

Sabbath School Department.

[From the Christian Helper.]

International Bible Lessons.

Lesson XV.—March 10.

PROSPERITY RESTORED.

Job. 42: 1-10.

GOLDEN TEXT.—Behold we count them happy who endure. James 5: 11.

Exposition.

2. I know. Job now knew God as he had never known Him before. We have seen the preparations for this knowledge. First came affliction, filling him with amazement, and disturbing his theories. Next came painful trials in the dark; Job trying to understand God's ways with him; and lastly God's revelation of Himself, satisfying Job, while showing that it was not necessary for him to understand, only to trust. *Thou canst do everything. No thought can be withheld.*—omnipotence. Job recognizes anew these two attributes. The Almighty God had then seen fit to permit Job's trial.

3. Job refers to the words of God (ch. 38: 3) and applies them to himself. "Therefore, I, because I see now that I was, as that reproof limited, without true knowledge, I uttered, I am not the only man that ever spoke rashly about things he understood not, things too wonderful for him. But not every man makes a confession so frank and humble as this."

4. An humble petition. Contrast Job's attitude towards God here, with that in the 13th chapter. *I will demand of Thee*, rather than *Thou shalt demand of me*. Job went asking humbly now. The verse contains a request that God would speak to him further. Job wishes to learn of God more forward, and not to rely on his own judgment, or depend on such enlightenment as his friends could give him.

5. *I have heard of Thee, etc.* The faith of Job and his knowledge, had received sudden illumination. His former knowledge had been comparatively obscure. It was as if he had only known God by hearing, and had now met Him face to face. He now really knew something of God's ways, and he could build a tower of faith heaven-high upon that foundation of sure knowledge. All faith must have knowledge for its foundation.

6. *Wherefore I abhor myself.* In proportion as we truly know God, we are humble. By revealing Himself to Job, God has changed the despairing bitterness of this man into grateful humility. *Repent.* "The word translated, repent, signifies two contrary things in Scripture; first, to grieve; secondly, to comfort, or to take comfort. Sorrow and comfort meet in repentance. To repent is to change both the mind and way from a bad to a good mind, and from a painful to a pleasant and delightful way."—Caryl. *Dust and ashes.* The mourners sat down in ashes, and sprinkled them over his head and upon his garments. Instead of mourning over his sorrows, Job now laments his sinfulness. He is not guilty of the charges his friends have brought against him, but in the presence of the pure and holy God, he sees distinctly his own unworthiness. His wonder hereafter would be, that God had bereft him of children, wealth and health, but that God should ever give him good gifts to so unworthy a one.

7. "After all that was sinful in his (Job's) speeches is blotted out by repentance, there remains only the truth of his innocence, which God Himself testifies to him; and the truth of his holding fast to God in the hot battle of temptation, by which, without his knowing it, he has frustrated the designs of Satan."—Delitzsch. Eliphaz seems to have led in the discourse against Job, and is specially named. Eliphaz receives no rebuke; he spoke conscientiously, and was most anxious to convince Job of God's mercy and justice in afflicting, and though he does not get at the whole truth concerning God's ways, still the spirit he has shown has been good.

The three friends do not seem to have shown any regret for their misjudgment both of God and of His servant Job. Perhaps they were complacently ignorant that they had done wrong, and were therefore amazed to have God's rebuke. The three friends were to bring a sacrifice and Job was to pray for them—Job, the man whom they regarded as condemned of God. They were thus taught that their sin required an atonement and an intercessor, and they were obliged to overcome their pride, and apply to the man they despised for intercession with God. Perhaps the atonement and intercession of Him who "was despised and rejected of men" was thus dimly suggested to their minds.

8. The three friends, though they had been so obtuse in regard to their own sin, yet did not hesitate about obeying the direct command of God when unmistakably addressed to them. But their obtuseness was sin. The beam was in their eye when they sought to cast the mote out of Job's eye. If they had been serving God faithfully and fully they would have been more sensitive to their own faults. Self-complacency is a weed that withers in the presence of God.

9. Turned the captivity. "A saying which early became proverbial among the Israelites, whose whole national history was a series of deliverances; but it may have been one of very early origin, and familiar to other kindred races."—Cook. *When he prayed for his friends.* "As though that act, the crown and consummation of goodness, was the immediate cause of his reward."—Cook. Beautiful is charity in the eye of God. Love to our fellow-men is closely connected with love to God. It is in truth, part of it. *Twice as much.* All his substance was doubled exactly (compare Job 1: 3 and Job 42: 12). His children, however, numbered the same as before. His first children were not lost; they were still his, and now that as many more were given him, his possessions in that respect were also doubled.

