foundation?

Ed.—See 2 Cor. x. 13—16.

C. H. P.—Verses 20, 21. Ought not these verses to lead the Lords' servants to work among the heathen more than they do?

T. H.—Please explain verse 21.

Ed.—It refers to the conversion of the Gentiles.

C. H. P.—Verse 24. Is it known when Paul went to Spain?

Ed.—No.

T. H.—The apostle here in 27th ver. speaks of the Gentiles who were made partakers of the Gospel that they should minister carnal things, i.e. worldly goods.

G. K. B.—The knowledge of Christ, whilst it fills the soul with happiness, knits us up with all that all His, and enhances in our eyes the value of their prayers, always effectual on the part of godly men of all ages.

T. H.—The apostle in ver. 30, admonishes to strive together and unite in earnest prayer—to be of one mind: he asks them to pray to God for him.

G. K. B.—“That I may be refreshed with you,” (not merely you by me).

### ROMANS XVI.

C. H. P.—How beautifully this chapter shows what women can do for the Lord without going out of their proper places.

E. M. B.—The following things are said to be “of God” in this Epistle:—

The Gospel of God, i. 1 ; xv. 16.	The judgment of God i. 32; xi. 33
„ Son „ i. 4.	„ „ ii. 2, 3, 5.
„ Beloved „ i. 7.	„ goodness „ ii. 4 ; xi. 22,
„ will „ i. 10; xii. 2; xv. 32	„ praise „ ii. 29.
„ power „ i. 16.	„ oracles „ iii. 2.
„ glory „ i. 23; iii. 23; v. 2;	„ faith „ iii. 3.
xv. 7.	„ fear „ iii. 18.
„ righteousness i. 17 ; iii. 5,	„ forbearance iii. 25.
21, 22 ; x. 3.	„ promise „ iv. 20.
„ wrath of God i. 18.	„ love „ v. 5 ; viii. 39.
„ truth „ i. 25 ; iii. 7;	„ grace „ v. 15.
xv. 8.	„ gift „ vi. 23.
„ haters „ i. 30.	

## BIBLE CONVERSATIONS.

403

The law of God	vii. 22, 25.	The Gifts of God	xi. 29.
	viii. 7.	„ calling „	xi. 29.
„ Spirit „	viii. 9, 15 ;	„ wisdom „	xi. 33.
	xv. 19.	„ knowledge	xi. 33.
„ sons „	viii. 14, 19 ;	„ ways „	xi. 34.
„ children „	viii. 16, 21.	„ mind „	xi. 33.
	ix. 8, 26.	„ mercies „	xii. 1.
The heirs „	viii. 17	„ power „	xiii. 1.
„ elect „	viii. 33.	„ ordinance	xiii. 2.
„ purpose „	ix. 11.	minister of God	xiii. 4.
„ word „	x. 17.	kingdom „	xiv. 7.
„ answer „	xi. 4.	work „	xiv. 20.
„ severity „	xi. 22.	commandment	xvi. 26.

Does not this chapter afford an illustration of the doctrine of future reward and loss in the coming kingdom? Some were to be honoured especially, because of their more abundant labors and more diligent devotedness, others were noted by no mark of personal approbation, while saluted equally in the love of Christ, as it will doubtless be in the coming day. The delicate adjustment of praise which did not confound labouring in the Lord with labouring much in the Lord, and which while greeting all in love sets some conspicuously in the light, that all might see and approve with joy appears instructive on this point. It is interesting to notice how assiduously the apostle labours to turn the hearts of the several saints to each other. Nothing is more easily deranged than Christian fellowship. The moment the principle of esteeming others more highly than self is practically lost sight of, the main-spring of happy fellowship is gone.

Nemie.—Is this the same mystery referred to in xi. 25? The gathering in of Jews and Gentiles into one body in Christ Jesus as in Eph. iii. 3—9. Which are the “Scriptures of the prophets” by which it is to be “made known to all nations?”

