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JOB -- A WORLD EXAMPLE
By Jasper Abraham Huffman

President Winona Lake School of Theology

Author of
Redemption Completed
The Messianic Hope in Both Testaments
The Holy Spirit
Voices from Rocks and Dust Heaps of Bible Lands
Building the Home Christian
Youth and the Christ Way
Biblical Confirmations from Archaeology
A Guide to the Study of the Old and New Testaments
Upper Room Messages
With Christ During Passion Week
God's Wonder Book, Spiritual By-paths in
the Greek New Testament for English Readers,
etc., etc., etc., etc., etc.

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DEDICATORY

To Our Sons. D. Paul, S. Lambert And John Abram.
Whom God Has Given Us, And Whom We Have Given Back
To Him

In Sincerest Consecration, This Little Volume
Is Affectionately Dedicated.

* * * * *

FOREWORD

The author of this volume had been conducting Bible Conference work in various summer camps, which were attended by a large number of ministers, as well as many laymen. The Book of Job had been studied in a number of camps with increasing interest.

Occasionally requests were made for the studies in printed form, but little attention was given to the suggestion. At the Miami Valley, Ohio, camp, however, the demand for the lectures became so insistent that the responsibility could no longer be avoided.

During the ten days the Bible study hour had grown cumulatively interesting. Ministers and lay people alike, confessed themselves thrilled by the truth brought from this neglected book of the Bible. At the close of the last day, Rev. Bud Robinson, an evangelist of wide experience, who had been one of the engaged workers of the camp, but who had nevertheless assumed the role of a disciple in the Bible Study hour, arose and called upon the class to join him in asking the author to then and there pledge himself to prepare the studies in book form. So unanimous and insistent a demand could not be turned aside. This volume stands as the fulfillment of the promise made that day. The demand for such a volume as this evidences the hunger of Christians for Biblical instruction. The Book of Job is little understood; in fact, much misunderstood. Lack of a correct perspective upon the book as a whole has led to a variety of interpretations. One is in danger of getting lost in the poetic part, unless he gets proper direction in the prose prologue, and unless he also confirms his position in the prose epilogue. The interpretation of the book must be found mainly in its prose parts.

A number of more or less incidental teachings in the book have been promoted to major places in the various schemes of interpretation, even by interpreters of no mean reputation. True, certain subjects, such as "The Philosophy of Human Suffering," "Divine Justice," "The Human Quest for a Divine Mediator," are prominent in the book. Nevertheless, they are incidental and minor, as far as contributing to the real purpose of the book is concerned. One good Calvinistic writer observes that, "the final perseverance of the saints is beautifully illustrated" in the book of Job.

Presumptuous as it may appear, the author sincerely believes that he has discovered the proper interpretation of the book, which is in part, indicated by the title, and which is more fully disclosed throughout the volume.

It is to be regretted that the minds of so many good people are prejudiced against the man Job, and that sincere ministers should speak of Job as a "self-righteous man being justly punished." selves against Job, for he himself failed to indict Job, and so this attitude of men must give Satan no little comfort.

It would appear only reasonable that all good people should be found upon God's side in the evaluation of Job, even though they find themselves unable to answer all the questions which arise. For without the slightest question God was on Job's side.

The American Standard Version of the Bible is quoted throughout this present volume, because the writer considers it the most accurate English translation of both the Old and New Testaments.

May the author humbly ask that his readers peruse this volume in the spirit in which it was written. And, should they find any conclusions which, to them, seem either false or unwarranted, will they be so good as to report them to him. He will receive such information thankfully.

If this book proves a blessing to you, dear reader, will you not speed it on in its mission of love and helpfulness?

Sincerely,
J. A. Huffman
Marion, Indiana

* * * * *

NOTE CONCERNING REVISED EDITION

The first edition of this book, which was exceptionally large, was exhausted in a surprisingly short time. It has been appreciated in America, where it has been read by thousands. It has also been adopted for use in schools where courses in The Old Testament are given.

