

CREDULITY.

The most credulous people we know of are infidels. They condemn a Bible which they have never examined, a religion which they have never tried, and principles which they have never put in practice, on the basis of assertions which they have never verified, and sciences which they have never investigated. They talk of geology which they have never studied, of history which they have never explored, and of heathen books which they cannot read, and they are slightly inclined to regard others as ignorant and idiotic, who are in no sense their inferiors, and in many respects may be more than their equals, who speak that they do know, and testify that which they have proved to be true.

The spirit of conceit and reason is not favourable to research, investigation, or candid judgment. Infidels are not fools, though some of them give people occasion to suppose that they are. Nor are Christians idiots, though some of their acts and words are far from wise. The apostle James says: "Who is a wise man and endued with knowledge among you? let him show out of a good conversation his works with meekness of wisdom." James iii. 13. If the Christian claims this wisdom, it is his duty to show it; if the infidel believes that he is the wise man, let him also prove it by his patience, candour, meekness, and honesty of speech and act.

Whatever infirmities and errors men may have, they are entitled to fair and considerate treatment at each other's hands; and as a rule, we believe true Christians are willing to thus treat men. Nothing is gained on either side by insult, scoffing or abuse. The matters in question are too grave to be thus disposed of; and honest, candid investigation will do much more towards leading men to the knowledge of the truth, than mere assertion, denunciation, and vituperation. He who speaks before he thinks, and thinks before he studies, may be confident, but he is not considerate; he may be intelligent, but he cannot deny that he is credulous. We have never yet met the skeptic who had a fair acquaintance with the Bible, or who could give a fair account of the reasons which an intelligent and well-instructed Christian has for receiving it as a divine revelation. We have met those who, when led to examine the evidences of the truth of Christianity, have renounced their infidelity, and become followers of the Son of God.—*Boston Christian*.

The Boy's Own Paper.

London: The "Leisure Hour" Office. Toronto: Tract Society's Depository.

Attention has been recently called, and that not without reason, to the great injury that is done to the children and youth of the present day by cheap literature of an immoral and vicious kind, specially calculated, by means of illustrations, sensational headings, etc., to attract the class to which it will be most injurious. The most effective way of putting down this evil is by providing cheap literature for the young which will be at the same time attractive and of good moral tendency. Boys, and girls also, must have something to read. Moreover, they must have something that contains pictures and stories of a somewhat lively character. But it is quite possible for stories to be lively and interesting without being bad. Nay, it is quite possible for them to be written in an animated, and even in an amusing style and at the same time to be instructive and improving to the morals. As a good specimen of the class of publications to which we now refer we direct attention to "The Boy's Own Paper," the monthly parts of which can be procured at very small cost at the Depository of the Upper Canada Tract Society, 102 Yonge street, Toronto. The first monthly part is now before us, containing a very large supply of entertaining and instructive reading matter, with a wealth of illustration that will assuredly recommend it to the young folk.

Let your word be your bond. Good credit is a torture to begin with.

BE temperate. Liquor has made more paupers than all other vices combined.

The Sunday School.

INTERNATIONAL LESSONS.

LESSON XIV.

April 6. } SANCTIFIED AFFLICTION. { Job xxviii. 1379. } 14-30.

GOLDEN TEXT.—"My son, despise not thou the chastening of the Lord, nor faint when thou art rebuked of Him."—Heb. xii. 5.

HOME STUDIES.

- M. Job i. 1-22. Job's first great trial.
T. Job ii. 1-13. Job smitten with disease.
W. Job vii. 1-21. Job's complaint.
Th. Job xiv. 1-22. Man full of trouble.
F. Job xxix. 1-25. Former prosperity bemoaned.
S. Job xxviii. 1-33. Sanctified affliction.
S. Heb. xii. 1-29. Parental chastening.

HELPS TO STUDY.

The book of Job is without question the most sublime religious poem in the literature of the world. As Thomas Carlyle says, it is "one of the grandest things ever written with pen. It is our first oldest statement of the never-ending problem—man's destiny and God's way with him here in this earth." Yet most Bible readers very imperfectly understand it.

