

THE BOOK OF JOB

BY

Arno Clement Gaebelein

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Introduction

The book of Job belongs to the poetical books of the Old Testament. The other poetical books are: The Psalms, Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, The Song of Solomon and Lamentations. In the Hebrew Bible they are found in the third section, called Kethubim (the Writings, Hagiographa). The arrangement in the Hebrew Bible differs from that in our English version. It is as follows--Psalms, Proverbs, Job, Song of Solomon, Lamentations and Ecclesiastes.

It needs to be explained that Hebrew poetry is different from the poetry of Occidental languages. It knows nothing of rhymed verses, though a rhythmical arrangement is quite often noticeable. The fundamental law of Hebrew poetry is parallelism, which is also very frequently found in the other books which are not classed as poetical. This parallelism has been divided in a threefold form. The synonymous, in which the same sentiment is repeated in different but equivalent words, as in Ps. 25:4, "Show me Thy ways O LORD, Teach me Thy paths"; the antithetical, in which the parallel members express the opposite sides of the same thought as in Psalm 20:8.

They are brought down and fallen,
But we are risen and stand upright.

The synthetical or constructive, in which the two members contain two disparate ideas, which, however, are connected by a certain affinity between them, as in Proverbs 1:7:

The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom
But fools despise wisdom and instruction.

The book of Job is in the form of a great dramatic poem, in which we have the following actors: Job of the land of Uz and his wife; his three friends Eliphaz, Bildad and Zophar; Elihu the son of Barachel, and Jehovah and the accuser, Satan. The question arises at once, since this book is cast in the form of a drama, is it romantic fiction or history? The critical school declares that it must not be regarded as history at all, though it is claimed that the author may have had some traditional material of a

righteous man who was a great sufferer and then the poet worked out the drama, adding fictitious matter. To show the mode of the reasoning of the critical school we quote from Dr. A.S. Peake, who says in his expository work on Job: "That this book must not be regarded as historical is shown by the account of the heavenly councils, by the symbolic numbers of Job's family and flocks, by the escape of one messenger and one only from each catastrophe, by the exact doubling of his possessions at the end of the trial. And even more obvious is that the speeches of Job and his friends cannot be literal reports of actual speeches, since they mark the highest point attained by Hebrew poetical genius, and since no such debate could be imagined in the patriarchal age." But if we believe that this book, like all the other books of the Bible, is given by inspiration, all these objections fall to the ground. Man knew not what was going on in heaven, but the Lord can reveal these unseen things and make known what happens in His own presence. If the record of the scenes in heaven in chapters 1 and 2 are not historical, not revelation, then they are mere human inventions, unworthy of our confidence. And why is it impossible that a controversy such as this book records could not have taken place in the patriarchal age? Evidently the author believes that the patriarchal age was too unenlightened to produce such brilliant speeches. Such reasoning is the natural offspring of evolution.

The book of Job is real history. Job is not the creation of a great, unknown poetic genius, some ancient playwright, he was a real person, who lived; the book gives the great and remarkable experience of his life. The first statement with which the book opens is sufficient to show the historicity of Job. "There was a man in the land of Uz, whose name was Job." Two other books in the Bible speak of him also as a historic person. Twice in the fourteenth chapter of Ezekiel we find him mentioned alongside of Noah and Daniel (Ezek. 14:14, 20). He is therefore not any more fictitious than Noah and the prophet Daniel. In the New Testament the apostle James mentions his name and calls attention to his patience.

Who Was Job?

Who was Job, when and where did he live? These questions cannot be definitely answered. According to rabbinical tradition he lived in Abraham's times, or, according to another tradition, he lived when Jacob's sons were grown up. If the latter view is true then he might be the Job who is mentioned as Issachar's son in Genesis 46:13. But there are also many other traditions which are very fanciful and mostly legendary. The land of Uz has been located somewhat east of Palestine, in the great fertile lands of North-eastern Idumea. That he must have lived in patriarchal days is proven by the contents of the book itself. We have no mention in this book of the law, nor of the levitical institutions, priesthood and sacrifices. (Sacrifices are mentioned in the beginning and the end of the book. But no priest is indicated. It is the primitive way of approaching God by a sacrifice.) Nothing is said of the history of Israel, nor is there a quotation from the writings of the prophets. We move evidently in this book in a time before the law was given and before Abraham's seed constituted a nation.

The Author and Date of the Book

Who wrote the book of Job cannot be determined. Some think it was Job himself to whom God by His Spirit dictated the book after he had passed

through the suffering. Some suggest Elihu as the chosen instrument to preserve this experience of Job. Not a few believe that Moses wrote the book. It matters but little who the penman was; we know that behind that pen stood the Spirit of God, who after all is the real author of this and every other Bible book.

The critics have made havoc with the probable date when the book was written. We quote again Dr. Peake, who in discussing the date of Job weaves in a piece of pernicious Bible exegesis which strikes deeper than a late date for Job. "The problem (of the date when Job was written) is no longer in its elementary stage. It has been long pondered and discussed, and this agrees best with a date considerably later than that of Jeremiah. Several scholars have placed it towards the close of the Exile, contemporary with Isa. 40-55. A comparison of the two writers discloses correspondence which cannot be accidental. There are especially close points of contact between the figure of Job and that of the suffering servant of Jehovah. The servant is to be identified with the historical Israel, which had died in the Exile and was to be restored to life by a return from captivity and re-establishment in its old home. The meaning of its suffering and death is closely connected with its mission to the world. That mission was to bring to the Gentiles the knowledge of the true God.... The sufferings of Israel are accordingly interpreted as vicarious; by its stripes the nations are healed." Isaiah 53, that sublime prophecy of Christ the sin-bearer, is thus interpreted as meaning the nation and then by an involved argument the authorship of Job is put into the time when the imagined "Deutero-Isaiah" wrote his part, which the ancient Jews and the Church of the past always believed to have been the work of the one Isaiah, and being the divine prediction of the suffering Christ. In their antagonism to the Bible as the infallible Word of God, the critics declare also that Job must have been written in post-exilic times, on account of Satan being mentioned and "Satan (they say) occurs in no early literature, but only in Zechariah and Chronicles."

And this is called scholarship! The fact, however, is that the Hebrew of the book of Job is in style not the Hebrew of a later, but of very early times. Traces of the Chaldee language are found in the Hebrew of Job. Yet these peculiarities which are antagonistic to a pure Hebrew style are really an evidence to the very oldest date in which this book must have been written. They are not in reality Chaldeisms, but rather Arabicisms, and are proof of a very great antiquity of the book, and show that its composition was made when Hebrew and Arabic had not diverged. That is why one of the greatest oriental scholars, Gensenius, wrote: "There is in this book much that is analogous to the Arabic language, or that may be explained by it." Inasmuch then as the book exhibits a fine picture of patriarchal times and its language also bears witness to a very early date all the objections of the critics are void.

The Story of the Book

The book begins with a prologue in which we are introduced to the central figure, Job. We hear of him as an excellent, God-fearing man, surrounded with great prosperity. Then the scene changes and the veil is drawn aside from the unseen world. We see what is going on in heaven and how Satan, the accuser of the brethren, when the Lord mentions His servant Job, sneers in Jehovah's face "Doth Job serve God for nought?" and then challenges God to put forth His hand and to touch all that he hath. Satan is confident that Job would curse Him to His face. How Satan is permitted

to carry out his own suggestion, we read in the first chapter. Yet after Job is stripped of all, he did not sin nor did he charge God foolishly.

Again we are in heaven and the same scene is before us. Satan, defeated in his first attempt, demands that the Lord touch the body of Job, his bone and his flesh, and he is confident Job would curse God. The Lord again permits Satan to do what he demanded with one restriction, Satan cannot touch Job's life. And soon we see Job covered from head to foot with sore boils scraping himself with a potsherd, sitting among the ashes. Only once does his wife appear upon the scene. She said to him, what Satan put into her heart: "Dost thou still retain thine integrity? Curse God and die." Job answered her and in all this did not Job sin with his lips. After that the dark shadow disappears. He has lost the battle. God is victor.

Then begins the main portion of the book when the three friends of Job, having heard of his affliction, come to comfort him. Three times each delivers himself of an address, except Zophar who speaks only twice. And eight times Job answers. The subject of the controversy is the mystery of suffering. The result of this lengthy controversy is tersely stated in chapter 32:2-3. Job through it all justified himself rather than God; the three friends with all their fine orations had not found an answer and yet had condemned Job. Then comes the great testimony of Elihu; this is followed by the words which Jehovah speaks. Then after Job is in the dust and cries out "Behold I am vile, I abhor myself!" comes an epilogue. The storm is gone; the sun breaks through the receding storm clouds and the book ends with the Lord blessing the latter end of Job more than his beginning.

The Message of the Book

The message of the book of Job is concerning the suffering of the righteous. Why do the godly suffer? How can their suffering be harmonized with the righteousness of God? if God is love and He loveth His saints why have they afflictions? In one word the theme of the book is the mystery of suffering. The answer to these questions concerning the suffering of the godly is twofold. God permits their suffering for His own glory. This we learn in the first two chapters. God received glory to Himself when Job, enabled by His grace and by His power, sinned not in the midst of the fiery trials through which he passed. Then God permits the righteous to suffer for their own good. It was a wholesome experience for Job; the sufferings chastened him and he received great blessing. This is the double answer in the book of Job as to the suffering of God's people. And yet there is a mystery of suffering which will only be fully bared when God's saints are in His presence and "know as we are known." Till then we walk in faith, trusting Him who has told us "that all things must work together for good to them that love God."

The Division of the Book of Job

The division of the book of Job is not difficult to make. There is first a prologue, that is followed by the main portion of the book, and in conclusion we have an epilogue. We divide the book into seven parts which we shall follow in a closer analysis with the annotations on the most important truths.

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Analysis and Annotations

I. THE INTRODUCTION

We are at once introduced to the leading person of this book. "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 and eschewed evil." As already stated in the introduction, the land of Uz was east of Palestine and probably a part of Idumea, or in close proximity to the land of Edom. This seems to be confirmed by Lamentations 4:21: "Rejoice and be glad, O daughter of Edom, that dwellest in the land of Uz." Uz is also mentioned in Jeremiah 25:20. It must have been on the borderland of Edom, if it was not a part of it. In Genesis 22:20-21, we read of the sons of Abraham's brother Nahor; among them are two named Uz and Buz. (Elihu was of Buz, Job 32:2.)

The meaning of the name Job is "persecuted" or "afflicted." His character is described as most excellent. He was perfect, which of course does not mean that he was sinless, without any flaw in his character. He was a whole-hearted man with a well-balanced solid character. In his dealings with others he was righteous, always upright and doing the right thing. He feared God, walking in the fear of God, which proves that he was a child of God, born again; and therefore he shunned evil in every form. This brief description of Job shows that he was an unusual man. The Lord

Himself bore witness to this fact, for He said to Satan, "there is none like him in the earth."

Great blessing rested upon him and upon his house. His family consisted of seven sons and three daughters. Of cattle he had seven thousand sheep, three thousand camels, five hundred yoke of oxen and five hundred she-asses and a very great household. He was in every way, in his character, in his enormous wealth, the greatest man of the children of the east. His was the position of a prince among men with a princely household. Then follows a pleasing scene, a sample of how he conducted himself. His sons and daughters lacked nothing; they feasted and enjoyed life together in the midst of the great prosperity with which God had blessed them. There is nothing to indicate that it was sinful pleasure in which they indulged. But Job had a tender conscience. He wanted to make provision in case his children had sinned and "cursed God in their hearts." The Hebrew for "curse" is "bless" and the meaning is to renounce God, to forget and turn away from Him. Notice that Job feared some such thought of turning away from God might have entered their young hearts; and that is where all turning away from God starts. And therefore pious Job rose up early in the morning and besides sanctifying them he also offered burnt offerings according to the number of them all. He knew God's holiness and the true mode of approach, by a sacrifice, the shedding of blood "without which there is no remission of sins." How far he himself entered into the joys of his family we do not know; nor does he mention himself as needing a sacrifice.

II. THE CONTROVERSY BETWEEN JEHOVAH AND SATAN AND THE RESULTS

CHAPTER 1:6-22

1. A scene in heaven, Jehovah's challenge and Satan's, accusation (1:6-12)
2. Satan's power manifested (1:13-19)
3. Job's great grief and great victory (1:20-22)

Verses 6-12. Suddenly the scene changeth. We are no longer on earth but heaven is opened and we read what is going on before the throne of God. While Job on earth with his loved ones is enjoying himself something takes place in heaven in which he is prominently concerned and yet he is ignorant of all.

The whole scene is intensely interesting. It is not fiction but revelation, and what is here recorded actually took place, and something like it still goes on in heaven. A parallel passage is found in I Kings 22:19. The prophet Micaiah saw the Lord sitting on His throne and all the host of heaven standing by Him on His right hand and on His left. And then the Lord permitted as a judgment upon Ahab, that a lying spirit should enter Ahab's prophets to deceive Ahab.

Heaven as a place is not fiction. There is an uncreated heaven where God's throne and dwelling place have always been. From the passage here we may gather that there are certain times when all heavenly tenants, good and evil, have to assemble before the Lord. The sons of God came to present themselves before the Lord. The expression "sons of God" does not mean believers on earth (the sonship of a believer is a New Testament truth), but supernatural beings, the angels. According to this book these sons of

God shouted for joy in the hour of creation (38:7). Other Scriptures speak of such heavenly gatherings. (See Psalm 89:5-7; Zech. 4, etc.) And Satan came also among them. He likewise must appear before the Lord. Satan means "adversary." In this character, as the accuser of the brethren he is seen in the last book of the Bible and according to Revelation 12 he is still active in the same capacity as in the days of Job, and has still access to the throne of God, till the hour comes when his doom begins with being cast out of heaven. Destructive criticism pronounceth Satan a Babylonian or Persian myth, a reproduction in Hebrew literature of the Persian fable of Ahriman. But even the French infidel Renan said of the Satan of the Scriptures, "This is quite a different person from the Ahriman of the Zend-Avesta. It is not the spirit of evil existing and acting for himself." He is not independent of God; as one has correctly stated it, "Satan can go only to the end of his chain." The critical assertion that the belief in a Satan originated after the exile is historically incorrect. The serpent in Genesis 3 is Satan. Originally he was Lucifer, the son of the morning (Isaiah 14), the cherub that covereth (Ezekiel 28) and this great creature of God fell by pride. (See "The History of Satan" in Studies in Prophecy Our Hope Press, and the larger work on Satan, His Person, Work Place and Destiny, by F.C. Jennings.)