But its ministry has not been confined to the homeland. In far-off China, missionaries have found it so well adapted to meet a need for the training of native workers that they have translated it into the Chinese tongue. It has also been widely used in other lands.

Now that a new edition is to be published, the author wishes to take the opportunity to thank the Christian reading public for the reception which it gave to this volume when it first appeared. The persistent demand for the book compels this new edition.

There is comparatively little change which the author considered necessary. He has used the volume as a text in Bible classes in his College and Divinity School work, thus submitting it to the anvil of the classroom, urging his students to give critical consideration to his treatment and conclusions. Under this test the book has stood firm and unchallenged.

The book has been revised slightly here and there, for the sake of improvement. The largest contribution to the treatment will be found in connection with Job's Lamentation of chapter three, where an important and interesting discussion will be found. The careful and critical answer to the question, did Job curse God, as Satan said he would, adds distinct value to this new edition.

* * * * *

FOREWORD TO SECOND REVISED EDITION

Since the Revised Edition was issued, this book has been extending its ministry both in the homeland and abroad, in a very gratifying manner.

From South America and Central America have come requests for permission to translate portions of the volume into the Spanish tongue, and the same has been granted. There is something about the man Job, God's dealings with him, and the valuable lessons of the book, which appeals to all men, everywhere.

This new, and still more fully revised, edition is sent out, as were the previous ones, on the wings of prayer, for its continued and increasing mission of spiritual helpfulness.

His and Yours,
J. A Huffman
Winona Lake,
April 1, 1947

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Chapter 1 INTRODUCTION TO THE BOOK OF JOB

In approaching our study of the Book of Job, our first obligation is to brush aside any least trace of indifference or irreverence. So long has the Book of Job been looked upon as practically useless, except as the source of an isolated quotation or a text here and there, that but few know what the book really contains. Others have felt at liberty to treat its principal character, Job, with a large measure of irreverence and to compare their troubles and trials to those of this Bible character, as requiring the "patience of Job."

Then, too, during the last few years, the Book of Job has been one of the chief battle-grounds of orthodox teachers against higher critics and liberal interpreters of the Bible. This fact makes the treatment of the book more difficult but, at the same time, more interesting.

In the order in which the sixty-six sacred books constituting the Bible are placed, the Book of Job is the eighteenth. In classification, it belongs with the poetic books, since a large part of it was written in the form of Hebrew poetry

AUTHORSHIP

The book carries the name of Job in its title, but that fact is not sufficient evidence that the book was written by him; on the other hand, it would not militate against his authorship. What we are to understand is, that the book is written of, or concerning Job, rather than by him.

The question of its authorship remains unsettled, although the book has been ascribed to a large number of persons ranging from Moses to Hezekiah. Among the persons named by various scholars as its possible authors are: Elihu, Solomon, Isaiah, Hezekiah, Baruch and Moses.

Tradition claims that Moses wrote the Book of Job. The Talmud, which is a sort of Jewish commentary on the Old Testament Scriptures, also testifies to its Mosaic authorship.

AGE OR ANTIQUITY OF THE BOOK

The date of the writing of the Book of Job is also undecided. If we knew positively who wrote the book, we could determine more accurately when it was written; but, the authorship being uncertain, we are obliged to look elsewhere for this information.

Higher criticism places the writing of the book not earlier than the reign of Solomon, which was from 1015-975 B. C., nor later than the return of Judah from Babylonish captivity, which occurred in 536 B. C. Orthodox writers, such as the authors of The Pulpit Commentary, Albert Barnes and others, place the date of the writing of the book before the Egyptian bondage or the giving of the law at Mt. Sinai. If their findings are correct, the book was written almost two thousand years before Christ. As evidence of the antiquity of the book it is argued that, if the book had been written after the Egyptian bondage or the giving of the law, it would surely contain some reference or at least some hint to that effect. It is further reasonably noted that, had the book been written after there was such a thing as Israelitish history, in the very nature of the case the writer would have drawn upon that history to prove his conclusions. Yet throughout the entire book no such traces can be found.