There are many different opinions as to its age and authorship. The most probable is, that it was written in the age of Solomon. In style, structure and spirit, it is identified with the books of Proverbs and Ecclesiastes, the three forming what is called "The Wisdom Literature." Job himself lived in the days of the Patriarchs. His dwelling was in the land of Uz, in what is now known as the *Hauran*, "that strange, lovely and fertile volcanic region," which stretches down from "Syria to Idumea," and which is to this day claimed by the Arabs as "the land of Job." The whole district is full of sites and ruins connected with his name; while every feature and circumstance in the Poem itself corresponds both to the age and land in which we believe Job lived. The story of his sufferings, and his patience was handed down from patriarchal times through successions of generations, until in the age of Solomon, an inspired poet threw the wonderful narrative into the grand drama which we now possess.

The design of the book is two-fold. The first and primary intention is that which arises out of Satan's challenge, "Doth Job serve God for nought?" chap. i. 9. It is "to prove that God is capable of winning and that man is capable of cherishing, an unselfish and disinterested goodness; that he can serve God for nought, that he can hold fast his confidence in God even when that supreme Friend seems to be turned into his Foe." The other and secondary intention of the book is to prove that "the dark mystery of human life is capable of a happy solution, that the afflictions of the righteous are designed for correction, not for punishment; and that the inequalities of this life are to be redressed in the life to come."

Another most important purpose is subserved by the book which is filled throughout with one importunate complaint that God cannot be seen. It proves that nothing can satisfy the heart except a supernatural revelation. Only when Job sees for himself the God of whom he had before heard, and learns in the light of that revelation how "vile" he is, does he find rest and peace.

Our lesson is taken from the speech of Elihu, who apprehends a part of the truth, and shows one of the reasons why God afflicts men,—to lead them to Himself. It sets forth the discipline, and the restoration.

1. THE DISCIPLINE:—Verses 14-22.

Man lies in darkness and death, but God does not leave him there. He speaketh to him, utters His voice of warning and persuasion, not once, but twice; again and again, in many different ways, by the visible things which show forth the invisible power and Godhead, by the whisperings and reproaches of conscience, by his providences whether joyous or grievous. Yet man perceiveth not. He is so blind, so obtuse, so taken up with self and the world, so unbelieving, so perversely set in his own way. The poet shows us the persistency of the divine warnings. He shows at length two ways in which God speaks to men.

1. *God speaks to man's heart*, vers. 15-18. He wakens his conscience in the silence of the night; in dreams and visions, not such as arise from the impressions of the outer world, but those which come from the depths of the soul itself, God makes Himself known. Gen. xv. 12. Then He openeth the inward ear, which ignorance, pride, prejudice, and unbelief has stopped. He sealeth instruction, that is, He makes it sure. He ratifies and confirms it, as when one affixes a seal. In all this, God's purpose is to withdraw man from his evil purpose, to change his temper and course of life, and to hide pride from him, take away false sense of security and imaginary self-importance and self-sufficiency, in order that He may keep the sinner from rushing on to his own destruction, hold him back from the pit of perdition and from the sword of God's justice.

2. *God speaks to man by pain and sickness*, vers. 19-22. When warnings are ineffectual, the discipline of affliction is added. Man is chastened with pain, and with the unceasing conflict, the hurting and utter unrest of his limbs. He is worn away by disease. His soul draweth near to the grave and his life to the destroyers, the angels of death who forcibly with violence tear forth the souls of the wicked.

God has reasons for the afflictions of men, whether they

are understood or not. One reason is, to drive them in penitence and self-despair to Himself. Sorrow teaches lessons which cannot be learned elsewhere.

God has many ways of speaking to men; but in all His utterances, His own desire and purpose is to save them from sin, and bring them to righteousness and peace.