He is forced to give an account to Jehovah. He walked to and fro in the earth and walked up and down in it. He therefore is not in hell. The New Testament tells us that he is "the god of this age" and that his throne is here on earth. He still walks up and down and to and fro. Then God calls his attention to Job and approves his character that there is none like Job. Satan knew Job and hated Job, as he still knows and hates every child of God and is moved with malice towards God's people. And so at once he sneers into the face of the Lord the challenge, "Doth Job fear God for nought?"--"Hast not Thou made an hedge about him, and about his house, and about all that he hath on every side? Thou hast blessed the work of his hands, and his substance is increased in the land. But put forth thine hand now, and touch all that he hath and he will renounce thee to thy face." Then the Lord delivers Job to Satan; gives him the permission to take all that he hath, only upon the person of Job he was not permitted to lay his vile hands. But let us notice that the accusation of Satan is the result of Jehovah's challenge. We quote another.

"It is carefully to be remarked here, that the spring and source of all these dealings is not Satan's accusations, but God Himself. God knew what His servant Job needed, and Himself brings forward his case and sets all in movement. If He demands of Satan if he had considered His servant Job, it is because He Himself had. Satan is but an instrument, and an ignorant though subtle instrument, to bring about God's purposes of grace. His accusations result really in nothing as against Job, save to disprove their truth by what he is allowed to do; but, for Job's good, he is left to his will up to a certain point, for the purpose of bringing Job to a knowledge of his own heart, and thus to a deeper ground of practical relationship with God. How blessed and perfect are God's ways! How vain in result the efforts of Satan's against those that are His!" (Synopsis of the Bible)

The controversy then is not between Satan and Job, but between Jehovah and Satan. Job is not so much on trial as the Lord Himself. Is God able to keep His servants loyal when the greatest afflictions pass over them? Has the Lord the power to sustain them? To manifest this power, to show forth His own glory, He permits the suffering of the saint. There are

many blessed and comforting truths connected with all this. The best is that we learn that the Lord lovingly watches His people, as He watched Job and spoke well of him and that it is an honor not chastisement when He permits afflictions and sorrow to come.

Satan could not attack the righteousness of Job, but he impeacheth his motives in serving God. In this he only revealed his own character. He attributes the godliness of Job to the selfishness in Job. Then comes his challenge. The conflict is on and it is to be seen if one who is the Lord's, who trusts in Him, can be made by adversities to turn his back upon God and forsake Him; or is God able to keep?

Verses 13-19. "So Satan went forth from the presence of the LORD." The accuser now acts the roaring lion. And now his work against Job begins. But caution is needed here lest powers be ascribed to Satan which he in reality does not possess. Satan is only a creature and does not share the attributes of God. He is not omnipotent; nor is he omniscient, nor omnipresent. If he displays powers it is with divine permission only. Of course here are secrets which we cannot fathom nor fully understand. Questions upon questions might be asked on this subject which the finite mind cannot answer, problems are here which no human can solve. But we know that all God's ways are perfect, yet past finding out.

And so here he is permitted to use powers to carry out his purposes. If God had not said, "Behold all that he hath is in thy power," he would have had no power.

Four calamities overtake Job's possessions and household. Satan stirred up the Sabeans (Hebrew: Sheba), a nomadic people, probably robber tribes and under his direction they plunder Job of his most valuable cattle and murdered the servants. No sooner had this happened than another messenger announced that the fire of God, probably not lightning, had fallen from heaven and the sheep and servants who were there had been completely destroyed. Then came the third calamity. The Chaldeans robbed Job of his camels and killed his servants who had charge of them. And then the last affliction which is the greatest of them all. A hurricane tore down the house and his loved ones were killed. His wife is not mentioned. Satan did not touch her for he intended to use her as a tool and as his mouthpiece. Thus suddenly, without any warning whatever, in the midst of earthly happiness, yea, real piety, Job, the great and prosperous Job had been stripped of all he had. Satan had done his work well. He knew how to be cruel and reserve the worst blow to the last. And all this happened not only under the all-seeing eye of God, but with His own permission.

Verses 20-22. And Job? Not a murmur escapes his lips. He arose; he expressed his great grief by renting his robe, shaving his head. But then he fell as a worshipper upon the ground and uttered the never to be forgotten words, "Naked came I out of my mother's womb, and naked shall I return thither; the LORD gave, and the LORD hath taken away; blessed be the name of the LORD." It was a great victory. Satan had failed completely. The Lord remained the refuge of Job and underneath the everlasting arms.

CHAPTER 2:1-10

1. Jehovah's second challenge and Satan's answer (2:1-6)
2. Job stricken (2:7-8)
3. Job's wife, Job's answer and victory (2:9-10)

Verses 1-6. Once more the sons of God, and Satan among them, present themselves before the Lord. It must have been immediately after Job's afflictions had come upon him. Probably the Lord called the assembly. The victory is on the Lord's side. Satan is defeated and his defeat is known to the heavenly hosts, who undoubtedly watched the tragedies which had been enacted on earth and who, with joy, had listened to Job's marvellous words. Triumphantly the Lord said to Satan, "And still he holdeth fast his integrity, although thou movedst me against him, to destroy him without cause." Then comes Satan's sneer. He has not given up hope. "Skin for skin, yea, all that a man hath will he give for his life. But put forth Thine hand now and touch his bone and his flesh, and he will renounce thee to thy face." This is bold and horrible language; it shows Satan's knowledge of human nature. And God tells Satan, "Behold, he is in thine hands." What an evidence that Satan can do nothing against the saints of God without His permission. What a comfort this is! Satan is absolutely under the control of God. And if God permits him to do his evil work, he judiciously designs, God's own love and power are on the side of His afflicted people; His own gracious faithfulness will be demonstrated in the trial. The suffering saints still learn the lesson which Job had to learn, his own nothingness, and that God is all in all. But there is a gracious restriction. The Lord said, "Only spare his life." Satan might sift Job; his life he could not touch, for the lives of God's people are in the hand of the Lord.

Verses 6-8. Satan does not delay long. He carries out his commission and useth his power to the utmost. "He smote him with sore boils from the sole of his foot unto his crown." What was the disease? It may have been the disease known as Elephantiasis, a disease of a horrible nature. Other diseases are mentioned also which correspond with the symptoms given in the brief description. "The symptoms given agree better with those of the Biskra sores, an oriental disease, endemic along the southern shores of the Mediterranean and in Mesopotamia. It begins in the form of papular spots, which ulcerate and become covered with crusts, which are itchy and burning sores" (Professor Macalister). It must have been the most loathsome disease Satan could think of.

"And he took him a potsherd to scrape himself; and he sat among the ashes." What a sad transformation! The great eastern emir, who erstwhile was so rich and influential, stripped of all his possessions, reduced to the most abject poverty, afflicted with a vile and extremely painful disease, takes his place upon the dunghill, amidst the ashes of the burnt refuse. He considers himself an outcast, unfit for a human dwelling.

Verses 9-10. Then his wife makes her only appearing in this drama. She is seen but once and only once she speaks. She must have followed him with weeping and wailing outside to the ash-heap. And now she speaks, but not of herself. Satan uses her as his instrument. He speaks through her. "Dost thou still retain thine integrity? Renounce God and die." That is exactly what Satan had spoken in God's presence, that Job would do this very thing. And now he uses the woman to suggest suicide to Job.

But noble is the answer of the afflicted saint of God. He detects in her language impiety--"thou speaketh as one of the impious (this is the meaning of foolish) women speaketh." Only those who do not know God can speak as you have spoken, is the meaning of his rebuke. What? shall we receive good at the hand of God, and shall we not receive evil? The power

of God it was which produced such wonderful submission. His grace enabled him to pass through it all without sinning. What a record! "in all this did not Job sin with his lips!" Satan's defeat is complete. His mouth is stopped. If he appears again before Jehovah he must stand in silence; the last word does not belong to him, but to God. And so is coming the day when Satan's defeat is complete, when he will be completely bruised under the feet of God's people.

III. THE CONTROVERSY BETWEEN JOB AND HIS FRIENDS

1. First Series of Controversies

CHAPTER 2:11-13

The Friends' Arrival

We now enter upon the main section of the book. The dark shadow of the accuser of the brethren has disappeared and in his place Job's three friends appear upon the scene. The news of the awful misfortunes had reached them; they made an appointment together to mourn with him and to comfort him. As they are now taking a prominent part in this drama we must examine their names and get some knowledge as to their personality. The first friend is Eliphaz the Temanite. Teman is in Idumea. He may have been the son of Esau (Genesis 36:10-11). His name means "my God is fine gold." Teman was noted for its wisdom. "is wisdom no more in Teman?" (Jeremiah 49:7). The second is Bildad the Shuhite. His name means "son of contention," which expresses the character he reveals in his speeches. His name can also be identified with the patriarchal age. Shuah was the sixth son of Abraham by Keturah (Genesis 25). He is also mentioned in connection with Esau, Edom and Teman. Shuah means "depression or prostration." The third friend is Zophar the Naamathite. Of his origin we know nothing. His name means "to twitter" like a bird chirps and twitters. And his addresses, consisting in violent utterances, reveal the senseless and harmless twittering of a bird.

There can be no question that all three were, like Job, God-fearing men. They formed with Job in the patriarchal age a kind of intellectual and religious aristocracy, in the midst of the surrounding idolators. How long their journey took after the news of Job's condition had reached them we do not know. It must have been months later after Job was first stricken, that they came to visit him. During that time the disease of Job developed fully; his misery did not become less. At last the friends arrived. And as they saw the ash-heap and the miserable figure upon it, they knew him not. He was so disfigured and distorted by the suffering and the disease that they failed to recognize him. They had known him in the days of his great prosperity, when young men were held by his personality in awe, when old men arose to do him honor, when princes refrained from talking and nobles held their peace (29:7-10). What a sad spectacle to see him in this deplorable condition. Their sympathy is expressed by weeping, the rending of their garments and the sprinkling of dust upon their heads toward heaven. What pain it must have given them when they saw that his grief and suffering were so great! Then follows an impressive silence of seven days and seven nights. They are stricken dumb and find no words to utter. But while their lips did not speak their minds were deeply engaged with the problem which ere long they would take up in controversy with the afflicted one. And the question uppermost must have been, "How can God, a righteous God, permit this good man to be in this

condition?"--"Why is he stripped of all and in this horrible condition?"

CHAPTER 3

Job's Lament

1. Job curses the day of his birth (3:1-9)
2. He longs for death (3:10-23)
3. The reason why (3:24-26)

Verses 1-9. The silence is broken by Job. Alas! his lips do not utter praises now, but he cursed the day of his birth. It was a sore trial for Job to look into the faces of these pious friends, in perfect health and strength, and he, even more pious than they, stricken and smitten of God. It was an aggravation of Job's grief and sorrow.

But let us notice though Job gives way to his feelings in this passionate outburst, he did not renounce God, nor is there a word of rebellion against Him. All through his address in answer to the arguments of his friends he does not lose sight of God, and over and over again expresses confidence in the unseen One, as in that matchless utterance, "Though He slay me, yet will I trust" (13:15).

Unmanned by the presence of his friends he curses the day of his birth. The chapter, and in fact all the chapters which follow, should be read in a good metrical version.

Perish the day when I was born to be,
And the night which said a man-child is conceived.
That day! may it be darkness;
Let not God regard it from above,
Neither let the light shine upon it.
Let darkness stain it and the shade of death.
Let densest clouds upon it settle down.
Let gathering darkness fill it with alarm.
That night--let gloom seize upon it.
Let it not rejoice among the days of the year.
Let it not come into the number of the months.

We give this as a sample of a metrical version. As the full quotation of the text is beyond the compass of our work, we recommend to our readers the translation of the Old Testament made by John Nelson Darby. It is the best we know and all poetical sections are given in this metrical arrangement.

Jeremiah, the great weeping prophet, also broke out in the midst of sorrow and treachery, in a similar lament, which reminds us of Job's words.

Cursed be the day wherein I was born.
Let not the day in which my mother bare me be blessed.
Cursed be the man who brought tidings to my father,
Saying, A man-child is born unto thee, making him glad.
Wherefore came I forth out of the womb
To see labour and sorrow
That my days should be consumed with shame?

Such expressions are the failures of poor, frail man. And He who

knoweth our frame and remembereth that we are but dust, is like a father who pitieth His children (Psalm 103:13-14). Since critics associate the sufferings of Job with the suffering Servant of the Lord in Isaiah's great prediction (Isaiah 53), we also can make this application, but not as meaning the nation, but our Lord Jesus Christ. What are Job's sufferings in comparison with the sufferings of our Lord! Job sat upon an ash-heap, but the Son of God was nailed to the cross and then He was forsaken of God. Never did a murmur escape those blessed lips.

(The correct translation of verse 8 is as follows:

Let those engaged in cursing days, curse this day,
Who are ready to rouse Leviathan.

It voices heathen superstitions and myths.)

Verses 10-23. He next wishes that he had died at the time of his birth and he looks upon death as a great relief and rest, saying:--

There the wicked cease from troubling
And there the wearied are at rest.

