

suggested become its habit? Does not such a habit invariably lead to a sense of the Divine presence that assures of safety, sustenance, and strength under all earthly circumstances?

Notice now how easy and natural the transition from "I" and "my" to "ye" and "your." From the singular to the plural! And see how full and complete the closing statement of our section for study—"God is a refuge for us." Mark the "us." From his own personal experience of the sufficiency of God he draws what inference? Is he alone needy? Or are there others in similar straits? Whose individual position is unique? Is not the whole race of humanity one universal brotherhood of peril? This is worth pondering. Many poor souls in the depths of their sorrow feel absolutely solitary. Many whose way is beclouded, act and speak as if every other person's sky was ever sunny. What an error! Does the every human soul have to face its foes and pass through heart-breaking trials? Whom does the enemy leave long in unmolested peace and quiet? And if God is sufficient for one, will He not be so for all? Or is God partial? Has He any favorites? Make the appeal, "Ye people." Review biography, survey the whole historic past. Does it not all testify to the universal cry for God because of a common need that no human supply can satisfy? Study the force of the phrase "at all times." Does not that suggest that we not only occasionally but constantly we need God? And does it not also mean that there can come no emergency so great, no exigency so sudden, but God is sufficient to ensure our sustenance and safety?

Now comes the concluding appeal. "Trust in Him." "Pour out your hearts before Him." Is not the solution of every vexed problem of human life to be solved thus? Would it not lighten every pathway if the soul were conscious that through all the seeming darkness God shines? Would it not give quick and complete victory in temptation if men but realized the glorious truth that "God is a refuge for us"? Is there any other preventive of distress, pain, loss, disaster or defeat than to "trust in Him at all times"?

If not, preach it, publish it, practise it, that every tried and troubled soul may prove it effective and sing the Psalmist's Song of Trust.

Life Lessons for Me from the Book of Job

To help you study and prepare the Topic for Feb. 14th, by Rev. J. H. McArthur, S.T.D.

How to take up this topic: Let three members of the League be chosen to take different parts, as follows: the first to tell the story of Job's misfortunes; the second to give lessons from Job's experience; and the third to give selected readings from the book.

SUGGESTIONS FOR THE FIRST LEAGUER.

He should tell in his own words the story of Job's trials as narrated in chapters 1 and 2, and of his final prosperity as described in chapter 42.

Outline.—Prologue—Job's vast wealth and true character.

Scene I.—Place (heaven); Persons (God, sons of God, including Satan); Subject (Job's integrity).

Scene II.—Place (earth); Persons (Sabans, Chaldeans, Job's children, messengers, Job); Forces of nature (lightning, wind).

Scene III.—Same as Scene I.

Scene IV.—Place (earth); Persons (Satan, Job, wife).

Scene V.—Place (an ash mound); Persons (Job, and his three friends).

Note.—By Satan is meant the devil or an evil spirit, as is generally supposed. Rather, he is one of the sons of God—one of the angels who had gathered together in counsel. Satan was the official designation of this particular angel. All angels were supposed to have some special work to do in the service of God; and it was the special work of this particular angel to act as a detective, or inspector, or accuser. It was his business to test the integrity of God's people, and to ferret out flaws in their character or conduct. In the prosecution of his work it was necessary for him to go to and fro in the earth, to walk up and down in it (1. 7). In testing Job he was acting in harmony with his office under the direction of God. (See also Ps. 109. 6; Zech. 3. 1, 2).

SUGGESTIONS FOR THE SECOND LEAGUER ON LIFE LESSON'S FROM JOB'S EXPERIENCE.

The first Leaguer has told us what happened to Job; we shall now try to find out what was happening in Job, i.e., his inner experience.

1. His experience of trial, in the loss of his property, his children, his health, through the temptation of his wife, and the suspicion of his friends. His friends came professedly to comfort him, but they only added to his grief; for by their weak of silence, by their averted looks, and afterwards by their spoken words they intimated that these calamities had befallen him because of his sins, perhaps secret sins, known only to himself and God (4. 7). Job was now despised by all, misunderstood by his friends; only his wife believed in his innocence.

