

## THE BOOK OF JOB.

### *Job i.*

There was a man in the land of Uz, whose name was Job; and that man was perfect and upright, and one that feared God.

2 And there were born unto him seven sons and three daughters.

3 His substance also was seven thousand sheep, and three thousand camels, and five hundred yoke of oxen, and five hundred she asses, and a very great household; so that this man was the greatest of all the men of the east.

4 And his sons feasted in their houses; and sent and called for their three sisters to eat with them.

6 Now there was a day when the sons of God came to present themselves before the Lord, and Satan came also.

7 And the Lord said unto Satan, Whence comest thou? Satan answered, From going to and fro in the earth.

8 And the Lord said unto Satan, Hast thou considered my servant Job, that there is none like him in the earth, a perfect and an upright man.

9 Then Satan answered, Doth Job fear God for nought?

10 Hast not thou made a hedge about him, and about his house, and about all that he hath on every side? thou hast blessed the work of his hands.

11 But put forth thine hand now, and touch all that he hath, and he will curse thee to thy face.

12 And the Lord said unto Satan, all that he hath is in thy power: only upon himself put not forth thine hand. So Satan went forth from the presence of the Lord.

14 And there came a messenger unto Job, and said, The oxen were ploughing, and the asses feeding beside them:

15 And the Sabeans fell upon them, and took them away; yea, they have slain the servants.

16 There came another, and said, fire is fallen from heaven, and hath burned up the sheep.

17 There came also another, and said, The Chaldeans fell upon the camels, and have carried them away.

18 There came also another, and said, Thy sons and thy daughters were eating and drinking.

19 And, behold there came a great wind and smote the four corners of the house, and it fell upon the young men, and they are dead.

20 Then Job arose, and rent his mantle, and shaved his head, and fell down upon the ground, and worshiped.

### *Job ii.*

9 Then said his wife unto him, Dost thou still retain thine integrity? curse God and die.

10 But he said unto her, Thou speakest as one of the foolish women speaketh. What? shall we receive good at the hand of God, and shall we not receive evil?

### *Job xlii.*

11 Then came there unto him his brethren, and his sisters, and they that had been of his acquaintance before, and did eat bread with him in his house: and they comforted him over all the evil that the Lord had brought upon him: every man also gave him a piece of money, and every one an earring of gold.

12 So the Lord blessed the latter end of Job more than his beginning; for he had fourteen thousand sheep, and six thousand camels, and a thousand yoke of oxen, and a thousand she asses.

13 He had also seven sons and three daughters.

15 And in all the land were no women found so fair as the daughters of Job; and their father gave them inheritance among their brethren.

16 After this lived Job a hundred and forty years.

17 So Job died, being old and full of days.

**T**HE Book of Job opens with an imaginary discussion between the Lord and Satan as to the true character of Job. Satan hates him because he is good, and envies him because he is a favorite

of the Lord, who expresses unbounded faith in his steadfastness to religious principles. Satan replies that Job is all right in prosperity, when surrounded with every comfort; but stripped of his blessings, his faith in a superintending Providence would vanish like dew before the rising sun. The Lord said, "You may test Job. I give you permission to do your worst and to see if he will not remain as true in adversity as he is in prosperity."

The Book of Job is an epic poem, an allegory, to show the grand elements in human nature, enabling mortals to rise superior to all trials and temptations, to the humiliations of the spirit, and to prolonged suffering in the flesh. Though illustrated in the personality of a man, yet the principle applies equally to the wisdom and the virtue of woman. The elements of Job's goodness and greatness must have existed in his mother. But little is said of women in this book; and that little is by no means complimentary. Job's wife's name was Dinah; some commentators say that she was the daughter of Jacob. Satan uses her as the last and most subtle influence for the downfall of his victim. Between the two forces of good and of evil, the triumph of the spiritual nature over the temptations of the flesh, the god-like in the human, was thoroughly proven. Job is represented as a great man. He has wealth, inflexible integrity and a charming family life, seven sons and three daughters, immense herds of oxen, sheep, asses, camels, and servants without number.

The spirit of evil, to test his faithfulness, strips him of all his possessions. In one day Job's houses were destroyed, his lands made desolate, his cattle stolen and his children carried off in a whirlwind. Job was stunned by these calamities. He put on sackcloth, shaved his head, as was the custom, and calmly accepted the situation; and his faith in the goodness of God remained. Then the spirit of evil, to test him still further, afflicted him with a terrible disease, loathsome to endure and pitiful to behold. His three friends, Eliphaz, Bildad and Zophar, mocked him in his misery.

His last affliction was the disgust of his wife. She ridiculed his faith in God, and scoffed at his piety, as Michal did at David. She was spared to be his last tempter when all his comforts were taken away. She bantered him for his constancy, "Dost thou still main-

tain thy confidence in the God who has punished thee? Why dost thou be so obstinate in thy religion, which serves no good to thee? Why truckle to a God who, so far from rewarding thy services with marks of his favor, seems to take pleasure in making thee miserable and scourges thee without any provocation? Is this a God to be still loved and served? 'Curse God and die.' " She urges him to commit suicide. Better to die at once than to endure his life of lingering misery.

Deserted by wife, by friends, and, seemingly by God, too, Job's faith wavered not. The spirit of evil had done its worst. Man had proven his Divine origin, himself the incarnation of the great Spirit of Good; and now that Job had proved himself superior to all human calamities, he is restored to health; and all his earthly possessions are returned fourfold.

Nothing more is said of his first wife, but his ten children are restored. The names of his three daughters are significant, though not euphonious: Jemima, the day, because of Job's prosperity; Kezia, a spice, because he was healed, and Karen-Happuch, plenty restored. God adorned them with great beauty, no women being so fair as were the daughters of Job. In the Old Testament we often find women praised for their beauty; but in the New Testament we find no notice of physical charms, not even in the Virgin Mary herself. Job gave to his daughters an equal inheritance with his sons. It is pleasant to see that the brothers paid them marked attention, and always invited them to their dinners, and that his ten children were reproduced just as his flocks and his herds had been.

Much more sympathy has been expressed by women for the wife, than for Job. Poor woman, she had scraped lint, nursed him and waited on him to the point of nervous exhaustion—no wonder that she was resigned to see him pass to Abraham's bosom. Job lived one hundred and forty years. Some conjecture that he was seventy years old when his calamities came upon him, so that his age was doubled with his other blessings. Whether Dinah lived to cheer Job's declining years, or whether she was lured by Satan to his kingdom, does not appear; but he is supposed to have had a second wife, by the name of Sitis—the probable mother of the second brood.

E. C. S.