We see from these expressions that his mind turned to death as the great emancipator. Moses and Elijah exhibit the same trend of thought and weakness; so did disappointed Jonah when he said, "it is better for me to die."

Weighed in the light of the New Testament all these expressions are found wanting. Death is not a friend whose visit is to be desired, but an enemy. The hope of God's people in affliction and sorrow in the light of the gospel is not relief by death, but the coming of the Lord. The promise of the New Testament, "We shall not all sleep but be changed in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye" (1 Cor. 15:52) is unknown in the Old Testament, for it is one of the mysteries hidden in former ages. Job's language is that of a man in despair; he seems to have quite forgotten the bright and blessed days of the past and fears a hopeless future.

Verses 24-26. In this final paragraph Job states the reasons for his lament and longing for death to release him. We quote the last two verses.

For the thing which I greatly feared is come upon me,
And that which I was afraid of is come unto me.
I was not careless, neither had I quietness
Neither was I at rest; yet trouble came.

He evidently in the days of his prosperity feared that just such calamities might overtake him. He knew the testing times would come and had no quietness. But now as they have come and the three anticipated evils overwhelmed him he would be glad to find the grave.

CHAPTERS 4-5

The First Address of Eliphaz

1. He rebukes Job (4:1-5)
2. The righteous are not cast off (4:6-11)
3. An awe-inspiring vision (4:12-21)

4. Experience and exhortation (5:1-16)
5. Happy is the man whom God correcteth (5:17-27)

With this chapter the long and tedious controversy between Job and his three visitors begins. His pitiful lamentation brings forth the addresses of his friends. Eliphaz and Bildad speak thrice, each answered by Job, and Zophar twice with corresponding rebuttals by Job. Job delivers his last word, the lengthy speech of chapters 27-31 in which he gives a summary of what he contended for, namely, his own integrity, but the problem of his suffering remains unexplained.

The controversy is progressive. The thought which the three friends follow is that all suffering is the result of the justice of God and therefore punitive. For this principle they contend in a dogmatic way. As the controversy continues they become more harsh, suspicious and finally almost abusive. Job's answers are first marked by despair; then hope enters in. In a measure he rises above his sufferings in answering his friends in a sharp way. He has the last word, but, as already stated, the mystery and problem of his suffering is not cleared up.

Eliphaz's address is first in the series of controversies in which each maintains the punitive character of suffering and each answer given by Job (chapters 6-7; 9-10; 12-14) is filled with despair reflecting the state of his mind. After these preliminary remarks we briefly examine each address and Job's answers.

Chapter 4:1-5. Eliphaz is the most dogmatic of the three friends and in his first address makes much of the greatness and justice of God. He had come to comfort; but little comfort could he bring to the afflicted one. He begins very politely. "If one replied to thee (to Job's lament) wouldst thou be grieved? But who can refrain from speaking?" But at once he stabs Job to the heart.

Behold thou hast instructed many
And thou hast strengthened the weak hands
Thy words have upholden him that was stumbling;
And thou hast strengthened oft the feeble knees.
But now it is come upon thee and what grief?
Because it toucheth thee, thou art troubled.
Hath not thy piety been thy confidence,
And the perfection of thy ways thy hope?

All this was of course perfectly true. But he did not understand what Job needed in his suffering. The words of Eliphaz, the wise man from Teman, must have acted upon Job like an application of an irritant to a bleeding wound. What Job needed was tender sympathy, a good Samaritan, to pour oil and to give him wine. But Eliphaz reveals in this at once the harshness of his nature, the lack of discernment between the suffering of the righteous and the wicked, and finally he develops into a false accuser.

Verses 7-11. Eliphaz had told Job he was a pious and righteous man (verse 6). And now he tells him: "Remember I pray thee, who ever perished, being innocent? Or when were any righteous ones cut off?" Only those that plow iniquity and sow wickedness reap what they have sown. God makes such to perish in His wrath. They are cut off even if they were like strong lions. What dogmatic logic! Job, if thou art righteous and suffering thus, then God is

destitute of all justice; but if God is justice, then
thou hast plowed iniquity and sown wickedness
and all thy suffering is thine own harvest.

Verses 12-21. The words which follow, describing a vision which Eliphaz had, are so sublime that we must quote them.

Now a thing was brought secretly to me,
Mine ear did catch a whispering thereof
In thoughts from visions of the night
When deep sleep falleth upon men:
Great fear came upon me, and trembling too,
It made my very bones to shake.
Then a spirit passed before my face;
The hair of my flesh stood up--
I stopped--but nothing could I then discern--
I looked, and lo, I saw a form
Silence: and then I heard a voice--
"Shall mortal man be more just than God?
Shall a man be purer than his Maker?
In His own servants He trusteth not,
His angels He chargeth with folly.
How much more than they that dwell in houses of clay
Whose foundation is the dust,
Who are crushed as the moth!
From morning to evening are they smitten
They perish utterly, without any regarding it.
Is not their tent-cord plucked up within them?
They die and without wisdom."

This vision describes the greatness and majesty of God and of course is again true. That it was a real vision cannot be doubted. Man's punity, his utter nothingness, is thus made known in this vision. But did this meet the need of afflicted Job? It could not explain the reason of Job's suffering. And something like this is suggested by these words--Job, you are just like other men before God; your present experience of affliction testifies to this. You thought you were right with God and that He blessed and protected you, but as He is holy and just, your suffering shows, you are reaping the consequences of your sin, as others do.

Chapter 5:1-16. He gives Job next a bit of experience, which is very true indeed. But the insinuation is wrong. He reasons from experience that suffering is the lot of the wicked, and therefore Job must belong to that class. The advice he gives to Job is in full keeping with his dogmatic assertion.

For man is born to trouble, as the sparks fly upwards.
But as for me I will seek unto God,
And unto God commit my cause;
Who doeth great things and unsearchable,
Marvellous things without number.

But the advice, while good, is most subtle, for it is built upon wrong premises. He maintains his previous assertion that Job was an ungodly sinner, reaping what he had sown; with this in view he spoke these words.

Verses 17-27. The first address of Eliphaz closes with a marvellous

climax upon the same wrong premises, that Job had sinned, that he must seek God, but Job had not renounced God; he had not left Him. Otherwise this final utterance of Eliphaz tells out the gracious power of the Almighty in a most blessed way. Read these verses and get the help and comfort which they breathe.

CHAPTERS 6-7

Job's Answer

1. His Despair justified by the greatness of his suffering (6:1-7)
2. He requests to be cut off (6:8-13)
3. He reproacheth his friends (6:14-30)
4. The misery of life (7:1-7)
5. Two questions: Why does God deal with me thus?
Why does He not pardon? (7:8-21)

Chapter 6:1-7. He meets first of all the reproach and accusation of Eliphaz (4:1-5). Because his sufferings are so great his utterances are so desperately wild. If Eliphaz only would consider this he would find how enormous the Pressure is "heavier than the sand of the seas" which weighs him down and he would have shown the sympathy and tenderness for which Job longed. And then the description of what his agony is:

For the arrows of the Almighty are within me
The heat whereof my spirit drinketh up.
God's terrors now against me are arrayed.

This inward suffering of his soul was even greater than the loathsome disease which covered his body. He felt that God's hand in holy anger was upon him and he knew not what he learned afterward, that all was love and compassion from God's side. Satan must have had a share and part in these increasing soul-agonies of Job. But has he not a perfect right to complain? The animals in God's creation do not complain without reason. If the wild ass has grass and the ox fodder, they utter no sound. Nor would he complain if all was well with him. But his afflictions are like loathsome meat, and should he not murmur and complain. It is all the language of despairing grief.

Verses 8-13. And now he returns to his great lamentation:

Oh that I might have my request;
And that God would grant me the thing I long for!
Even that it would please God to crush me;
That He would let loose His hand, and cut me off!

This is still greater despair. And that he looks upon as comfort; yea, he would exult in pain that spareth not. It would end his sufferings and then after death he need fear nothing. He was conscious that he was right with God. "For I have not denied the words of the Holy One." Here is the first note of self-righteousness, of justifying himself, which later on becomes more pronounced in his answers.

Verses 14-30. The sympathetic kindness he expected from his friends had not come. Eliphaz's address gave the evidence of it.

E'en to th' afflicted, love is due from friends;

E'en though the fear of God he might forsake.
But my brethren have dealt deceitfully, like a brook
Like streams whose flowing waters disappear,
And are hidden by reason of the ice
And of the snow, which, falling, covers them. (Companion Bible.)

He had been bitterly disappointed in his friends. Their silence first, their wailing, and the outward signs of deepest grief, had led him to hope for comfort from their lips. They were like water brooks promising an abundant supply of refreshing water in winter time when not needed. But--

What time it waxeth warm, they disappear
When it is hot they vanish from their place.
The travelling caravans by the way turn aside
They go up into the waste, and perish.

Such were his friends. They were like dried up brooks in the summer's heat. He had not asked them to give.

Did I say, Give unto me?
Or, Offer a present for me of your substance?
Or, Deliver me from the Adversary's power?
Or, Redeem me from the Oppressor's hand?

Nothing like this he had asked of their hands; all he craved was kind and tender sympathy. He urges them to teach him, to show him in what he has sinned, if he suffers for his sins. He urges them to look straight into his face and see if he is lying. He solemnly assures his friends of his innocence.

If only Job had not looked to his friends but to Him whose goodness and mercy he knew so well, he would not have suffered such disappointment. And what a contrast with David's faith: "Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil, for Thou art with me; Thy rod and Thy staff they comfort me."

Chapter 7:1-7. This section is one of great beauty, describing human existence and the misery connected with it, as it was so markedly in his own case.

As soon as I lie down to sleep, I say:
How long till I arise, and night be gone?
And I am full of tossings till the dawn.
My flesh is clothed with worms, and clods of earth;
My broken skin heals up, then runs afresh.
Swifter than weaver's shuttle are my days,
And they are spent without a gleam of hope.

It is the picture of despair. The dark shadow of the enemy who had so wrongfully accused him must have told him "without a gleam of hope" as if God had now forsaken him.

Verses 8-21. Why did God deal with him in this way? He thinks God must be his enemy and asks:

Am I a sea? or a monster of the deep;
That Thou settest a watch over me?

He had dreams too, not like the dreams of Eliphaz which reveal the greatness of God, but dreams of terrifying visions, so that he loatheth his life.

... I would not live always:
Let me alone; for my days are vanity.

Poor, suffering, despairing Job! To think of Him whose love had been so fully demonstrated in the past, as his enemy and to pray to Him, "Let me alone," was indeed horrible despondency. And if he has sinned, why does not God pardon and take away his iniquity? But this is not confession of sin. A different thing it is when finally he cries out, "Behold I am vile, I abhor myself."

CHAPTER 8

Bildad's Address

1. How long, Job? (8:1-7)
2. Enquire of the former age (8:8-10)
3. God's dealing with the wicked and the righteous (8:11-22)

Verses 1-7. Bildad the Shuhite now speaks to Job. He is less dogmatic than Eliphaz, and less courteous, but more outspoken. He must have lost his patience listening to Job's reply. Especially does he resent what Job had said about God, the insinuations which had fallen from his lips. But we shall see he too follows the logic of Eliphaz, that God punishes Job for his sins. He starts in at once to rebuke Job for what he had said. "How long, Job, wilt thou speak these things? How long shall the words of thy mouth be like a mighty wind?" By the latter expression he insinuates that Job's speech was tempestuous like the wind, and as empty as the wind. He declares, what certainly is the truth, that God cannot be unrighteous. In this way Bildad called a decisive halt to the dangerous utterances Job had made, forced to it by Eliphaz's cold and dogmatic assertions. Job, inasmuch as he repudiated the accusation of being a sinner, and being punished for his sins, was rapidly approaching the verge of charging God with being unjust. Then Bildad deals a cruel blow to the man upon the ash-heap. He tries to illustrate the principle he defends, that God only punishes sinners, by the children of Job, that they sinned and were wicked and therefore God dealt with them in His righteousness. It has been freely rendered in this wise:

It may be thy sons 'gainst Him have sinned
And He, through their rebellion, cut them off.

How that must have pained Job! Then he exhorts Job to seek God diligently and it would not be in vain. He has his "ifs." "if thou wouldst seek unto God"--and--"If thou wert pure and upright."

Verses 8-10. But he is a traditionalist. He appeals to the past. "For inquire, I pray thee, of the former age, and apply thyself to that which their fathers have searched out." We, in our generation, are but of yesterday, and know nothing. Zophar also appealed to the fathers.

Verses 11-22. And here we have the wisdom of Bildad as he learned it from the past. It is all true and sublimely stated; the wicked cannot

prosper; their doom is certain. On the other hand God will not cast off the perfect man. But Job is in the place of one who is cast off, therefore he must belong to the wicked who do not prosper. This is hidden beneath Bildad's rhetoric. Yet beautiful are the closing sentences of his first address, the truth of which was fully acknowledged by Job in his reply.

But perfect men God never casts away
Nor takes He evil-doers by the hand.
Wait! Then one day He fills thy mouth
With laughter and thy lips with joyous shouts.
And they who hate thee shall be clothed with shame,
And tents of wicked men exist no more.

CHAPTERS 9-10

Job Answers Bildad

1. The supremacy and power of God (9:1-10)
2. How then can Job meet Him? (9:11-21)
3. He destroyeth the perfect and the wicked (9:22-24)
4. Confession of weakness and the need of a daysman (9:25-35)
5. Murmuring against God (10:1-17)
6. Welcoming death (10:18-22)

Chapter 9:1-10. The final words of Bildad seemed to have had a momentary soothing effect upon Job. Of a truth it is so. But here is the question, How can a man be just with God? And what a God He is! If a man contend in argument with Him, of a thousand things he could not answer one. Even if it is the wisest among men, and strongest, who stood up against Him, he did not prosper. He moveth and overturneth mountains; He makes the earth to tremble, bids the sun and it does not shine. He made the mighty constellations in the sky, Arcturus, Orion and Pleiades--

Who doeth mighty things works, past finding out,
And wondrous things, in number infinite.

