

## Table of Contents

About the Author -----	iv
Preface-----	vi
Introduction -----	vii
Chapter 1 Job's Happy Condition-----	1
Chapter 2 Satan -----	14
Chapter 3 Job's Affliction-----	25
Chapter 4 Job's Three Friends-----	40
Chapter 5 Job's Conflict -----	55
Chapter 6 Job's Redeemer Triumphs Over Satan-----	66
Chapter 7 Job Refutes His Friends -----	80
Chapter 8 Elihu-----	89
Chapter 9 The Lord -----	101
Chapter 10 The Book of Job in the Plan of Holy Scripture-----	117
Outline of the Book of Job-----	129

## Chapter 1

### Job's Happy Condition

*"There was a man in the land of Uz, whose name was Job; and that man was blameless (perfect) and upright ..." (Job 1:1)*

The book of Job is one of the most remarkable in the Old Testament. Apart from its inspiration, and considered simply as a literary production, it bears the stamp of uncommon genius. It is occupied with a profound and difficult theme, the mystery of divine providence in the sufferings of good men. This is not treated in the abstract, in simple prose or in a plain didactic method. But an actual case is set vividly before the reader, in which the difficulty appears in its most extreme form. By an extraordinary accumulation of disasters a man of extraordinary piety is suddenly cast down from his prosperity, and reduced to the most pitiable and distressed condition. And then there is unfolded in the most masterly manner the impression made on others by the spectacle of these calamities, as well as the inward conflict stirred in the sufferer himself. We see Job's bewilderment and sore distress, his alternations of despair and hope, his piteous pleas for a sympathy which is denied him and his irritation under the unjust suspicions which are cast upon him, his wild and almost passionate complaints against the Providence which crushes him, intermingled with expressions of strong confidence in God which he cannot abandon. This wild tumult in his soul is graphically depicted in its successive stages, until we are brought to the final solution of the whole, and the vindication at once of the Providence of God and of His suffering servant. And all this is set forth in the loftiest style of poetry, abounding in fine imagery and containing passages of deep compassion as well as of rare nobility and power.

The book of Job well deserves the mountains of acclaim which have been bestowed upon it as a product of the poetic art. And while we humbly receive its inspired lessons, there is no reason why we should be insensible to its other attractions. The Bible is not, indeed, amenable to the laws of criticism, nor to be judged by ordinary standards of taste. When God speaks to us, we must reverently listen and obey, however homely the medium through which He communicates His will.

Nevertheless, we should stand in wonder of this holy book, and to its adaptation to the needs of all classes of people during all times in history. Like the inexhaustible supplies of Nature in its manifold diversity, the volume of divine revelation gives us not only the massive granite and the ponderous metal, but the sparkling and polished gems of thought; not only the basic articles of food, but the rarer delicacies. So it is that the poetic genius is graciously spread throughout the sacred scriptures in the sweet lyrics of David, the impassioned fire of Isaiah, and the marvelous beauty of the book of Job.

The principal personage of this book, and the one about whom the interest chiefly centers, is Job himself, a venerable and patriarchal character, whose fortunes are detailed to us at an important crisis in his life. Some have thought that he was not a real, historical person, and that the narrative of the book is not one of events which actually took place, but that it is rather a fiction or a parable like that of the Prodigal Son or the good Samaritan. Such people believe that the book of Job is designed to represent not some one person to whom all this happened precisely as is here detailed, but a whole class, such as is often met with in real life. This, however, cannot have been the case. It is related not as a parable, but as a history, instructive throughout, as all the Bible histories are, but still an actual, veritable occurrence. And Job is spoken of in other parts of Scripture as a real person, and in connection with other real persons like Noah and Daniel, and the events of his life are referred to in a manner which strongly implies that they had actually occurred (Ezekiel 14:14). We can have no doubt, therefore, that, with all the poetic embellishment of the narrative, Job did actually live, and the history took place as it is here related.

At this point, we will proceed to consider the life of Job. We will consider his character and condition when he is first introduced to our notice, his great excellence and piety and his happy, prosperous state. These important issues are sketched briefly, but strongly, in the opening verses of the first chapter, and again in chapter twenty-nine, where, after his gloomy reverses, Job pathetically recalls the joys of former years.

We commonly think of Job as a sufferer; and the lessons that we most associate with him are those which concern affliction. His great sorrows form indeed the grand crisis of his life; and it is to their exhibition, together with the attendant principles of the divine administration, that this book is chiefly devoted. But the very point of the whole lies in their exceptional character, which requires an explanation. If this were not so, there would be no mystery to be explained. The enigma is in the

contrast between what Job had to endure and what was in fact his ordinary experience up to the time when he was overtaken by these extraordinary calamities. "...godliness is profitable for all things, having promise of the life that now is and of that to come" (1 Tim. 4:8) This was fulfilled in the life of Job up to the time of his heavy trial, which had been one continued course of prosperity and happiness. It seemed as though nothing were left him to desire. As he himself expresses: *"In the days when God watched over me, When His lamp shone upon my head.... When my steps were bathed with cream, And the rock poured out rivers of oil for me! ... My root is spread out to the waters, And the dew lies all night on my branch."* The freshness of a well watered tree, the richness of butter and oil, the brilliancy of God's own light, are the figures which set forth his joyful and prosperous abundance. And, as the tempter sneeringly said, Job had not feared God for naught. God has made an hedge about him and about his house and about all that he had on every side. He had blessed the work of his hands, and his substance was increased in the land.

While, therefore, we go very properly to Job's dark hours to learn the uses of affliction, and all the salutary lessons which accompany it, it behooves us likewise to remember the lesson of all those years of blessings. God's blessing attends the righteous. "... *He who would love life And see good days, Let him refrain his tongue from evil, And his lips from speaking guile; Let him turn away from evil and do good; Let him seek peace and pursue it. For the eyes of the LORD are on the righteous, And his ears are open to their prayers; But the face of the LORD is against those who do evil*" (1 Pct. 3:10-12).

Let us never neglect to consider the piety and the happy estate of Job, with the view of taking note how these are combined in the ordinary providence of God. The Bible does not indicate that there are no exceptions. There are such exceptions. There are grave and weighty reasons why there should be. Job himself was a notable exception at one period in his life. In considering the number and the mystery of the exceptions we must not forget the rule, a rule verified for the most part even in the general tenor of the lives of those who constitute the most notable exceptions. Happiness and godliness go hand-in-hand in the ordinary experiences of this world.