

"Great God, how beautiful is earth,  
In sunshine or in shade,  
The forests with their leafy boughs,  
The flowers that gem the glade."

SOME THOUGHTS ON THE  
BOOK OF JOB.

Surely God has caused this wonderful experience of this most remarkable of men to be written, and to be handed down to us of this present dispensation for some purpose. Shall we look into it and endeavour to see what that purpose is?

It is plainly gathered from the oft repeated expressions of Job's three friends that men believed that God's punishments were dealt out to the wicked only—that if a man was under the scourging hand of God it was proof positive that he had sinned against God. Thus to Job's three friends this was a clear case; hence the sore taunt to Job; but not so thought Job, because his case was a clear contradiction of it. And Job was right in this. He was a righteous man, and God has not recorded anything to the contrary of Job, and it is not as Euphaz, Bildad and Zophar thought, that it was the wicked only who were punished.

Christian reader, Satan is considering us—is weighing us in a balance, and do you think God can answer for you as He did for Job, "A perfect and an upright man, that feareth God and escheweth evil." Let us consider well these two things.

Nevertheless, God gives Job into the hand of Satan, for what purpose we will consider later. And how does Satan proceed to try Job, to wring that from his lips that he judged his heart capable of? By taking from him his riches, his honor, and his children; and what was the result? Listen, "And Job arose, and rent his mantle, and shaved his head, and fell down upon the ground, and worshipped, and said, the Lord gave and the Lord hath taken away, BLESSED be the name of the Lord." Let us here challenge our own hearts—are we sure such would be our language if the Lord were to take from us all that we possessed in life?

But Satan was foiled in this his assurance, but he was not vanquished, and again he describes Job, and again God permits. And

now Job is brought to the lowest depths of misery. A loathsome body to behold wrapped about him. "Yet Job sinned not with his lips." Blessed triumph! And here we we bid adieu to Satan; his power is spent, and he is a vanquished enemy. God will not allow Satan to exult over the failings of His children, or give to him the glory of accomplishing anything; but on the contrary makes him to hear those words of victory over himself, "The LORD giveth and the LORD hath taken away, blessed be the name of the LORD." Satan is nobody with Job; so he retires, and having permitted Satan to hear this, God now draws the curtain about His servant and excludes Satan from seeing any further.

But here is Job in this condition, a condition which Satan not God had brought him into; and has Satan no intention of taking him out of it? Oh, no; that is not Satan's character. But God is not going to leave His servant thus, and moreover He is going to overrule this calamity that has befallen His servant and make it to work together for Job's good. He is also going to employ other means, and we will see just how far these other means are to be instrumental.

Job's three friends, (evidently those who also feared God,) first approach in the character of mourners or sympathizers.

Poor Job's heart is wrung with anguish, and whose would not have been? The earth is slipping from under his feet and he wishes for death. Yea, he wishes he had never been born, and he turns upon fate and chides with her, "why was I born," and seeks to draw comfort from annihilation—tries to make himself believe in it, and dwells on the peace of nothingness, and thus down, down, he drops into the most gloomy perplexity—very sore in his trouble, and all is as the darkness of death. He is so wrapped up in his misery that he does not think to lift up his eyes to heaven, but sits in the dust of earth.

It is not enough that he is burdened even to wishing for death, but those he looked to for comfort offer him reproach instead. "Behold thou hast instructed many, and hast strengthened the weak hands, thy words have upheld him that was falling, but now it has come upon THEE and thou faintest, it toucheth THEE, and thou art in trouble."