Ed.—Yes. The Scriptures of the prophets are the Old Testament prophets.

T. H.—Verse 18. Cenchrea near Corinth, Phebe—servant—deaconess: the apostle does not forget his helpers in the Lord, he here mentions their names.

Edo.—Verses 3, 9. “Helpers,” something we can all be. In 1 Cor. xii. 28, the little word “helps” is such a comfort placed as it is among the higher offices, it is a niche the weakest child can fill. “For the Lord,” “for Christ,” occurs eleven times in this 16th chapter. Verse 12, Labouring in the Lord, glorious results must follow.

T. H.—Verse 4: he still pays high tribute of love to those who suffered for the cause of Jesus: the word “laid down” &c. as on the block, i.e. hazarded their lives probably in the affairs Acts xviii. 6. 12.

G. K. B.—The trade of tent maker, if pursued in Rome, would naturally furnish him with a large room where not a few might assemble, as for a considerable time after this Christians were in the habit of so meeting. Not Achaia but Asia (R. V.) The household of Stephanas were the firstfruits there, see 1 Cor. xvi. 16.

T. H.—Verse 6. Mary who laboured much is commended as well as many others, the apostle is giving a record of the names of those who did great service to the Church of God.

C. H. P.—Verse 13. Does this verse mean that Rufus' Mother was like a mother to the Apostle Paul?

T. H.—Verse 16 “Holy kiss” a common salutation on the cheek in the east, (Luke xxii. 47, 48) the primitive Christians practised in their assemblies. We may learn how Christians should love one another.

Yod.—Verse 25. From this verse we get a good idea of the use of the word “mystery,” in the New Testament. It is not used so much to mean (as we use it now) anything dark, hard to be understood, misty, shadowy, vague, &c., but rather that which has hitherto been kept secret. See 1 Cor. xv. 51, where Paul says “Behold I shew you a mystery.” He was about to

tell them something that had never been known, i.e., the resurrection and catching up at the coming of the Lord for His saints. But here Paul is speaking of the truths relating to the church which were specially revealed to him, see Eph. iii. 3, 4, 9; v. 32.

T. H.—Verse 17 there is a caution with regard to divisions, offences and scandals, the apostle says they are to be avoided.

T. H.—Explain verse 19. “For now obedience is come abroad unto all men,” etc.

T. H.—Verse 20, the apostle here gives a lovely assurance that God will defeat the purposes of Satan : soon the reward of immortality will be given to the faithful. “Let no man take your crown.”

---

## *Summer and Winter.*

“COMMUNE with your own heart upon your bed and be still.” (Ps. iv. 4.) What a blessed word! We lose considerably, both in reading and hearing, from not conferring with our own hearts upon the truth we may have received, or at the time felt to be applicable to us.

The ant is set before us as an example of one who prepares for the winter. Now we find that God provides us with provisions for some dreary time that is coming; but instead of being like the ant, when the winter comes, want comes on us like an armed man (Prov. vi. 11); it is not only winter, but we have no food, and all because we only enjoyed ourselves (which sleep expresses) during the summer. Nothing reveals this to us, if we at all judge ourselves, so much as the great difference between us in summer and in winter; in the former we seem to enjoy everything, we could almost imitate the lark; but when winter, the frost and pitiless blast supervene, all the supposed spiritual joy of the summer's day is gone, and we can talk and think only of the inclemency of

the air which surrounds us. This painful discrepancy or exposure of our want would not occur if we really had stored provisions, suited for the exigence to which we are exposed. The apostle could say that he had learned in whatsoever state he was therewith to be content; he knew how to be abased and how to abound; he could do all things through Christ who strengthened him. (See Phil. iv. 11—13.) I believe the soul ought to say, when it takes in any truth, "Some day I shall want it, now let me see how it fits me, and whether I have it from God; in a word, that I have made it as much my own as the money in my purse—as the strength by which I can do anything, or any other acquisition of which I have real possession." Better a soul should feel how unprovided he is for winter, than that he should lie down and try to slumber over it. It is very hopeful when a soul feels how it has neglected to provide for the day of trial; that if ever a summer again occurs he will not, through God's grace, fail to make use of it.