The attitude of Job's friends was in keeping with the Jewish theology of the day,—that God always prospers the good man and punishes the wicked man; and that misfortune coming upon a man is an evidence that he has sinned, and must be interpreted as a punishment of the same. His "comforters" therefore thought that Job's sufferings were a sign that he had sinned.

(What do you think of this doctrine? Read Psalm 37. 25. What do you think of the Psalmist's statement? When these words were quoted to a good old woman who had suffered misfortune, she replied by saying that David did not know everything. What do you think of her opinion? What was Christ's view of this doctrine? See Luke 13. 1-5; John 9. 1-3. What was the view of the islanders of Malta? Acts 28. 3, 4.)

2. Job's Experience of Doubt. Is it surprising that Job now passes through a season of doubt? Is doubt ever justifiable? What is your opinion about that? What is your own experience?

(1) Job doubts whether there is a purpose in life or not. He curses the day of his birth (3. 8). Did Job lose his patience?

(2) He doubts the sincerity of his friends. He believes them to be false. While these men were sincere, they were nevertheless mistaken in their explanation of Job's trouble (6. 14, 15). Do serious disputes between men arise as frequently from their misunderstanding each other as from their misdeeds toward each other? What have you observed in this respect? Are we in danger of misjudging our fellows?

(3) He doubted the goodness of God (19. 6). Do not we sometimes complain of our lot, saying that we have more than our fair share of trials? Do you know on the verge of scepticism. Do you know

any great men, or men of less fame, who have at some time been troubled with scepticism? What has been your own experience? Do you know of any person who never had a doubt with reference to their acceptance by God?

3. Job's Experience of Faith. Job still maintained his faith in the presence of God, and in His justice (19. 25, 26); he believes in the value of a just life (23. 10). God reveals Himself to Job with greater clearness. The man who grovels in darkness, sincere, will aid his way to the light. Job's perplexities were not all solved, but he saw God, and that was sufficient (42. 5). Job received twice as much as he had at first. Does this happen in every case? Have we a right to expect it?

SUGGESTIONS FOR THE THIRD LEAGUER.

Let the best reader in the League be chosen for this part. Make careful preparation by reading the following selections over until you catch their spirit and are able to read them with proper expression. Read them in the light of Job's experience as already related. Use, if possible, the Revised Version.

Job's complaint, 3. 1-7, 20-26. Eliphaz's insinuation that Job had sinned, 4. 1-8, 12-17. Job's reply, 6. 1-4, 8-10. Job's desolation, 19. 1-29. The speech of Jehovah, 38. 1-11; 40. 1, 2. Job's reply to Jehovah, 40. 3-5; 42. 5, 6.

FAMILIAR QUOTATIONS FROM THE BOOK OF JOB.

Locate and verify the following from the Book of Job:

The Value of Life.

Skin for skin, yea, all that a man hath will he give for his life.

Job Justifies God.

Naked came I out of my mother's womb, And naked shall I return thither: Jehovah gave, and Jehovah hath taken away;

Blessed be the name of Jehovah.

What? shall we receive good at the hand of God, And shall we not receive evil?

Job's Extremity.

My bone cleaveth to my skin and to my flesh, And I am escaped with the skin of my teeth.

Job's Impression of His Friends.

No doubt but ye are the people, And wisdom shall die with you.

I have heard many such things: Miserable comforters are ye all.

Job's Doubt.

If a man die shall he live again? All the days of my warfare would I wait, Till my release should come.

Job's Hope.

But as for me I know that my Redeemer liveth, And at last he will stand upon the earth.

There he wicked cease from troubling, And there the weary are at rest.

(This last passage in its original meaning referred to the condition of infants that never saw the light.)

Job's Faith.

Though he slay me, yet will I trust him.