

Original Contributions.

BIBLE TALKS.

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NUMBER XXI.

Under this heading I have spoken of many persons and events whose record is found in the Bible; but of Job I have as yet said nothing. The book bearing his name occupies a prominent position in the sacred canon consisting of 42 chapters, and is quoted from by many of the sacred writers. But who was Job? and in what period of the history of our race did he live? Some claim that he was a fictitious person—never had any real existence. But the prophet Ezekiel said, "Though these three men, Noah, Daniel and Job, were in it (the land of Canaan) they should deliver but their own souls by their righteousness, saith the Lord God." Here he is called a man, so was as truly such, as were Noah and Daniel, with whom he is classed because of the righteousness of each. The apostle James, prompting his persecuted suffering brethren to endure all patiently said, "Take, brethren, for an example of suffering and of patience, the prophets who spake in the name of the Lord. Behold, we call them blessed which endured; ye have heard of the patience of Job, and have seen the end of the Lord, how that the Lord is full of pity, and merciful." (5: 10, 11, Rev. ver.) Thus James classes him with the suffering patient prophets and makes him and his sufferings as real as any.

These two Scriptures establish his personality. From the same source we learn who he was. Ignorance of the Scriptures is the sole cause of so little being known of Job. His parentage is given as clearly as of other patriarchs. He was the third son of Issachar, one of the twelve sons of Jacob; consequently he was his grandson, and was in the caravan that went down into Egypt at the call of Joseph. (Gen. 46: 13) The Scriptures likewise give a pretty satisfactory account of his three friends—Elephas, Bildah and Zophar, who living near by and hearing of his misfortunes, came to comfort him. Eliphaz was the son of Esau, so was first cousin of Manasseh, and second cousin of Job. He was also father of Amelek, from whom descended the Amalekites of whose misdeeds and utter destruction I have spoken in a previous paper.

(Gen. 36: 4.) Bildad the Shuute was probably a descendant of Shua, son of Abraham by Keturah (25: 2). Zophar the Naamathite was probab-

ly a descendant of Naaman, grandson of Benjamin. (1 Chron. 8: 4) The young man Elihu, who is introduced towards the close of our narrative is said to be of the kindred of Ram, who was Judah's great grand-son. (1 Chron. 2: 9, also Ruth 4: 19.) We thus see that all were descendants of Abraham, and relatives of Job. Their being descendants of Abraham accounts for their general intelligence, their reverence for God, and the very exalted ideas they had of him as the Almighty Ruler of the Universe, and of his providential dealings of one race. They were not at all like the nations around them, as they were wholly given once to idolatry. God had said of Abraham, "I know him that he will command his children and his household after him, and they shall keep the way of the Lord, to do justice and judgment." Three hundred years later we have in these men, together with Job, an illustration of the beneficial influence of a thorough moral and religious education—education in the way of the Lord—to know, feel and obey the Lord. Parents should take courage and renew their efforts to thus educate their children, knowing that their labor in the Lord is not in vain. In so doing they bless their children and society; possibly for generations to come.

In learning who Job is, we also learn when he lived. It may be safely affirmed that he lived during the entire sojourn of Israel in Egypt. This lasted 215 years. Being the third and next to the youngest son of his father when they went down into Egypt, he was probably from three to five years old. At the time of his affliction, he was the father of ten children, all of whom were grown, and his sons were married and had left the paternal roof; so Job must have been some eighty or a hundred years old; after his recovery he lived a hundred and forty years; making his full age at least two hundred and twenty-five years. This covers the whole period of the captivity. Though Job was one of the "three score and six" of Jacob's descendants that went into Egypt, and into the captivity, he did not remain in captivity, but went out, possibly when another king arose that knew not Joseph

and began to oppress Israel. Be this as it may, the next recorded of him is as follows, "There was a man in the land of Ur, whose name was Job." When first spoken of by the sacred writers, he was a little boy, on the eve of being taken down into Egypt to see his uncle Joseph, who was ruler over all the land. He was thought to be dead, but they had just learned to their great joy that he was actually alive; and grandfather Jacob, and his pa and ma, all his uncles and cousins were going to see him and live with him; and he was going along. They went and had a nice time for a series of years. But after a while they were badly treated and Job thought he had better leave, so he went to Ur, a place near the eastern arm of the Red Sea, not far from where Esau and his descendants had settled in the land of Edom. Here he spent the remainder of his eventful life; of which more in our next.

Hebron, O., Aug. 15, 1883.

Four Centuries of Luther.

It will be four hundred years on the 10th of November, since Martin Luther was born. And already Protestants in this country and Germany have begun to celebrate the event. He was born nine years before Columbus discovered America, and was well on his way to manhood when the Continent was reached by the half-dazzled explorers. These two events deserve to be classed together. For the discovery of America and for the Protestant Reformation, of which Luther was both heart and head, mark the great turning point in history between the old and the new ages. They are the two great events since the close of the Apostolic age, and Christianity was fairly launched on its all-subduing, beneficent way.

The story of Luther's life has been told hundreds of times, gathering new interest with each retelling. The literature relating to Luther and the Reformation would make a large library, and hold some of the world's best work. The time has now come for a re-study of that work, and a new estimate of Luther's position in history. His Protestantism failed, as we are so often assured by Catholics and ritualizing Episcopalians? What is to be the future of a movement, which during four hundred years of activity, has done more to emancipate the human in-

tellect, to set beneficent and humane causes in motion, to stimulate material progress, to give impetus to science and useful inventions, to break the power of despotisms and make people free, and to liberate faith from the superstitions which were choking it to death? This American Republic was the direct product of the Reformation. The Declaration of Independence would never have been written had Martin Luther not nailed his theses on the church door at Wittenburg.

Luther was to the Reformation what Cromwell was to the English Revolution, what Washington was to our own. There were reformers before Luther. The spirit of revolt against the abuses and tyranny of the Roman Catholic Church was rife in Germany when he appeared. But it was diffused, diffident, inoperative. It needed crystalization in a movement; it wanted a man to embody it, and give it the boldest possible expression. In Luther it found its organ, so to speak, and he became its incarnation. Providence apparently had more to do with the training of Luther and the shaping of events at that time, than all human agencies combined; and one can hardly read the history of that period, and see how events fitted into each like the pieces of a Chinese puzzle, without feeling that a wiser and mightier than human intelligence was behind and in that historic demonstration.

It is remarkable that Ignatius Loyola, the founder of the Jesuit order, which has had such a powerful influence on the history of the Catholic Church, was born eight years after Luther, and while Luther was carrying Germany by storm against the Church, Loyola laid the foundation of that energetic society which has done more than any other to hold the Church against Protestant aggressors. It is very largely through the work of these two men that Europe is not all Papal nor all Protestant today. It is worth the while now to contrast anew the work of these two remarkable men, and learn the secret of their effectiveness. Luther was a brilliant boy. His talents were extraordinary, and marked him out for a great career. No wonder that his father was proud of him, and did his best to educate the precocious boy; and it was quite natural that he should grieve bitterly, when arrested by a lightning flash in the road, Martin solemnly vowed to enter a convent