How then can a man be just with such a God of power and greatness?

Verses 11-21. And such a Being Job declares is for him inaccessible.

Behold, He passeth, but I see Him not,
He sweepeth by, but is invisible.
LO, He doth seize; who then can hold Him back?
Or who shall say to Him, What doest Thou?
Should God at length His anger not avert,
Helpers of pride must stoop beneath His hand
How then can I address and answer Him?
Or choose my words in argument with Him?

How can Job confront such a one? Should he attempt to justify himself, his own mouth and lips would instantly condemn him; and if he were to say, I am perfect and blameless, He would only prove his perverseness.

Verses 22-24. But the words which follow sound almost like the ravings of a madman. He speaks out, but not in the fear of God. He assumes indifference and says that it is all the same to him, whether he is right

or wrong, for God destroyeth the perfect and the wicked alike; in other words He is an unjust God. When the pestilential scourge marcheth through the land and slays suddenly, He but mocks at the innocent who are taken away. The earth is given by Him into the hands of the wicked; injustice reigns everywhere. If God has not done all this, who then is it? Horrible words these which must have been whispered in his despairing soul by that being who is as much the accuser of God to the brethren, as the accuser of the brethren before God.

Verses 25-35. Then he confesseth his impotence. His days are swiftly passing. He cannot clear himself. He expresses his fear that God will not hold him innocent; He will account him guilty. If then he is wicked all his labours are in vain. Whatever he does cannot change matters. Even if he bathed himself in water pure as snow, and washed his hands with soap, so as to be as clean as he never was before, yet God would surely plunge him into the ditch. All self-help, and self-improvement is in vain. But then a ray of light. He needs another to help him, to bring him in touch with God, to make him just with God. He calls for a daysman, an umpire, one that might lay His hand on God and on him, the sinner, so that the rod be taken from him and he be freed from fear. The daysman we find later in this book foreshadowed. But He has come; Christ Jesus our Lord.

Chapter 10:1-17. And now the darkest of all. Not so much is it the physical agony, the boils and running sores, torturing him, as it is the bitter consciousness that he is loosing hold on God, that he begins to look upon Him no longer as a loving friend, but as a harsh, unmovable tyrant. It is a death struggle through which he passeth. His soul is weary of his life and so he tells out the bitterness of his heart. What accusations are here! Bold language indeed for the creature of the dust, and such an afflicted creature as he was--"I will say unto God--Show me wherefore Thou contend with me." He charges God that He planned his calamity and destruction (verses 6-13). It is as if Job confesseth in his blindness by his words that he is in the hands of an all-powerful, merciless being, not a God of love and justice, but an enemy.

Verses 18-22. What then is the use of living? Oh, if he only had been carried from the womb to the grave!

CHAPTER 11

Zophar's First Address

1. Job's multitude of words rebuked (11:1-6)
2. The greatness and omniscience of God (11:7-12)
3. That Job repent and receive the Blessings (11:13-20)

Verses 1-6. The third friend of Job is in every way the weakest. Speaking last he must have been the youngest of the three. He lacks the dignity of Eliphaz and the gentleness of Bildad, nor does he possess the depths of either. Evidently Job's speech has taxed his patience and irritated him.

Should not thy mass of words be answered?
And a man so full of talk, should he be justified?
Can thy boastings make men hold their peace?
And when thou mockest, shall no man make thee ashamed?
For thou sayest 'My doctrine is pure

And I am clean in His eyes.
But Oh that God might speak
And open His lips against thee.
That He would show thee the secrets of wisdom,
That is manifold in effectual working!
Know therefore that God exacts not more
than thine iniquity deserveth.

One can almost feel the boisterous spirit in which this rebuke must have been delivered.

Verses 7-12. He now reminds Job of the greatness and omniscience of the God whom he accused. Could he by searching find out God or find out the Almighty unto perfection? "It is high as heaven; what canst thou do? Deeper than Sheol; what canst thou know? The measure thereof is longer than the earth, and broader than the sea." But more than that He is an omniscient God, the searcher of hearts. He knoweth vain men and seeth iniquity also. So far it all seems well.

Verses 13-20. So far all sounds well, but now he follows the same argument as his friends. He too believes that Job is a wicked man who has hidden iniquity, and that this must explain his affliction. So he turns exhorter and calls on him to repent. Set thine heart aright, he tells Job; stretch out thy hands towards Him. Put iniquity away, do not permit iniquity to be in thy tents! He talks as if he is very sure, more so than Eliphaz and Bildad, that Job is guilty of much sin. Then he draws a charming picture of the blessed results if Job confesses and repents. He would forget his misery "as waters that are passed away."

Everything is painted by him in the rosiest colors as if he knew what God would do for Job. The time did come when Job got richer blessings than those outlined by Zophar. And what Zophar said, "Yea, many shall make suit unto thee" (marginal reading: entreat thee), came actually true when Eliphaz, Bildad and Zophar had to humble themselves before this Servant of God. Zophar's final word is a warning of the fate of the wicked. It was meant for Job. The blunt, rough way of Zophar, who does not contribute anything new and fresh to the controversy, makes Job more confident that he is right and he gives a remarkable answer.

CHAPTERS 12-14

Job's Answer to Zophar

1. His sarcasm (12:1-6)
2. He describes God's power (12:7-25)
3. He denounces his friends (13:1-13)
4. He appeals to God (13:14-28)
5. The brevity and trouble of life (14:1-6)
6. The ray of light through hope of immortality (14:7-22)

Chapter 12:1-6. He answers not only Zophar but the others as well. Before this Job had expressed his disappointment in them, rebuked them for their unkindness, and assailed as worthless their arguments, but now he treats them in a very sarcastic manner.

No doubt but ye are the people
And wisdom shall die with you.

Was he then without any understanding or inferior to them? Do you think I am ignorant of the things you have spoken to me about? You mock me; I am nothing but a laughingstock. You as my neighbors come to me and say, "He calls on God, that He should answer him." Yet I am the just, the perfect man; you make sport of me. You are at ease and treat the one who is down, overwhelmed by misfortune, with contempt. But remember:

The tents of robbers prosper,
And they that provoke God are secure;
Abundance does He give unto them.

This is what Zophar had claimed in his address, that the wicked do not prosper. (See Job 11:2, 14, 19, 20.) Robbers often prosper and those who are secure are often those who provoke God. Perhaps his friends with their prosperity might belong to that class.

Verses 7-25. This is also in answer to Zophar's argument. Zophar had spoken of the greatness of God. The wisdom which Zophar had tried to impress upon him is so elementary that the beasts themselves know something about it.

But ask now the beasts, and they shall teach thee;
And the fowls of the air, and they shall tell thee;
Or speak to the earth, and it shall teach thee;
And the fishes of the sea shall declare unto thee.
Who knoweth not in all these,
That the hand of the Lord hath wrought this?
In whose hand is the soul of every living thing,
And the breath of all mankind.

Job outstrips Zophar's speech in every way. He is ahead in the controversy. In verses 12-13 Job seems to have Bildad's statement in mind (8:8-9), and he declares now that with God is wisdom and might; He hath counsel and understanding. But what follows, while true in itself, is but the one side of God's doings, and the darkest pessimism, such as suited his mind. God spoils counsellors, maketh judges fools, looseth the bonds of kings, leadeth priests away spoiled, overthroweth the mighty, pours contempt on princes; He increaseth the nations and destroyeth them.

He taketh away the heart of the chiefs of the people in the earth,
And causeth them to wander in a wilderness where there is no way.
They grope in dark without light.
And He maketh them stagger like a drunken man.

It is a dreadful picture Job has drawn of God by the one-sided description of His greatness. Not a word of His love and mercy. It is in full keeping with his despairing heart.

Chapter 13:1-5. He had told in the previous words that he was not an ignorant man. What his wise friends had told him he understood perfectly; both nature and history had taught him the greatness of God which they had emphasized. What ye know, I know; I am not inferior to you. I am just as good as you are. What he desires is not to speak with them but to the Almighty; he wants to reason with God. The parallelism of verses 4 and 5 is interesting and has been rendered as follows:

But as for ye, plastered with lies are ye,
Physicians of no value are ye all
Would ye but altogether hold your peace;
That, of itself, would show that ye are wise.

Still stronger is his rebuke as found in verses 7-13. He warns them that their whole course is wrong. They are presumptuous in talking deceitfully for God. All this he speaks in self-defense, that he is innocent, and with it the subtle accusation against God once more, that He is unjust. He also warns them that "He will surely reprove you" and this came true.

Verses 14-28. Then his words addressed to God Himself. He dares to approach Him. Knowing the greatness and awfulness of God, and perhaps conscious too of not having Him honoured as he should have done, he says, this would be the meaning of the rather difficult verse (14), "Come what may I take my life in my hand and risk it." The paraphrase of the Companion Bible expresses it correctly.

Aye, come what may, I willingly the risk will take;
and put my life into my hand.

But at that moment when he makes this resolve His faith breaks through and he utters one of the sublimest words which ever came from human lips. "Yea, though He slay me, yet will I trust in Him." And thousands upon thousands have spoken it after him, thus honouring God with faith's sweetest song in the night.

He wants God to hear his speech diligently and have declaration come into His ear. He expresses his hope that God would yet declare him just, that is justify him, then who will dare to contend with him? And then that pleading of his with so much pathos! Relieve me from the sufferings, withdraw thine hand far from me, which rests upon me; and let not thy terror make me afraid. Then call Thou, and I will answer (verses 20-22). Or let me speak, he says, and answer Thou me. Then once more the right note, that note which finally must be sounded to the full in his wretched misery--"How many are mine iniquities and sins? Make me to know my transgression and my sins." But it was only momentarily. He breaks out in fresh charges against God. His self-righteousness has blinded him so that he asks, "wherefore hidest Thou Thy face, and holdest me for Thine enemy?" Horrible charges he brings against His Maker, the charges of injustice (verses 26-28). He wanted to listen to God, but He gives Him no chance to speak. When finally God speaks Job is in the dust.

Chapter 14:1-6. A true picture he has drawn in these words of man's frailty. Besides this unclean, for, who can bring a clean thing out of an unclean? Not one. He requests that he might be let alone "till he shall accomplish as an hireling his day."

Verses 7-22. There is hope for a tree, he declares, though cut down, but it may sprout again. "But man that dieth, and wasteth away; Yea, man giveth up the ghost, and where is he?" He speaks of man "who lieth down and riseth not." That is the language of man apart from revelation. It is the expression of one who is in darkness and uncertainty. Frequently teachers of errors, like soul-sleep, the annihilation of the wicked, etc., in defense of their false teachings quote Job and the utterances of these friends as if these were true revelations from God, when their words are

only the expressions of the human mind, and often false and misleading. What Job spoke and his friends is given in an unfailing inspired account, but revelation is a different matter altogether.

Then Job's desire is to be hidden in Sheol, until His wrath be past. "That Thou wouldest appoint me a set time, and remember me!" In this he expresseth the wish to believe that there is hope and that some one might give him the assurance about it--"If a man die, shall he live again?" But this ray of hope is only for a moment and once more he gives way to despair and continues his awful suspicions that God is his enemy. The first series of controversies are a complete failure. Job by justifying himself has dishonored God, and his friends by condemning him and not giving him the comfort he needed have sinned as well.

2. The Second Series of Controversies

CHAPTER 15

Eliphaz's Second Address

1. Tells Job that he is self-condemned (15:1-6)
2. Charges him with pride (15:7-16)
3. The wicked and their lot (15:17-35)

Verses 1-6. His second address is not as lofty as his first. Job's language has evidently annoyed him very much. He characterizes his words as vain, unprofitable, which can do no good. He charges him with having cast off fear and having become one who restrained devotion before God. He tells Job that what he has spoken only confirms their views of him, that he is a wicked man and suffers justly for his sins.

Thine own mouth condemneth thee and not I;
Yea, thine own lips testify against thee.

Verses 7-16. Wrong as Eliphaz's rebuke is, he adds still another charge. He tells him he is filled with pride. What Job knows they know also. "What knowest thou, that we do not know? What understandeth thou, which is not in us?"

And why does Thine heart carry thee away?
And why do thine eyes wink? (in pride)
That thou shouldest turn thine anger against God
And cause such words to issue from thy mouth.

Then, as he did in his first address, Eliphaz speaks once more of the holiness of God. "Behold He putteth no trust in His holy Ones. Yea, the heavens are not clean in His sight."

Verses 17-35. Here we have another description of the wicked, their miserable lot and what is in store for them. What he said was meant to terrify Job. Every word must have cut deep into Job's miserable soul, for he knew with Eliphaz he was a wicked, impious man. We see that Eliphaz said nothing new. He restated the former argument.

CHAPTERS 16-17

Job's Reply to Eliphaz

1. Miserable comforters are ye all (16:1-5)
2. Oh God! Thou hast done it! (16:6-14)
3. Yet I look to Thee (16:15-22)
4. Trouble upon trouble; self-pity (17:1-12)
5. Where is now my hope? (17:13-16)

Chapter 16:1-5. How masterfully he meets their wrong accusations and how he brings forth his suffering afresh, yet always with that horrible nightmare, God is not for me, but against me! Such things Eliphaz spoke he had heard before. What are you anyway? Nothing but miserable comforters. If they were in the condition in which he is, he would also speak. "But I would strengthen you with my mouth, and the solace of my lips should assuage your grief." I would never treat you as you treat me.