Receiving truth without pondering or self-judgment, only leaves the soul, in the end, more barren; simply for this reason, that you weaken your appreciation of anything if you find that it only charmed you, but had no place of abiding use or benefit to you.

How happy one might be, pondering alone the thoughts and ways of our Lord. Stormy days will come; but if we are diligent now we shall only prove, in those dreary times, the truth and excellence of His counsels. A clean animal must ruminant; feeding well will not do, the other must follow.

---

### *Our Service.*

"No service by itself is small  
Or great, though earth it fill;  
But that is small that seeks its own,  
And great—that seeks God's will."

DEAR Reader, have we brought our life service whatever it be to this test? I take it for granted we are all engaged in *some* service for our beloved Lord. But is He our object in it? Is it to

us as it wasto Him, our great delight to seek to do God's will? Oh! how happy that service when the servant can truly say "It was begun, and is carried on in much prayer, and my only desire in it is to do God's will." Happier still if he can add, "And I fully believe it is the work he would have me to do, and that He Himself has given me."

What can a servant wish for more than to do the will of a Master whose loving-kindness is to him better than life. And oh! dear reader, if Christ is not this to us, what is He? Yes, let us ask ourselves steadily the question, What is Christ to me? Is He or is He not the dearest object of my heart? If He is not our service must be more or less out of gear. If He be, and I have learnt to love Him more than that much loved idol, Self, then to do His will is my sweetest task on earth, as it will be my joyful occupation in heaven. We have need from time to time thus to challenge ourselves. Of course if living as we should be, in daily communion with Christ, the answer that He is first rises as soon as the question is asked. But if our communion is intermittant and our love cold it may be some time before we can look up and say, Yes, thank God though my heart is often cold, yet Christ is first. Oh! may Christ be more and more to each of us.

---

## *To all Bible Students,*

*And especially the Readers of these Pages.*

---

**WE** take the present opportunity of thanking the Members of the Bible Students' Class for their patient continuance in their monthly task of searching God's word, the results of which have been of such interest and profit to our whole circle of readers.

There can be no manner of doubt on the minds of any who study the current of present thought that all authority is being

gradually but surely rejected by the masses, and that the few who recognize the voice of God speaking through His word are standing out more and more distinctly from the rest. Some Christians think they will escape the difficulty of taking sides, by accepting all they consider vital, the Gospels as well as the Epistles, and maintaining at any rate a reserved attitude towards the Old Testament scriptures.

To do this is to give up the whole point, nay it is more, it is to impugn the veracity of Christ Himself. For in a remarkable manner which we have already pointed out in these pages He has as it were gone out of His way, to set the stamp of His authority upon the Old Testament Scriptures, and more especially upon many parts which are disputed. To suppose that our Lord was imposed on by mere Jewish tradition, or to think that, knowing the falsehood of the narrative, He yet treated it as true, is alike impossible.

It is vain therefore to attempt to believe in half a Bible. It must be all or none. Every part is so interwoven with the other, and the whole is so harmonious that to reject any part would be like cutting a segment out of a perfect circle.

On the other hand let us not be afraid to confess that there is much we may not understand. The first point is to get a good hold and a clear understanding of, and a warm love towards HIM of whom all Scripture is full. And then with the guidance of His Spirit reverently to study the word.

Those who accept the word of God as the sole authority on Divine things, cannot surely have much to separate them, and in these evil days it is well for such to draw as closely as possible together so as to present a solid front to the ever advancing foe. May God enable many a reader of these pages to become a valiant soldier for the truth, laying on the whole armour of God and being able, having done all "to stand."