

read the twelve books of the "Paradise Lost;" and how many of the followers of Wordsworth ever finished even the prelude to his threatened "Excursion." Many reasons might be assigned for this, and they all apply with special force to the poem which is called the book of Job. Possessing an unsurpassed wealth of imagery, and rich in lessons of instruction from the Spirit of God Himself, time and labour are absolutely necessary to comprehend it. From the abruptness and seeming want of connection in its style; for want of sufficient attention to the course of the argument; from the great distance between its ancient simplicity and our modern refinements; and, above all, from a careless passing over of its beauties of figure and allusion, great numbers have found this poem unintelligible—"a spring shut up, a fountain sealed." But the neglect of the thoughtless multitude is well counterbalanced by the intense admiration of the judicious few. Joseph Caryl, who well knew the value of life, expended twenty years of thought and study on this book, and has left the result in a gigantic commentary, a monument of his own perseverance, and a fine test of that of his readers. The father of John and Charles Wesley wrote also upon it—a work full of widely-collected information, the sheets of which, when just ready for the press, were consumed by fire; and the cheerful old man, with a patience worthy of Job himself, resumed his task; and, amid gout and palsy, composed it anew, and sent it forth to the world in a folio, adorned with elaborate plates, so tall that it can scarcely find standing room on modern book-shelves. Nor have our poets been less diligent in their study of it than our divines. Its imagery, or imitations of it, is to be found sparkling, with a brilliance all its own, on the pages of Shakspeare, Milton, Gray, and Byron. Its spirit has thoroughly entered into the soul of Tennyson, and is powerfully realized in some of his most exquisite lines. Paraphrases of the whole, or part, are almost innumerable; the most remarkable being by Dr. Edward Young, author of "The Night Thoughts;" and the most recent, that of the Right Hon. the Earl of Winchelsea. Could we now be privileged to vindicate its claims to attention by exhibiting some of the links of the argument, and unveiling some of

the beauties of the imagery; above all, could we induce any by patient and prayerful study to do this much more efficiently for themselves: we should greatly rejoice at this opportunity of testifying our own intense love and admiration for this venerable song.

The story which the poem before us enshrines, is simple and familiar. The patriarch is first introduced to our attention, crowned with all temporal and spiritual felicity. He was a man "that feared God and eschewed evil." But he did more. He was "perfect in every good word and work." He "instructed many:" he "strengthened the weak hands:" his words "upheld him that was falling:" and he "strengthened the feeble knees." He was "eyes to the blind," and "feet" was he "to the lame." "a father to the poor," he "saved them out of the mouth of the cruel;" so that "when the ear heard" him, "then it blessed" him; "and when the eye saw" him, "it gave witness unto" him; "the blessing of him that was ready to perish, came upon" him, and he "caused the widow's heart to sing for joy." His life was unimpeachable. He was a stranger to the pride of riches; and "made not gold his hope." His devotion was sincere and unaffected. He clung to the simple rites of his forefathers, sacrificing according to the number of his family, and causing the young men to join the ceremony with previous cleansing and preparation. Nor did he do so without a special reward. "The secret of God was upon his tabernacle." His gracious revelations were his familiar intercourse. Above all, he "knew that his Redeemer lived." By faith his eye was strengthened to gaze down the long line of centuries that twined their slender arches carven with many a type and strange device, and the memorial of many a king, priest, prophet, yet unborn—over a path that led down, down to that far distant altar, long to be unstained, yet in whose oblation he felt himself with all saints to have a joyful interest; though the Mystery of God was yet unrevealed, and beneath that fretted canopy no angel's pinion might yet dare to sweep. In addition to this, all the stores of earthly happiness were poured at his feet. He was a king and father to his countrymen. The hills were covered with his countless flocks, and the valleys