Verses 6-14. And now he charges God with being responsible for all. What does he say? "Thou hast made me desolate.... Thou hast laid fast hold on me.... He hath torn me in His wrath and persecuted me.... He has gnashed upon me with His teeth.... He hath delivered me to the ungodly." Remarkable is verse 10. "They have gaped upon me with their mouth; they have smitten me upon the cheek reproachfully; they gather themselves against me." This was done to another Sufferer, the Lord Jesus Christ. But He murmured not; He did not dishonour God as Job did, but glorified Him. It is interesting to make a contrast between these two sufferers. It brings out the perfection and loveliness of our Saviour.

Verses 15-22. But in all these ravings, faith, which slumbers in his breast, asserts itself, and tries to awake. He says "my witness is in heaven, and He that voucheth for me is on high." Thus he clings to God. How beautiful this word suits us, who know Him who has gone on high and who voucheth for us there, needs hardly to be pointed out. But Job knew Him not as we know Him. Once more he desires that daysman. "O that one might plead for man with God, as a man pleadeth for His neighbour!"

Chapter 17:1-12. What a pathetic description of his troubles! And he cannot deliver himself from the obsession that God is the author of it all.

Verses 13-16. And what is his hope now? How dark and evil his thoughts! The grave is to be his house, the darkness his bed. Corruption, his father, the worm his mother and his sister. He and his hope will go down to the bars of the pit, and rest together in the dust. But we shall soon hear another confession from his lips.

CHAPTER 18

Bildad's Second Address

1. New reproaches (18:1-4)
2. Once again, the wicked and what they deserve (18:5-21)

Verses 1-4. Bildad has the good sense in this second oration to be very brief. He, like Eliphaz, pays his compliments to Job and reproaches him. How long are you going to speak yet any way! You, you tell us that we are like the beasts, stupid and ignorant! Keep on with your nonsense, you but tear yourself in your anger, it is all unavailing and changes not things for thee. This is the meaning of his rebuke.

Verses 5-21. Then the favored theme, the wicked and what is in store for them. Apart from the falsity of the application of all Bildad says to Job, his words are certainly true and very poetic. Thus he speaks of the wicked and his fate:

Terrors make him afraid on every side,
And chase him at his footsteps.
Through pangs of hunger his strength declines,
Calamity ever stands ready at his side,
The members of his body to consume,
Yea, death's firstborn his members shall destroy.
His confidence be rooted out of his tent,
It shall lead him away to the king of terrors.
They that are none of his shall dwell in his tent,
And upon it brimstone shall descend.

All his words, though true, were consummated cruelty. It must have been torture and agony unspeakable for suffering Job to hear himself thus portrayed as the wicked man, whose lot is well deserved.

CHAPTER 19

Job's Reply to Bildad

1. How long will ye vex my soul? (19:1-6)
2. And I am not heard! (19:7-12)
3. Forsaken of men he pleads to be pitied (19:13-24)
4. Faith supreme (19:25-27)
5. The warning to his friends (19:28-29)

Verses 1-6. Bildad's scathing speech did not bring Job into the dust. He acknowledges the words vexed his soul and broke him in pieces, but he does not change his viewpoint. He repudiates the guilt with which they charged him and continues to blame God.

Verses 7-12. Afresh he breaks forth in accusing God. He charges Him with not answering his prayers. "He hath stripped me of my glory, and taken the crown from my head. He hath broken me down on every side, and I am gone." He imagines that His wrath is kindled against him. But what a display of divine mercy and patience! God looked upon the worm in the dust and pities him, as He still pities His children.

Verses 13-24. Then the description of his forsaken condition. Read it in these verses. His brethren, his kinsfolk, his wife, all have turned against him. His servants look upon him as an outcast. Young children even despise him. Then the wail for pity: "Have pity upon me, have pity upon me, O, ye my friends."

Verses 25-27. But what a change! Suddenly light breaks in. He does not speak by himself, but the Spirit of God enlightens his soul and utters words which stand in striking contrast with all his previous wailings. The witness he bears is not without difficulties in point of translation. Darby's translation is as follows:

And as for me, I know that my Redeemer liveth
And at the Last, He shall stand upon the earth;

And if after my skin this shall be destroyed
Yet from out of my flesh I shall see God.
Whom I shall see for myself.
And mine eyes shall behold and not another.
Though mine eyes be consumed within me.

The Companion Bible paraphrases the text in an excellent way:

I know that my Redeemer ever liveth,
And in the latter day on earth shall stand;
And after worms this body have consumed,
Yet in my flesh I shall Eloah (God) see,
Whom I, e'en I, shall see upon my side,
Mine eyes shall see Him--stranger now no more:
For this my inmost soul with longing waits.

And the Redeemer of whom he speaks, enabled to utter these words of faith by the power of another, is the Lord Jesus Christ, the risen, living, coming Redeemer, the victor over death and the grave. Here is the testimony of the book of Job to the hope of the coming of the Lord, the resurrection of the body and the glorification of the saints.

verses 28-29. How astonished his friends must have been at this wonderful outburst from his lips, which but a few moments ago almost blasphemed God. He asks them why they persecute him, inasmuch as the root of true faith is in him. He warns them that there is judgment.

CHAPTER 20

The Second Address of Zophar

1. Zophar's swift reply (20:1-3)
2. Another description of the life and fate of the wicked (20:4-29)

Verses 1-3. Zophar, the twitterer, begins his reply to Job with impatient haste. Job's words, probably those found in chapter 19:2-3, and the last two verses, have made him angry. He boils over with indignation. He is ready now to confirm the testimony already given and wound the suffering servant of God still more.

Verses 4-29. He follows the same path and there is again nothing new in his argument. The description of the wicked is great; no fault can be found with what he says about those who are ungodly. The triumphing of the wicked, and the joy of the ungodly is for a moment only. He is bound to perish Swiftly; like a dream, like a vision he vanisheth away. His children remain poverty stricken. He may swallow down riches, but he vomits them up again. And so he continues in his portrayal of the ungodly. Wrath is finally coming upon him. Such is the portion of the wicked man from God. But the serious mistake Zophar made is twofold. Job had pleaded for pity. Not a word of pity comes from Zophar's lips. The whole address is meant to tell Job "Thou art that man!" And the second mistake, he does not consider for a moment Job's utterance which could not come from the lips of an ungodly person, but from one who knows God.

CHAPTER 21

Job's Reply

1. Hear my solemn words--then mock on (21:1-6)
2. His testimony concerning the experiences of the wicked (21:7-26)
3. Your answers are nothing but falsehoods (21:27-34)

Verses 1-6. This answer shows that Job gets the upper hand over his accusing friends in this controversy. In a masterly way he meets their arguments. He wants them to hear diligently, and if they choose, after he has spoken, they may mock on. He is not complaining to man, or making his appeal to these human friends. He begins to look for another helper, even to God.

Verses 7-26. Zophar's eloquent words concerning the wicked are taken up by Job and he proves that experience shows another side besides the one Zophar had made so prominent. The wicked often live to a ripe old age and possess great power. They have large families and their houses are safe from fear; nor is the chastening hand of God upon them. They prosper and all goes well with them; their cattle increase. They sing to the timbrel and to the harp and rejoice at the sound of the pipe. They love pleasure and have a good time. Then suddenly Job changeth the description. They spend their days in prosperity--but in a moment they go down to Sheol. It reminds us of Asaph's great Psalm (73) in which he describes the prosperity of the wicked: "When I thought to know this it was too painful for me; until I went into the sanctuary of God; then understood I their end. Surely Thou didst set them in slippery places; Thou castedst them down to destruction."

Job declares they reject and defy God; they laugh at the thought of praying to Him. Then he gives his own, personal testimony "the counsel of the wicked is far from me." In this he shows his friends that they are wrong in classing him with the wicked. Then he continues in unfolding the problem of the wicked and how God deals with them.

Verses 27-34. Without enlarging upon the final statements of his answer, we only remark that Job shows that his friends have not only failed to convince him, but their answers are insincere and nothing but falsehoods. The victory is on his side; yet the problem, "why do the righteous suffer and how can their suffering be harmonized with a righteous God," remains as unsolved as before.

5. The Third Series of Controversies

CHAPTER 22

The Third Address of Eliphaz

1. Is not thy wickedness great? (22:1-5)
2. In what Job had sinned (22:6-11)
3. The omniscience of God and the ways of the wicked (22:12-20)
4. Eliphaz's exhortation and promise (22:21-30)

Verses 1-5. The third cycle of addresses begins again with Eliphaz, the wise man from Teman. He tries to maintain his dignity and lofty conception, but he proves too well that Job's accusation of insincerity is well-founded. He starts out with reminding Job of the majesty of God. Can then a man be profitable to God? Is it any pleasure to the Almighty when

thou art righteous? Or does He gain anything by it if thou art perfect in thy ways? Since then God has no interest in man's righteousness, and He cannot punish Job for his righteousness, he draws the conclusion that Job is a great sinner. Is not thy wickedness great? Neither is there an end to thine iniquities.

Verses 6-11. And now having made the assertion, according to his logical conclusions, he attempts to show that Job not alone must have sinned, but in what his sin consists. He charges him with avarice, with cruelty, with dealing in a heartless way with widows and with the fatherless. Then he tells Job that is "why these snares are around thee and thou art covered with darkness and with the waters of affliction." The astonishing thing is that every word of what Eliphaz says is a lying invention. Job later gives the most positive proof that all was a concoction of falsehoods. The Word of the Lord concerning Job shows up Eliphaz as a miserable liar, for the Lord had said concerning Job, "there is none like him in the earth, a perfect and an upright man." Would the Lord have spoken this if Job had outraged the laws of humanitarianism and withheld water and bread from the destitute or stripped the naked of their clothing? But how could Eliphaz ever stoop so low? It was but the result of his iniquitous logic. Job must be a sinner; he is a wicked man and without any real facts he draws his conclusions that Job must have done these things and charges him positively with it. The same fatal logic is still with us. Evil, for instance, comes upon a servant of the Lord Jesus Christ; he passeth through affliction, sorrow upon sorrow comes upon him, then someone suggests that his life must be wrong and the slanderous tongue soon charges some specific evil.

Verses 12-20. Eliphaz speaks next of God's omniscience and then again brings in the favoured theme of himself and his friends, the wicked and their defiance of God. Then in self-righteousness he declares--"But the counsel of the wicked is far from me." Strange it is this word which came from Job's lips first (21:16). Evidently Eliphaz repeats this phrase to mock and to insult Job.

Verses 21-30. Once more as before he turns exhorter. Acquaint now thyself with Him and be at peace, thereby good shall come unto thee. He gives him instruction what he is to do, and what God will do for him if he acts upon his advice. But while the exhortations are all proper, they are altogether out of place with Job. For if Job acted upon this advice and would repent according to Eliphaz's demand he would by doing so assent to the false and lying accusations of his three friends. He would acknowledge himself the wicked man they had made him out to be. What he says as to restoration is almost prophetic of what should come to Job in blessing at the close of his trial.

CHAPTERS 23-24

Job's Reply

1. O that I knew where I may find Him (23:1-8)
2. Trusting yet doubting (23:10-17)
3. Hath God failed? (24:1-12)
4. Job's further testimony as to the wicked (24:13-25)

Chapter 23:1-9. Job here does not disprove at once the false charges of Eliphaz. He can afford to wait till later, till their mouths are

completely silenced. Then he speaks the final word. He acknowledgeth that he is still rebellious. His hand which is upon him is heavier than all his groanings. Then that outburst which reveals the longing of his tried and tempest-tossed soul--"Oh, that I knew where I might find Him, that I might even come to His seat! I would order my cause before Him, and fill my mouth with arguments." Then in blinded self-righteousness he speaks a bold word: "I would know the words He would answer to me, and understand what He would say to me." He is so sure of it all that he declares "He would give heed to me." How different it was when the Lord did speak and Job's lips are sealed, only to open in expression of deepest self-abhorrence. Yet even in the words he speaks here, still in the dark as to the reason of his suffering, he demonstrates that he is not the defiant wicked man, but one who longs for God.

Verses 10-17. Trusting yet doubting expresseth the sentiment of what he says next. Trust is expressed in the beautiful utterance, "But He knoweth the way that I take; when He hath tried me I shall come forth as gold." Yet it is self-vindication which speaks next, not in God's presence, but to clear himself before his friends. "My foot held fast to His steps." Doubt follows for he still considers God, not his friend, but his enemy.

Chapter 24:1-12. The rendering of the opening verse is difficult to make. It has been paraphrased in this wise: "Since, then, events from the Almighty are not hid, why do not they who love Him know His ways?" This perhaps expresseth the true meaning of his thought. He shows what so often happens on the earth and which seemingly indicates a failure of God in His righteous government. Why is it all? And never before in the history of the race has Job's charge of the failure of God been so prominent as in our evil days.

From city and from houses groans ascend;
With shrieks those being murdered cry for help
Yet God regards not this enormity.

Verses 13-25. He describes the paths of the wicked again and yet they seem to escape the retribution in this life which they so well deserve. They even have security. And Job still is haunted by the thought that in these facts there is found an evidence that God is favorable to them. Death surely comes to them "yet a little while and they are gone" but what comes after death he does not mention. Then boldly he raiseth himself up and says, "And if it be not so now, who will prove me a liar, and make my speech of no account?" What an assertion that all he declared is infallibly true!

CHAPTER 25

The Third Address of Bildad

1. What God is (25:1-3)
2. What man is (25:4-6)

Verses 1-3. Bildad's arguments are exhausted. He has reached the end of his resources and Zophar does not open his lips again. Nevertheless Bildad's final word is of great force and beauty, with deep meaning. He gives a picture of what God is.

With Him dominion is reverence;

He maketh peace in His high places.
The number of His hosts who can count?
And upon whom doth not His light arise?

How pregnant with meaning these four sentences!

Verses 4-6. And what is man, man the creature of the dust, the earthworm.

How then can man be just with God?
Or he be pure who is of woman born?
Behold for Him the moon hath no brightness,
And even the stars are not pure in His sight.
How much less man, that is but a worm!
Or any mortal man-nothing but a worm!

