

CONFLICT AND TRIUMPH

smitten rock of the desert at the head-waters of the stream of consolation. This precious tide flows on with ever-deepening current, gathering fresh tributaries as it flows, and bearing more abundant blessings on its bosom, until it issues in the boundless, unfathomable ocean of divine grace and love, within view of which we are brought in the gospel.

No book of the Bible stands apart by itself, or can be fully understood if it is only studied separately and in its isolation. It is part of a gradually unfolded revelation. It belongs to a well-ordered system. It is a link in a chain. It is a member of an organism. It is what it is, not for itself alone; it has been shaped with reference to the position that it is to occupy and the function it has to perform in the plan of the whole. The history of Job is one among a great body of signal facts, illustrative of God's ways with men and of his plan of grace.

The book of Job is one of a long series of inspired writings through which it has pleased God to make known his will and to reveal himself. What precise part does it take in the successive disclosures of divine truth? How does it advance upon what had before been made known? How does it prepare for what was to follow? What educating power lay in the truths which it lodged in the minds and hearts of men, and what further consequences did they produce? And how do its teachings stand related to the completed revelation of the gospel?

It would be impossible to treat exhaustively such a theme as this within the narrow limits to which we must confine ourselves and to attempt to do so under any circumstances might savour of arrogance and presumption. It will be sufficient to venture a few observations by way of suggestion.

The law precedes the gospel in logical order as in actual fact. It is thus in the experience of the race of man as a whole, in that of the chosen people, and in that of individual men. The covenant of works goes before the covenant of grace; the sentence upon our transgressing first parents before the promise of him who should bruise the serpent's head; the commandment given by Moses before grace and truth by

The Place of Job in the Scheme of Holy Scripture

Jesus Christ; the conviction of sin before the apprehension of saving mercy. Unless the lesson of the just desert of sin and of the inflexible righteousness of God has first been learned, the necessity and value of the offer of salvation cannot be understood. The doctrine of retribution is a necessary prerequisite to that of delivering grace. God must be apprehended as a Law-giver and a Judge before he can be known as a Redeemer.

In a general sense, the Old Testament may be said to contain the law, and the New Testament the gospel. They are accordingly contrasted by the apostle (*2 Cor. 3:6*) in respect to the tendencies of the whole, as the letter that kills and the spirit that gives life. The foundations were laid broad and deep and strongly cemented by ages of the continued inculcation of God's essential righteousness.

What is the Old Testament in its grand divisions but the law proclaimed at Sinai, confirmed by the providential retributions of the history, devoutly meditated upon and practised by the psalmists and other inspired poets, and expanded and enforced by the added revelations of the prophets? When the law had, by all these concurrent methods, been worked into the minds and hearts and lives of men, then, and not before, was there an adequate basis on which to rear a superstructure that should match it in amplitude and in solidity - the revelation of God's immeasurable grace.

While, however, the two Testaments are predominantly what has now been described, they are not exclusively so. The statement, though correct in the main, is not exhaustive. The gospel was already witnessed by the law and the prophets (*Rom. 3:21*); and the faith of Christ re-enacts and establishes the law (*Rom. 3:31*). Coupled with the revelation of God's justice under the Old Testament, there was a co-ordinate disclosure of his grace, which was set forth with growing clearness and fulness from the beginning to the end.

Every advance in the presentation of the one was attended or followed by a corresponding advance in the knowledge of the other. Judgement and mercy are concomitants, as well as