JOB AND THE AGE IN WHICH HE LIVED

According to the facts disclosed, we are dealing with a very old book, it having been written well up to four thousand years ago. Further, Job may have lived some time earlier than the writing of the book, and his history may have been handed down orally, from generation to generation, as ancient history was.

There are a few other facts about the age in which Job lived, which point to an early date; these we should note:

As will be seen from the first chapter of the book, Job, as the father, was the priest -- he offered sacrifices for his sons. This was patriarchal, and points to a date when there was not, as yet, an organized priesthood.

Then, too, no reference is made to a sanctuary, either tabernacle or temple, nor any stated place of worship. Evidently, then, Job lived in a day prior to the sanctuary or to any organized priesthood.

Another fact cited as evidence that Job lived in a very early age is, that the language used is what modern scholars call "archaic," meaning that the expressions found in the book are very ancient. All these evidences, taken together, are quite conclusive of the fact that Job lived in a very early time.

JOB'S COUNTRY

The name of the country in which Job lived was Uz. This name first appears in Bible history as the name of a man, the son of Nahor who was Abraham's brother (Genesis 22:21). The name again appears in Genesis 36:28. Later it became the name of a country, probably because of the descendants of one of these men Occupying it. The land of Uz is located east of the sea of Galilee, or rather northeast of Palestine. It is now known as Hauran.

ITS HISTORICITY

The first question we meet, in discussing the Book of Job, is relative to its historicity, or its historical reality. This question must be intelligently approached and reasonably answered before we can make satisfactory progress in our meditations.

Three views are held concerning the historicity of the book:

1. Job is a fictitious writing; or a drama.
2. It is absolutely historical.
3. It has an historical setting, with poetical expansion and embellishment.

These three views we shall consider separately, with an effort to ascertain the merit or demerit of each.

1. To conscientious students of the Bible an interpretation of the Book of Job as a piece of fiction, or a drama, seems entirely unworthy and completely out of harmony with the spirit and dignity of the Bible. The very first verse of the book says: "There was a man." This statement does not sound like the language of fiction, but like a plain declaration of a fact. Then the place in which he lived is designated and his name is given. This book, which is the inspired Word of God, would certainly not make plain, straightforward, unmistakable statements like these, to which there were no corresponding historical facts. Another reason which should make us hesitant to accept such interpretation, from the very first suggestion, is that it comes from a source where considerable liberty is taken with the Scriptures; a source known as higher criticism.

2. To conclude that the second-named position is correct, which insists upon a rigidly historical interpretation, may be over-reaching, inasmuch as the larger part of the book is poetry; and poetry, from its very nature, requires some latitude for expression. Poets, today, are given some liberty for expression, even to the extent of changing accents and pronunciation of words, for the sake of rhyme and rhythm. It is not unreasonable to assume that Hebrew poets would also be allowed some latitude for expression, even when writing in verse form an historical narrative. Then, too, in the poetic parts, figures of speech are employed by the speakers, which in their very nature permit of varied expression.

3. The third position, then, that the book has an historical setting, with poetic expansions and embellishments, is the one which appears to be correct. The book is historical. There did live a man whose name was Job, as well as others whose names are given. The entire background is

historical, and whatever expansion or embellishment it contains is perfectly in keeping with the narration of a matter of history written in the form of poetry.

Another strong evidence that Job lived in history is that he is mentioned in subsequent Old Testament Scripture, as well as in the New Testament. In Ezekiel the fourteenth chapter, the fourteenth and twentieth verses, Job is named together with Noah and Daniel. This testifies to the fact that he was considered an historical person, as truly as were Noah and Daniel, and no one seems to question the history of these men. James also, in the fifth chapter and eleventh verse, speaks of Job without any apology whatever.