Remarks.

1. In this story, we see that Satan was foiled. Job did not cast away his allegiance to God, though tried severely. And when the history of each child of God is told, it will be the same; each one will be a trophy of grace. And when the history of the world is told, it will still be the same. Whatever the appearance of things may be now, the end will be; Satan foiled, Christ and His church triumphant.

2. Perhaps Job's redoubled prosperity was necessary at that time to prove to all men God's delight in Job; but it is spiritual, and not temporal blessings that are the measure of God's favour to us.

3. It is a good thing to pray for others; our own souls are then abundantly watered. Nothing is a greater help to a kindly, charitable disposition towards any one than to pray for him.

The Cross.

Quaint though the construction be of the following poem, yet never has the story been told with more truthful simplicity:

Blest they who seek,
While in their youth,
With spirit meek,
The way of truth.

To them the sacred Scriptures now display
Christ as the only true and living way;
His precious blood on Calvary was given;
To make them heirs of endless bliss in heaven,
And e'en on earth the child of God can trace
The glorious blessings of his Saviour's grace.

For them he bore
His Father's frown;
For them he wore
The Thorny crown;
Nailed to the cross,
Endured its pain.
That his life's loss
Might be their gain.
Then haste to choose
The better part,
Nor e'en dare refuse
The Lord thine heart,
Lest he declare,
"I know you not,"
And deep despair
Should be your lot.

Now look to Jesus who on Calvary died,
And trust on him who there was crucified.

"Oh that I Had a Bigger Boat."

The Becton boatman, who was the first to launch out on the dark water of the Thames, at the cry of hundreds of drowning men and women of the "Princess Alice," said, "Oh that I had a bigger boat." This good man found a copious harvest of human beings, easily gathered in a moment to the capacity of his boat. And seeing how soon he had gathered in all he could accommodate, and hundreds still struggling—and the vast majority of them struggling in vain—he exclaimed, "Oh that I had a bigger boat! I could save so many more!"

In a higher and nobler sense, this is the cry of all who are earnestly laboring to save souls from the overwhelming waters of sin and unbelief—Oh, for more and larger opportunities of doing good; Oh for a bigger boat to rescue the perishing; to rescue more drunkards, more blasphemers, more sinners from the depths of woe in which they are engulfed! For as just in proportion to the number of boats and ropes and safety belts and life buoys and other helps sent out, the more were saved from a watery grave, so in the mission work, the more agencies employed the more souls are rescued for Christ.—*Hand and Heart.*

Henry Martyn's Prayer.

On the occasion when the British flag was hoisted on the Dutch fort of the Cape, on the 10th January, 1806, Henry Martyn, the noble missionary, on his way to India, being present, offered up the following prayer: "That the capture of the Cape might be ordered to the advancement of Christ's kingdom, and that England, while she sent the thunder of her arms to the distant regions of the globe, might not remain proud and ungodly at home, but might show herself great indeed, by sending forth the ministers of her Church to diffuse the Gospel of peace." Subsequently, by Dr. Moffat, and many others, the Gospel has been widely preached in South Africa.

Faraday's Lost Cup.

This great chemist one day knocked into a jar of acid a little silver cup. It disappeared, was eaten up by the acid, and could not be found. The question came up whether it could ever be found. One said he could find it, another said it was held in solution and there was no possibility of finding it. The great chemist came in and put some chemical into the jar, and in a moment every particle of the silver was precipitated to the bottom. He lifted out a shapeless mass, sent it to the silversmith, and the cup was restored. If Faraday could separate that silver from amid the acid and recover his cup, we

may surely believe God can restore our sleeping and scattered remains from amid the dust of the earth.

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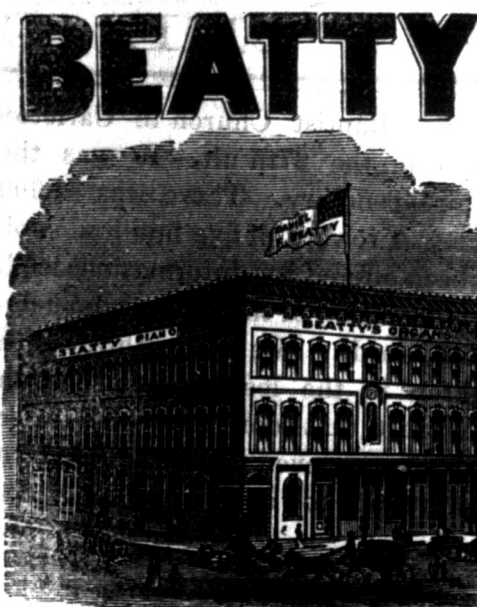
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