CHAPTER 26

Job's Reply

1. A sarcastic beginning (26:1-4)
2. Job also knows and can speak of the greatness of God (26:5-14)

Verses 1-4. You have helped me greatly, Bildad, me, who am without power. Whom dost thou instruct anyway? And what kind of a spirit is it which speaks through thee? In other words he means to say, I have no more use for your argument at all.

Verses 5-14. But let me, Bildad, tell you something about the greatness of God before which your words pale into nothing. And so he utters a description of God's greatness which is indeed greater than Bildad's. And after this sublime unfolding of God's greatness and power, he truthfully says:

Lo, these are but the outlines of His ways
A whisper only do we hear of Him
But who can comprehend the thunder of His power?

Job's Closing Words in Self-Vindication

CHAPTER 27

1. My righteousness I hold fast (27:1-6)
2. The contrast between himself and the wicked (27:7-23)

Verses 1-6. Zophar, the third friend, no longer speaks. Perhaps Job paused after his remarks in answer to Bildad and waited for Zophar's criticism. Perhaps that young hot-head hid his inability of advancing another argument under an assumed disgust. Critics have assigned verses 7-10 and 13-23 to Zophar and claim that Job did not speak them at all. But other critics, like Wellhausen, Kuenen and Dillman say that these verses are a later insertion. We do not need to waste our time by examining these claims of the inventive genius of these scholars. There is nothing to them. Job now becomes bolder, knowing that his friends had spent their last arrow against him. He still accuseth God that He has taken away his right and

wronged him. And he is determined, more so than ever before, not to give in to the abominable logic of his friends. "My righteousness I hold fast, and will not let it go; my heart does not condemn me as long as I live." It is the vindication of himself.

Verses 7-23. And this self-vindication he pursues when he pictures the godless and contrasts them with himself, showing that he cannot be identified with these. How could this description of the godless ever be applied to himself? True, he had suffered like the wicked suffer, but will his end be like theirs? Thus he tries to show them that they had done him an injustice, for he was an upright man, who in spite of his misery held on to God.

CHAPTER 28

1. The treasures of the earth (28:1-6)
2. The better treasures (28:7-22)
3. God knoweth the way and the true wisdom (28:23-28)

Verses 1-6. This part of the monologue of Job does not seem to have much relation, if any, to the controversial matter of the previous chapters. He speaks first of the treasures of the earth, the riches which man seeks after, but which do not last, and are so often man's undoing. Job shows that he had a good knowledge of mining operations. He knows of veins of silver and how gold is refined. Iron is taken out of the earth and copper molten out of stone. Then he describes how the miner with his mining lamp makes an end to the darkness when he digs into the mountains and then he sinks a shaft. They are so far down that the foot which passeth above knows nothing where they are. The dangers of mining he also mentions--"they hang (suspended by ropes) afar from men, they swing to and fro." All this man does, risking life and comfort, to get gold and the treasures of the earth.

Verses 7-22. But there are better treasures, truer riches than these. Job evidently aims at a contrast with what man seeks in earthly things and the better things which are for him. There is a better way than digging into the earth for gold and precious stones.

There is a path no bird of prey has ever known,
Nor has the eagle's eye discovered it.
A path which no proud beast hath ever trod;
Not e'en the lion ever passed that way.

But these paths are not for finding treasures of the earth; and so there is another way to get other riches, far better than silver and gold. Then he speaks again of what man does to bring hidden things to light, how he lays his hand on the flinty rock and overturns the mountains in his mining operations, stemming the subterranean waters, and all to bring the hidden treasures to light. Then he asks: "But where can wisdom be found? And where is the place of understanding?" Alas! man does not know the price of wisdom; it is not found in the deep, nor in the sea. Gold cannot buy it, nor silver. The price of wisdom is above rubies, the gold of Ophir, the precious onyx (beryl) or the sapphire. "Whence then cometh wisdom?"

Verses 23-28. Here is the answer: "God understandeth the way thereof. Yea, in all His creation, He knows the way and much more so in redemption He is in the person of His blessed son, the way to Himself, and in Him all the treasures of wisdom and of knowledge are hid." Then comes the

revelation of true wisdom: "Behold, the fear of the Lord, that is wisdom; and to depart from evil is understanding." God has spoken to his heart and answered the question concerning wisdom and understanding. And ere long Job himself will demonstrate in his experience the meaning of this verse. In reverence and fear he then turns to Him, bowing in the dust; from evil, yea, from himself he turns, departs and finds the true wisdom and understanding.

CHAPTER 29

1. His past prosperity and honors (29:1-10)
2. The good works he did (29:11-25)

Verses 1-10. The words spoken by Job were wholesome words, showing that his mind was moving in another channel, but now he reverts to the old complaint in self-occupation, self-pity and self-vindication. What a horrible thing this old self? And before the sun can scatter his dark night, that self must be laid into the dust of self-abhorrence. And so we hear him review the past. Some 20 times he says "I" in this chapter. It reminds one of the man in Romans 7 with his "I." Retrospect is good if it is done with praise and in humility. Not once does Job utter a word of praise. It is all spoken to remind his friends, as well as himself, what a great man he was. How often it is with the Lord's servants, that they live in the past and then nourish a most subtle pride.

Verses 11-25. What a prominent place he used to occupy and the good works he did! The words need no further comment; what he means is on the surface. He glories in his good character and in his good works. Self is triumphant. His friends well knew that every word he spoke of his past greatness was true and not a lie.

CHAPTER 30

1. His present humiliation and shame (30:1-19)
2. No answer from God: completely forsaken (30:20-31)

Verses 1-19. He had spoken of his past greatness and now he describes his present misery. Ah! the bitterness if it--those younger than I have me in derision! Alas! through it all we hear nothing but pride. He scorns those who were so much beneath him. And those who were scourged out of the land, these children of fools and base men, mock him, the former prince among men. "I am become their song; I am a byword to them; they abhor me; they spit in my face." Then he describes his affliction. "Days of affliction have taken hold upon me--the pains that gnaw me take no rest." He is in the mire and has become like dust and ashes.

Verses 20-31. He brings in God again. Thou dost not answer me! Heaven had been silent to all his pleas. What a dreadful charge: "Thou art turned to be cruel to me; with the might of Thy hand Thou persecutest me"! He thinks himself completely forsaken, not knowing that God's thoughts towards him were thoughts of love and peace. His skin is black, he says, his bones are burned with heat. No joy for him, nothing but weeping.

CHAPTER 31

1. My chastity and righteousness (31:1-12)

2. My philanthropy (31:13-23)
3. My integrity and hospitality (31:24-34)
4. Let God and man disprove me (31:35-40)

Verses 1-12. His final word is the final word in his self-righteous vindication. He gives Eliphaz the lie. He gives a review of his life to prove that he is clean in the sight of God and of man. Even if after this outburst his friends would have an inclination to answer him they could not have done so. He silenced them for good. But what are his declarations after all? Nothing else but the filthy rags of his own righteousness, the vain boastings of a good, moral man, such as we hear on all sides. He shows that in his character he was morally pure. The gross sins of the flesh he had avoided. He had even abstained from a look which might stir his passion. He knew that God watched him and therefore the sin of adultery was shunned by him; he did not sin against a neighbour's wife. If he had ever done that, then let the sanctity of his home and his own wife be violated. Then he enumerates his great philanthropy. He had respect of the widow; he shared his bread with orphans; those who were naked he had clothed.

Verses 24-34. He was not a worshipper of gold, a covetous man, nor had he worshipped like others about him, the sun and the moon, or what sun-worshippers did, kissing the hand and wafting it towards the sun. He was a hospitable, a kind hearted man; nor did he cover his transgressions as Adam did, nor did he hide his iniquity in his bosom. His was a walk in integrity.

Verses 35-40. "Lo, here is my signature, let the Almighty answer." I sign my name to all I have said; I swear to it. Let mine enemy also bring forth his accusations and sign them also. He challengeth God and man. And even to the land he appeals that all his transactions were just. Job's words are ended. One feels like saying, "Thank God!"

His final word may be condensed in one sentence: "I am clean." The next time he speaks and opens his lips, he says, "Behold I am vile." How he came to this the rest of the book will teach us.

IV. THE TESTIMONY OF ELIHU

If the book of Job were now ended the last word would be Job's. Furthermore the enigma of suffering would remain unexplained and God's character would stand impeached. Eliphaz, Bildad and Zophar ceased answering Job because he was righteous in his own eyes. But suddenly another appears on the scene. Nothing is said how he came to be there; yet he must have listened to the controversy, for he sizeth up the whole situation and boils down the whole matter in a few terse statements. Critics and most expositors have spoken rather slightingly of Elihu. We heard some years ago a prominent Bible teacher speak of him as "a young theologian who has just been ordained and who thinks he has a lot of knowledge." Others call him "a conceited young philosopher" and that his babbling should be treated with silent contempt. Such statements only prove that the men who make them have not gone deep into the meaning of this book and that they lack in spiritual discernment. Just such a one, sent by God, is needed to exercise a mediatorial function and to prepare the way for the Lord Himself to come upon the scene. It is generally

pointed out that God rebukes him in the words of chapter 38:2. But God speaks to Job who applies it to himself. The vindication of Elihu from such criticism of man is found in the last chapter.

CHAPTERS 32--33:7

1. Elihu introduced (32:1-5)
2. I waited, but now must speak (32:6-22)
3. His address to Job (33:1-7)

Verses 1-5. As Elihu had listened to the different addresses his wrath was stirred up. His name is very suggestive. Elihu means "my God is He"; Barachel--"the Blessed God"; the Buzite, "the rejected One" of Ram, and Ram means "exalted." These are names which find their fullest application in the person of our Lord, whom Elihu in his mediatorial work represents. But why was his wrath kindled? Because Job justified himself rather than God and because Job's friends had found no solution of the problem, yet they condemned Job. This is indeed the result of the whole controversy in a nutshell. From the fourth verse we learn that he was a younger man; he maintained silence because they all were elder than he.

Verses 6-22. He tells them why he waited and did not speak before. He thought "days should speak, and multitude of years should teach wisdom," so he was not a forward, conceited young man. But he acknowledges the spirit and that the inspiration of the Almighty gives understanding. Depending on that he must speak. He tells the three friends in plain words that they did not convince Job, nor did one of them answer his words. With Job, Elihu says he has no controversy and he does not intend to use the speeches of the three men. Verse 15 is a soliloquy in the third person, spoken by Elihu as he looked on the three men. Then he says that he must speak. He is filled with words and the mighty constraint of the spirit within him, makes him like wine which has no vent and is ready to burst like new bottles.

Chapter 33:1-7. The chapter division here is unfortunate. The opening verses belong properly to the preceding chapter. What a difference between Elihu's words in addressing Job and the way the three other men had acted. He is calm, gentle and kind. He assures him that what he is going to say comes from the Almighty. Now, Job, if thou canst answer me, arrange thy words and stand up. "Behold, I am according to thy wish in God's stead." We believe with this Elihu refers to Job's desire for a daysman. Now in the person of Elihu he has come. He encourages Job not to be afraid, for "I am also formed of clay." How beautifully all this may be applied to the true Daysman, our Lord, we leave to the meditation of the reader.

CHAPTER 33:8-33

1. Elihu rebukes Job (33:8-13)
2. How God deals with man (33:14-22)
3. How God in grace recovers (33:23-30)
4. Mark well, Job, hearken unto me (33:31-33)

Verses 8-13. Elihu treats Job in a dignified, yet firm manner. He speaks as one who is sure of the whole matter. He has heard Job's speeches; he knows the mistake Eliphaz, Bildad and Zophar made, in treating Job as a suspicious character, a hypocrite and a godless man. No such wrong accusations are made by Elihu. He knows where Job's trouble lies and

already spoke of it (32:2); it is his self-justification and pride stands behind it. But Elihu's zeal is for the honor of the name and character of God. What Job had said in charging God he must rebuke. He therefore quotes Job's utterances in his previous addresses. Without entering into a lengthy argument to disprove the charge of Job, or to explain the mystery of the sufferings Job underwent, he utters one masterly sentence. "Behold in this (his wrong charges against God) thou art not Just. I will answer thee, that God is greater than man." Well spoken! God is greater than man, therefore His ways are past finding out, yet all must be perfect and righteous. And because God is God--"Why dost thou strive against Him? for He giveth not account of any matter of His."

Verses 14-22. But God, though He is greater than man, does not pass by man or ignore him. Elihu speaks of two different ways in which God deals with man. The first is in a vision of the night, in a dream. When there was no Bible, the revelation of God, God spoke to man individually by dreams and visions. He does not do so any longer for we have His completed Word in which His will is made known unto us. The purpose of this way of dealing with man is to withdraw him from an evil way and to warn him so that he may leave the pride which man nourisheth in his bosom; to keep his soul from the pit and his life from perishing by the sword.

But there is another way in which God deals with man, the way of affliction and suffering. The description Elihu gives of a sufferer fits Job's case exactly. To understand this method of God in dealing with man there is need of a messenger from God, a mediator, one who comes in, a daysman to interpret the meaning of the affliction and God's object in it. It is not a common interpreter who can do this, but one of a thousand--yea, He is needed who is "the chiefest among ten thousand." This interpreter is to show unto man his uprightness. But whose uprightness, or righteousness, is meant? It has been translated by "to show unto man what is right for him"; and so most expositors explain that it means the interpreter tells the sufferer how to do right before God; and critics even suggest that the word "uprightness" should be changed to "fault." There is a deeper meaning here. The word "his" should be spelled with a capital "H"--not man'S, but God's righteousness, the interpreting messenger is to show to the afflicted one. The following paraphrastic translation puts it in the right way:

Then, then, He speaks to him by messenger
Who can interpret; One 'mong thousands chief,
Who will reveal to man HIS righteousness.
Then He doth show him grace (divine and saith:)
"Deliver him from going down to death;
A ransom I have found--redemption's price."