II. RESTORATION—Vers. 23-30.

God interposes not only to warn, but to save; this deliverance, however, requires a mediator. If there is an Angel, the Angel of Jehovah—Gen. xxii. 11.; xxxii. 24.; xlviii. 15.; Ps. xxiv. 8.; I. ch. lxxiii. 7; the Messenger of the Covenant, as Mediator for him, to interpret God's will, to intercede and redeem, one who among a thousand has no equal, to show unto man His uprightness, that is, the right way by which he may be delivered from sin and death, the way of repentance and faith—then he, that is God, is gracious to him, and the Mediator saith, Deliver him from going down to the pit, for I have found a ransom, an atonement, that which covers, cancels, blots out sin, and saves the sinner. The atonement is God's provision. Thus everywhere throughout the Bible, the ransom for sinners is set forth as the only possible ground of pardon. The penitent is healed, as well as forgiven. He renews, as it were, his youth—2 Kings v. 14; Isaiah xl. 31. He becomes like a child—Matt. xviii. 3; a new man—Eph. iv. 22-24; a new creature in Christ Jesus—Gal. iv. 15. New, like Saul—Acts ix. 11, he shall pray unto God, who will shew him favour, so that the man now seeth God's face, which hitherto has been hidden from him, with joy, not with fear. For God will render unto him his righteousness, that is, will again regard and treat him as a righteous man. But not only does the restored penitent give forth his heart to God, he cannot but tell forth his joy to men.

Verses 27, 28, reads:—

"He (the penitent) singeth and said:—

'I had sinned and perverted what was straight,
'And it was not recompensed (required) to me,
'He hath delivered my soul from going down into the pit.
'And my life rejoiceth in the light.'"

Lo, all these things, warnings, afflictions, redemption, worketh God with man. And in all, He has one object, to bring him back from the pit . . . to the light. Observe:—It is our Mediator who has paid our ransom, even His own precious blood.

The marvellous change in those who are brought from darkness into the light, from the power of Satan unto God. The two measures of the greatness of salvation—the depths (pit) from which it rescues us, the height to which it lifts us, the light and the glory.

HINTS FOR YOUNG MOTHERS.

The three requisites for babies are plenty of sleep, plenty of food, plenty of flannel. The saying that man is a bundle of habits is as true of babies as it is of grown children. If an infant is accustomed from its birth to sleep from 6 o'clock at night till daylight, the habit of early sleep will be formed, and the mother may have all the evenings to herself.

If the baby sleeps all night, a long morning nap will naturally come about dinner-time, after which the child, except when very young, should be kept awake until six o'clock. Perseverance in this routine will soon result in securing quiet evenings for both the child and the parent.

Some mothers have a long season every morning and every night in getting the baby asleep. They rock them and sing to them till Morpheus unfolds them. With most children this is entirely unnecessary. An infant can be accustomed, by a few days' training, to go to sleep itself for a morning nap as well as for the longer rest at night.

A mother has duties to herself as well as to her offspring. While she should exercise a constant care in securing its utmost physical comfort, she should secure rest and recreation for herself. In no other way can she keep fresh in feeling and buoyant in spirit. Nothing is so wearing as the unceasing tending of a fretful baby.

Every means should be employed to aid the child in taking care of itself and giving as little trouble as possible. It may learn in babyhood to amuse itself with toys or by watching movements going on around it.

Fashion as well as good sense requires infants' dresses to be made with long sleeves, and high in the neck. Fashion requires children of all ages to be warmly clad. Flannel should encase the whole body, with the exception of the head and hands. The fruitful cause of colic in infants is the nakedness of their necks and arms.

Regularity in feeding is as important as either of the other requisites. Babies cry as often from being overfed too frequently as from hunger. Let the mother obey the dictates of common sense in this matter and not force food into a baby's stomach for every little complaint it makes.

Children of three or four years old need much more sleep than they usually have. For irritable and nervous children sleep is a specific, and it can be secured to them only by the force of habit. Many light forms of disease may be cured by keeping a child in a uniform temperature and in quiet. Let the young mothers who read this article experiment upon these few suggestions, and we are sure they will have many an hour in the nursery for reading and thought.—*Ex.*

It is stated that, in consequence of the recent secessions of Anglican clergy to the Church of Rome, the Vatican is considering in what way it can secure a wider field of action for the Roman Catholic Church in England without offending against the existing laws. Instructions on this subject have, it is said, been sent to Cardinal Manning.