In these words we have Him declared who is the revealer of God's love and righteousness, the Son of God, though His Name is not mentioned, yet He is the only One who reveals to sinful man His righteousness. He has paid redemption's price, He has made atonement and therefore He can deliver the sinner from going down to the pit. Here we have the gospel in the book of Job. Then the blessed results. His flesh becomes as fresh as a young child; this is the new birth. He prays to God as His redeemed child and He shows Him grace and beholds His face with joy, even the face of a loving Father. This is the way God bestows upon man His righteousness through Him, His well-beloved Son, who has found the ransom. He sings a new song. "I have sinned, and perverted that which was right, and it profited me not. He hath redeemed my soul from going into the pit, and my life shall behold

the light."

Verses 31-33. After this glowing utterance in which Elihu brings in God in His grace, he turns to Job. "Hast thou anything to say, then answer me." But Elihu waits in vain. Job's lips are sealed.

CHAPTER 34

1. Hear my words ye wise men (34:1-4)
2. The refutation of Job's accusation of God (34:5-30)
3. Job needs testing to the end (34:31-37)

Verses 1-4. In beginning this part of the address, in which Elihu vindicates God's character against Job's insinuations, he addresses the friends of Job, and perhaps others who were gathered there. He wants them to pay the closest attention to what he will say.

Verses 5-30. This is the main burden of his address; it is taken up with refuting Job's charge against God. He treats Job with all fairness and quotes what he said before. The wrong Job had done in his words is found in verses 5-9. Then Elihu brings forth the refutation that God is unjust. He shows that God is righteous. He is God and the Almighty and He cannot do that which is evil and unrighteous. If sin or wickedness were in Him He would not be God. His creation bears witness to this. He sustains all in His goodness. Note verse 14 in its true rendering, "Should He set His heart upon Himself," what then would become of man? All flesh would then expire and man would turn to dust again. But He does not set His heart upon Himself. Finally Elihu demonstrates the righteousness of God from His greatness and his omniscience. His judgments also declare that He is righteous (verses 26-30).

Verses 31-37. And Job has not yet learned the lesson; he needs more testings. Did ever a word like the following come from his sinful lips? "I have borne chastisement, I will not offend any more." Has he asked in humility to be taught? Or has he said, "if I have done iniquity I will do it no more"? Alas! his spirit in spite of all affliction, was still unbroken. "Would that Job were tried unto the end, because he answered like wicked men, for he addeth rebellion unto his sin, He clappeth his hands among us, and multiplieth his words against God."

CHAPTER 35

1. Remember the greatness of God (35:1-8)
2. Why God is silent and does not answer (35:9-16)

Verses 1-8. Job having kept silence Elihu continues and asks him if this is sound judgment, what he had said, "My righteousness is greater than God's righteousness." This was the logical conclusion which Elihu drew from some of his words. Because God did not care for him the sufferer what profit was it to him if he had not sinned? Then Elihu answers and his friends as well by following Job's unjustly charge. He points out the greatness of God and that cannot in any way be affected by what man does. That was Job's contention. Look at the heavens which are higher than the creature of the dust. If thou hast sinned by thy many sins, what canst thou do to Him? If thou are just, what givest thou to Him? Thy sin may hurt thee, and thy righteousness may profit thee; how canst thou claim that He has afflicted you in an unrighteous way? In all this Elihu had accommodated himself to

Job's wrong reasoning.

Verses 9-16. Furthermore, Elihu shows that this reasoning of Job is utterly false. Job had contradicted himself. God takes notice of man. Then he gives the reasons why God does not answer the cry of the afflicted. It is not His indifference but man's sin and forgetfulness of Him. None saith, "Where is God my Maker, who giveth songs in the night?" The true reason is the evil-doer's pride. God will in nowise hear vanity. Pride, vanity, self-will and all that goes with it makes it impossible for a righteous God to hear. And therefore Job's contention that it does not matter with God whether a man sins or is righteous is disproven.

CHAPTER 36:1-21

1. God's care over the godly (36:1-7)
2. The purposes of affliction (36:8-18)
3. Job to consider this (36:19-21)

Verses 1-7. Elihu had told Job in the last verse of the preceding chapter that he had opened his mouth in vanity and had multiplied words without knowledge. That should have explained to Job the reason why God did not answer. There could be no reply from Job and so Elihu continues. He is not through yet with speaking in behalf of God. Sublimely he stands up for God. "I will ascribe righteousness to my Maker." He tells Job, "One that is perfect in knowledge is with thee." How could he say this? Because Elihu knew in speaking for God His Spirit would speak through him to Job. All Job had said was wrong. Though God is mighty, yet does He not despise any. He does not preserve the life of the wicked, nor does He withdraw His eyes from the righteous. But the day is coming when God will reward the righteous.

He seateth them with kings upon the throne
He makes them sit in glory; raised on high.

Beautiful truth! It is a glimpse of the gospel again, as expressed also in Hannah's song of praise (1 Samuel 2).

Verses 8-18. But what about the afflictions of the righteous? Here Elihu speaking in God's behalf lifts the veil. He permits them to be bound in fetters and in sorrow's bonds, so that He, the righteous God, may show to them their deeds, to uncover their transgressions which have for its source that which God hates, pride (the crime of the Devil; 1 Tim. 3:6). It is love and kindness, not his wrath and displeasure, which are revealed in the afflictions of the righteous. He wants to instruct them by suffering. And if they hearken and learn the lesson, they shall spend their days in prosperity, and end their earthly existence in peace and pleasantness. It was a call to Job to acknowledge this, it is a prophecy that ere long he would find it out, when God has accomplished His purpose with him, and his end would be peace and prosperity. The wicked do not heed this and therefore perish. Let any man refuse to hear Him and harden his heart against Him, they shall perish among the unclean. He would have led out Job in a broad place, but if Job continues in the argument of the wicked, reasoning and pleading as they do, charging God falsely, then let him beware. "Because there is wrath, beware lest He take thee away with His stroke, then a great ransom cannot deliver thee." We dare not meddle with this verse as others have done. Let it stand as it is, this solemn truth! There is wrath and if man does not hearken to God

His wrath in judgment will be displayed and the great ransom, not even the great ransom, can deliver.

Verses 19-21. These verses contain wholesome words of exhortation addressed to Job to take heed and not to regard iniquity.

CHAPTERS 36:22--37:24

1. God's power and presence in nature (36:22-33)
2. The thunderstorm (37:1-5)
3. The snow and the rain (37:6-16)
4. Elihu's concluding remarks (37:17-24)

Chapter 36:22-33. The chapter division in the Authorized Version is at fault. These concluding verses of the thirty-sixth chapter begin the final section of Elihu's testimony. Unspeakably great in every way, in diction and reverence, is this man's witness to the ways of God in creation's work. They show that he speaks not of himself, but the One who is perfect in knowledge speaks through him. God's power is displayed in nature and man should extol His work and gaze in wonder upon it.

Lo! God is Great--greater than we can know;
The number of His years past finding out.
Tis He who draweth up the vapour clouds,
And they distil from heaven in rain and mist,
E'en that which from the low'ring skies does fall,
And poureth down on man continually.
Can any man explain the rain-clouds balancings,
The rumbling thunders of His canopy?
Behold He spreadeth out His light thereon
While making dark the bottom of the sea.
Yet He His judgment executes by these;
By these He giveth food abundantly.
He graspeth in His hand the lightning flash
And giveth it commandment where to strike.
Of this the noise thereof quick notice gives
The frightened cattle warn of coming storm.
(Companion Bible)

How beautiful! It also proves the antiquity of the book. In early days man knew the Creator by His works and was fully occupied with them (Romans 1:20-21).

Chapter 37:1-5. And now the thunderstorm. His voice is heard in the thunder, His power displayed in the lightning and Elihu, in vivid description, trembles.

He thundereth with His voice of Majesty
One cannot trace Him, though His voice be heard.
God's voice is wondrous when He thundereth.
Great things He doth; we comprehend them not.

And if He is so wonderful in nature, His ways there past finding out, how much more in His providential dealings. Yet whether in nature or in providence, His ways are perfect.

Verses 6-16. The description of God's perfect ways in nature are

continued by Elihu. The snow and the rain, the hot blast of the summer, the biting frost of winter, the formation of ice by His breath and the storms, all is in His hands and controlled by Him. O Job! hearken, hearken! Stand still and consider the wondrous works of God.

Verses 17-24. And now the concluding words of his great, God-given testimony. They are to impress Job and all of us with the frailty, the nothingness of man. "Touching the Almighty, we cannot find Him out; He is excellent in power; and in judgment and plenteous justice He will not afflict. Men do therefore fear Him; for none can know Him, be they ere so wise." This must be man's true attitude. This should have been Job's place before the Almighty. Surely the beautiful and powerful testimony of Elihu must have been a spiritual anaesthetic to Job. But more than that, it clears the way for the Almighty to speak.

V. THE LORD'S TESTIMONY TO JOB AND CONTROVERSY WITH Him

CHAPTER 38:1-38

1. The Lord speaks to Job (38:1-3)
2. The questions of the Lord (38:4-38)

Verses 1-3. The voice of man is hushed; the voice of the Lord begins to speak. The Almighty, the Creator, the Lord of All comes now upon the scene. He too, like Elihu, had been the silent listener; He heard Job's complaint and wailing and the babblings of his friends. Elihu's wonderful utterance, inspired by the Lord, was ended. The thunderstorm is on, no doubt a literal storm, the dark clouds gather--

Then from the North there comes a golden light.
God appears in wondrous Majesty (chapter 37:22).

The golden light of God's own presence and glory overshadows the scene. Out of the whirlwind His own voice is heard. It is that voice which David in the "thunderstorm-Psalm" (Psalm 29) so wonderfully describes. The voice which is upon the waters--full of majesty, the voice which breaketh the cedars; the voice which divideth the flames of fire. When David thus extolled the voice of the Lord, he shows the demands of that voice. "Give unto the LORD, O ye mighty, give unto the LORD glory and strength. Give unto the LORD the Glory due unto His Name; worship the LORD in the beauty of holiness." And that voice, though terrible in majesty, will bring peace. "The LORD will bless His people with peace." What a scene it must have been there in the land of Uz, when the voice of the LORD spoke out of the whirlwind! We can imagine how good Elihu stepped aside and covered his face. And Eliphaz, Bildad and Zophar, terror-stricken, fell on their faces in the dust, while silent Job, awe-struck, dares not to look up. And what He speaks is for the one great purpose to humble Job, to bring him in the dust.

Job's last utterance was this: "Oh, that the Almighty would answer me" (31:35). He answers him now. "Who is this that darkeneth counsel by words without knowledge?" What a blunder expositors have made of speaking of Elihu's gentle words, and true words, as "a harsh judgment" and that God rebukes him in this verse. No; God does not rebuke Elihu who had exalted His Name and His works. He rebukes Job. He had darkened counsel by the multitude of his senseless words. God answers Job. He is going to

ask him questions.

Verses 4-38. If we were to examine these questions minutely, which the compass of our work does not allow, we would have to write many pages. There are 40 questions which the Lord asks of Job, His creature, concerning His own works in creation. They relate to the earth and its foundations upon which all rests. the bounds of the sea--

When I decreed for it My boundary
And set its bars and doors and to it said,
Thus far-no farther, ocean, thou shalt come:
And here shall thy proud waves be stayed.

He asks about the morning light and the unknown depths, the unexplored depths of the sea, with their hidden secrets, and the gates of death. He questions as to the elements, the treasuries of the snow, the storehouse of hail, the rain, the winds and the ice--

Whose is the womb whence cometh forth the ice?
And heaven's hoar-frost, who gave it its birth?
As turned to stone, the waters hide themselves;
The surface of the deep, congeal'd, coheres.

And what about the things above, the stars and their wonderful constellations?

Canst thou bind fast the cluster Pleiades?
Or canst thou loosen great Orion's bands?
Canst thou lead forth the Zodiac's monthly signs?
Or canst thou guide Arcturus and his sons?

And then the rain clouds, the lightnings and their control. What questions these are. They cover every department of what man terms "natural sciences"--geology, meteorology, geography, oceanography, astronomy, etc. Job had not a single answer to these questions and if he had spoken his words would have been folly. And we, 3000 years or more after, with all our boasted progress, scientific discoveries of the great laws of nature, are still unable to answer these questions in a satisfactory way. All the boastings of science of getting at the secrets of creation are nothing but foam. One breath of the Almighty and man's speculations, apart from Him and His Word, are scattered to the winds. But what is the aim of the Lord in putting these questions? To show that God is greater than man and to humble man, to bring Job to the needed true knowledge of himself and to deliver him from the pride of his heart.

CHAPTERS 38:39--39:30

1. The beasts of prey (38:39-41)
2. The wild goats, the ass, the unicorn and the ostrich (39:1-18)
3. The horse, the hawk and the eagle (39:19-30)

Chapter 3839-41. God's own wisdom and power in nature, as witnessed to by Himself, is followed by His witness as to the sustenance of His creatures, how mercifully He provides for their need. This section begins with the query, "Knowest thou?" Could he hunt the prey of the lion, or fill the ravenous appetite of their young? God considers the young, even so unclean a bird as the raven has its food provided by God. Wonderful it is

to read that the young ravens in their helplessness cry to God. The beasts acknowledge the Creator by their instincts and look to Him for food, though it be not the sweet song of a lark, but only the croak of a raven. How it reminds us of the witness of the same Creator who speaks here, when He was clothed in creature's form. "Consider the ravens; for they neither sow nor reap; which neither have storehouse nor barn; and God feedeth them. How much more are ye better than the fowls" (Luke 12:24). And striking it is that He begins by calling Job's attention to the wild beasts first, though they are now man's enemy through man's sin. God in His infinite wisdom and benevolence cares for them.

Chapter 39:1-18. Then what about the goats of the rock and their young? His omniscient eye beheld them out in the desert rocks and He watched over their young. Could He then not watch the footsteps of His higher creature, even His offspring, man? Then the wild ass, also a desert animal. He cannot be tamed. God made him so. The unicorn (the aurochs) with his strength is known to God also. He has the power to make him the willing slave; man cannot do it. And the peacock with its goodly wings and the ostrich, which leaveth her eggs in the earth, and warmeth them in dust. Who takes care of these hidden eggs, which the foot might crush and wild beasts break? It would be amusing, if it were not so sad, when critics declare that the author of "the poem" made a mistake when he speaks of the eggs of the ostrich. But it is not an "author" who speaks, but the Creator Himself and He knows more about His creatures than all the "scientists" in the world.

Verses 19-30. Next the description of the noble horse. Did Job give the war horse his strength or clothe the neck with the rustling mane, or make him leap like the locust? The picture of the war horse in battle is sublime also. God shows to Job a glimpse of His works, and the wisdom which has created them, as well as His care in keeping them. Such a God is He whom Job has maligned.

The hawk too may teach him a lesson. Is it by Job's instructions that the hawk soars high into the air, and is it by his command that the eagle mounts and builds his nest in the dizzy heights, from where he spys his prey? No answer could Job give. His silence is assent. God is great and unsearchable and Job but the rebellious worm of the dust.

CHAPTER 40

1. The answer demanded (40:1-2)
2. Job's answer (40:3-5)
3. Jehovah's appeal to Job (40:6-14)
4. Behold behemoth! (40:15-24)

Verse 1-3. Now comes the direct word of Jehovah out of the storm-cloud to Job. He addresses him as "he that reproveth God." He had contended with the Almighty and now the Almighty Job had judged faces him and demands an answer. Let him answer.

Verses 3-5. And Job answers; and what an answer it is! It is the answer for which God was waiting. "Lo! I am vile; what shall I answer Thee? I will lay my hand upon my mouth." He acknowledges that he had spoken too much and that now he cannot answer and proceeds no further. He is completely silenced, acknowledges his own nothingness and vileness, that his words were wrong and that he has nothing else to say. He was convinced that such

a God who had spoken to him of creation and His creatures, making known His power, wisdom and care, could never be unjust in His dealings with man.

Verses 6-14. But Jehovah, the searcher of hearts, has not yet finished. Job's abominable pride must be laid bare. Jehovah asks him the serious question, "Wilt thou disannul My judgment? Wilt thou condemn Me, that thou mayest be righteous? Hast thou an almighty arm like God, or canst thou thunder with a voice like His?" Then he tells him: "Deck thyself now with majesty and glory." Array thyself with majesty and power. Come and take My place and then thus arrayed let Job be in God's place, rule and deal with proud man and the evil-doers.

Send far and wide thy overflowing wrath;
And on each proud one look, and bring him low;
Each proud one single out, and humble him;
Yea, crush the evildoers where they stand;
Hide them away together in the dust;
And in the deepest dungeon have them bound.

It is Divine irony, but needed in order to humble Job still more. He who was so proud and had so stubbornly defended his righteousness in self-justification and God-accusation, how could he do what Jehovah asked him to do?

But if he were to do it, then Jehovah would be ready to own to him "that thy right hand to save thee will suffice." It all strikes home to the proud, self righteous heart of Job.

Verses 15-24. The Lord asks Job to consider the behemoth; it is undoubtedly the hippopotamus (the Greek for river-horse). A description of this powerful beast follows. He calls the behemoth the "chief of the ways of God," one of His greatest works in animal creation. The behemoth is one of Job's fellow-creatures "which I made as thee." He eateth grass like an ox. He has tremendous strength in his loins and legs. He takes its rest under the shady trees and fears nothing:

Suppose the stream should swell, he will not blench
For he believes that Jordan he can drink.
Shall any take him while he lies on watch?
Or with a ring shall any pierce his nose?

Behemoth then is a powerful, uncontrollable beast which lives for itself. How weak then is man as contrasted with this beast in possession of such marvellous strength. Yet it is only a beast and Job is a man. How abominable then must Job's pride and boasting appear in the sight of the Lord.

CHAPTER 41

1. Leviathan, the untamable beast of power (41:1-11)
2. Its description (41:12-24) -
3. His remarkable strength (41:25-34)

Verses 1-11. The leviathan has generally been identified with the crocodile. Like the behemoth, the leviathan is a strong and untamable beast. Jehovah asks, Canst thou draw up leviathan with a hook? Canst thou pierce his jaw with a reed? Will he make a covenant with thee? Wilt thou take him

for a servant forever? Then He declares that he is fierce, and even at the sight of him one is cast down. And if a creature is so mighty and strong what must the One be who called this creature into existence? Verses 10 and 11 should be rendered as follows: "Who then is able to stand before Me (the Creator)? who did give to me first that I should repay him? since all beneath the heavens is mine."

Verses 12-24. A more detailed description of the leviathan follows. His frame is strong; his outer garment, so invulnerable, who can strip it off? His teeth are terrible, who can open the doors of his face (his mouth)? His scales, his armour, are his pride. Here is a good description of the crocodile's hide. The scales are so near each other that no air can come between them; they are joined one to another, they stick together, that they cannot be sundered. His sneezings flash forth light and his eyes are like the eyelids of the morning. The eyes of the crocodile are visible quite a distance under water. The Egyptians therefore used the crocodile's eyes in the hieroglyphics for the dawn of the morning. The entire description shows what a terrible beast it is.

Verses 25-34. Then his great strength is unfolded. If one lay at him with the sword, it cannot avail. The dart, the spear and the pointed shaft make no impression upon him. He counteth iron as straw and brass as rotten wood. The arrow cannot make him flee; clubs are counted as stubble. The final statement concerning leviathan is "He is king over all the sons of pride."

This last word is significant--"He is King over all the sons of pride." it has a deeper meaning. In Isaiah 27:1 we read: "In that day the LORD with His sore and strong sword shall punish leviathan the piercing serpent, even leviathan the crooked serpent; and He shall slay the dragon that is in the sea." Here leviathan typifies the power of darkness. Both the behemoth and the leviathan typify Satan, his character and his rule. He is king over all the sons of pride. These two beasts are likewise a good description of the beasts spoken of in Revelation, which at the end of this age will manifest their power and pride as Satan's masterpieces. And now the deduction which Job could easily make. If he is proud then he belongs to leviathan the king who rules over the sons of pride. Jehovah has touched the secret in Job's bosom. He has searched out the depths of his heart. Pride, the Devil's crime, has been cherished by him. And now with the heart laid bare by Jehovah's dealing we shall hear Job's voice once more.

VI. THE CONFESSION OF JOB

CHAPTER 42:1-6

Critics claim that Job's answer is misplaced and that it really ought to be put in connection with chapter 41:3-5. This is another evidence of the lack of spiritual discernment of these "great" scholars. They treat the Word of God as literature only and criticise it as such. We have seen that the additional words of Jehovah were needed to bring Job completely into the dust and bring from his lips the confession which alone could satisfy Jehovah and be the great blessing for himself. This confession we have now before us.

Then Job answered the Lord and said:
I know that Thou canst do all things,

And that no purpose of Thine can be withstood.
Who is this that hideth counsel without knowledge?
Therefore have I uttered that which I understood not.
Hear I beseech Thee and I will speak,
I will demand of Thee, and I will speak and declare Thou unto Me.
I heard of Thee by the hearing of the ear;
But now mine eyes seeth Thee,
Wherefore I abhor myself, and repent in dust and ashes.

Here we have his full answer, his complete prostration before Jehovah. He acknowledgeth first Jehovah's supreme power. He is omnipotent and can do all things. Then he quotes Jehovah's own words (38:2; 40:2). Thou hast asked me, "Who is this that hideth counsel without knowledge?" It is strange that some expositors can misapply these words as if the Lord again rebuked Elihu. No, as we have shown before, He rebukes Job for his wild and audacious charges he had made against the Lord. And now Job acknowledgeth that Jehovah's rebuke is right. It is all true, he saith, I uttered things I did not understand, things too wonderful for me, beyond my ken. Hear me now, Jehovah, I will speak. Once more he quotes Jehovah's word. Thou hast said (40:2), "I ask of thee, answer ME." Here then is MY answer, he replies--"I heard of Thee by hearing of the ear; but now mine eyes hath seen Thee--this is my answer now--I abhor myself in dust and ashes I repent."

Face to face with Jehovah, His power and His holiness prostrate Job in the dust. No creature can stand and boast in His presence. His plea of innocence, of righteousness, of philanthropy and all the boastings of his former greatness is gone. He seeth himself stripped of all; he stands in Jehovah's presence in nakedness and shame. Nor does he say that he abhors now what his mouth hath spoken, but it is himself, his wicked, proud self, which he abhors. He has taken the place of greatness. Now Jehovah can come forth and lift him up and raise him to blessing and glory. This great scene corresponds with the vision of Isaiah when he beheld the Lord and cried out "Woe is me! for I am undone; because I am of unclean lips" (Isaiah 6:5). And Daniel also! (Daniel 10). Peter on the Lake of Galilee was face to face with Him, who hath spoken to Job, the same and not another, and when he seeth His power and realizeth this is Jehovah, Peter falls at His feet and like Isaiah, Daniel and Job, acknowledges his nothingness. "Depart from me, for I am a sinful man, O Lord."

The enigma of the book of Job is solved. God permitted the afflictions to come upon His servant Job, not only to manifest His power, but for Job's good, to draw him into the place of nearness and of blessing. And that place is the dust, "in dust and in ashes."

This is the place which all God's saints must own. And blessed are we, beloved reader, if we follow the wooings of grace, if we let His Spirit put us daily into that place, so that the Lord's hand may be prevented from putting us there by suffering and affliction.

VII. THE EPILOGUE: JOB'S RESTORATION AND BLESSING

CHAPTER 42:7-17

1. Jehovah's message to Job's friends (42:7-9)
2. Job's restoration (42:10-15)

3. The conclusion: Peace (42:16-17)

Verses 7-9. Like the beginning of the book, the prologue, the epilogue is not in a poetic measure, but in prose. The Lord addresseth Eliphaz as the most prominent one of the three friends of Job. His wrath is kindled against the three. Though they had apparently stood up for Him and defended His character, yet under the searchlight of the Omniscient One, who searcheth the hearts of men, they are found wanting. The charges they had brought against his servant Job, were false. They had wickedly accused Job, whom He had declared to be "a perfect and an upright man." In all their charges they had slandered God. Then the Lord said, "for ye have not spoken of Me the thing that is right, as My servant Job hath." Here is a beautiful lesson. Job hath confessed and Jehovah hath forgiven. He forgets all Job's sinful utterances; He remembers them no more. But in infinite grace He takes the few sentences scattered throughout Job's speeches in which he honoured the Lord and expressed trust in Him and with these He is well pleased. It must have been a sweet music in Jehovah's ear when Job said, "Though He slay me yet will I trust." And so He acknowledgeth Job as His servant. They must bring sacrifices--a burnt offering; and that blessedly shows us the cross.

"And my Servant Job shall pray for you; for him I will accept." Sweet scene now as Job prays for his humbled friends. How it again reminds us of Him, who ever liveth and maketh intercession for His people. Him God hath accepted in His great sacrificial work on the cross, and we are accepted in Him.

So Eliphaz the Temanite, Bildad the Shuhite, and Zophar the Naamathite went, and did according as the Lord commanded them; and the Lord accepted Job. This is the last as to Job's friends.

Verses 10-15. And now Job's restoration and double blessing. All his kinfolks return with all his acquaintances and sit down to a meal in sweet communion. What about his bodily disease? Nothing is said of that. But assuredly the Lord touched his suffering body, and He who spoke to the leper, must have spoken to Job, "Be thou clean," and the loathsome disease vanished, and as Elihu had said, his flesh became like that of a young child. They also brought him money and rings of gold. They were not presents to enrich him, the Lord did that for Job, but simply to show how happy they were over Job's healing and restoration.

All his wealth becomes twice as large as before. The Lord blessed the latter end of Job more than his beginning. While his possessions are doubled, his sons and daughters are not. He gives him also seven sons and three daughters. This does not mean, as some suppose, that they were not new sons and daughters, but that the restoration is that in resurrection. Such a view is untenable. The sons and daughters were born to him. The names of the three daughters are given. Jemimah (a dove); Keziah (cassia); Keren-happuch (flashes of Glory). Such were the blessed results of Job's experience, expressed by these names. Purified and humble like the dove; cassia, which is fragrance, worship and adoration; and the flashes and splendour of glory.

Verses 16-17. We have reached the end. It is an end of peace, a perfect day. Four generations he beholds and at the ripe old age of 140 years he is gathered to his fathers. In consulting the Septuagint version we find a long addition to the last verse which begins with this statement:

"and it is written that he will rise again with those whom the Lord raises up." Then follows Job's genealogy. It is taken from some apocryphal writing but it shows that the hope of the resurrection of the body was believed in ancient days. Surely Job will be there, "in that day" and his great utterance, "I know that my Redeemer liveth," and the hope of seeing Him will be realized.

"Ye have heard of the patience of Job, and have seen the end of the Lord; that the Lord is very pitiful, and of tender mercy" (James 5:11). And all His people know this matchless truth, that the Lord in all His dealings with His people "is very pitiful and of tender mercy." In our annotations we have pointed out repeatedly the comparison of Job in his sufferings with the Lord, our Saviour, and His holy sufferings in the sinner's place. It brings out the perfection of Him who is altogether lovely.

An application to Israel can also be made. If this is followed out it will prove of much interest. Israel, like Job, is suffering, self-righteous, but some day the nation will come face to face with Jehovah and be humbled in the dust. Then their restoration when they will receive double of the Lord's hand for all their sins (Isaiah 11:2).

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