When we keep in mind the fact that, though the hand of some man was used to pen the Book of Job -- just as human hands penned the other books of the Bible -- but that God inspired it, no difficulty is experienced. It is when we leave God out that we encounter trouble. In such omission lies the trouble of the higher critic. Many men, considering the book from the standpoint of literature merely, have pronounced it "a very superior production." But, studied in the light of inspiration, and with the illumination of the Spirit, and the help which comes as the result of earnest prayer, the Book of Job then becomes one of the most sublime of all the books ever written.

* * * * *

Chapter 2 A PERFECT MAN Job 1:1-5

The unique character Job, who becomes at once the central figure of the narrative, is immediately introduced to us as a "perfect" and "upright" man. Whatever may have been meant by this expression, it is evident that the qualities ascribed to Job were the choicest and best attainable by men who lived in his day.

The term "perfect" means complete, entire, not lacking. The Greek word translated "perfect" is a strong one meaning absolutely finished. The first verse of the chapter continues to delineate his character, showing that his perfection had two sides. It had a positive side -- he "feared God." It also had a negative side -- he "turned away" from evil. In the statement that he "feared God" is included his whole attitude of reverence, worship and service. It was not "fear" in the sense of being afraid, but in the sense of obedience and trust. His turning away from evil bespeaks his attitude toward everything that was unworthy, sinful, or that would displease God. Unlike much of the religion of today, which has only one side, Job's religion had two sides -- a positive, which resolves, and attempts to do things; but also a negative, which caused him actually to turn his back upon the evil. For Job there were some things which he could not do; some things which were unquestionably wrong, and from which he therefore turned away.

PERSISTENCY OF JOB'S PERFECTION

Whatever that something was which Job possessed, and which rendered him worthy of being called a "perfect man," it remained with him in surprising persistency.

Twice did God testify in heaven, in the presence of angels, to Satan, that Job was a "perfect" and "upright" man (1:8; 2:3). It was also understood by his wife, for while he was in the very midst of his second trial, with all its inexpressible bitterness, she asked him: "Dost thou still retain thine integrity?" (2:9). The word "integrity" is used in our English versions, but the Hebrew word is the same one translated "perfect" in the first verse, and would read accordingly: "Dost thou still retain thy perfection?"

Despite the insinuations cast upon Job, which would likely have more or less of a tendency to intimidate almost any person in his religious profession, Job professed perfection, right in the face of his accusers (9:21). Then with a tenacity which resembled a death grip, he declared he would hold it fast, saying: "Till I die I will not put away mine integrity [perfection] from me. My righteousness I hold fast and will not let it go" (27:5, 6).

VARIOUS STANDARDS OF PERFECTION

Having noted God's testimony to Job's perfection, as well as Job's own persistent profession of it, a little further study of the subject of perfection is necessary for the sake of a clear understanding.

Perfection in the absolute sense of the word, or absolute perfection, belongs to God alone, and can not be applied to man; consequently, it is to the realm of relative perfections that we must turn in order to find a perfection applicable to Job.

In the realm of relative perfections will be found all standards of perfections which are less than absolute. There is angelic perfection, but since angels are of a distinctively higher order than man, this perfection is not suited to Job. There is also creation, or Adamic, perfection, but since, by the fall, man has been reduced to a plane lower than the Adamic both physically and intellectually, as well as morally, this perfection is not suited to one in Job's situation. There is also resurrection perfection, but that obtains only beyond the grave, hence sheds no light upon the subject of Job's perfection.

In the catalogue of relative perfections there remains yet a single one: religious or Christian perfection. This is the perfection which Job possessed. This relative perfection which we speak of as religious or Christian perfection is a sliding scale. This scale is not adjusted to accommodate our notions, ideas or practices, but according to the revelation God has made of Himself. As that revelation has been progressive, the standard of religious perfection, with which God measures men, has been gradually rising, until today, as a result of the greatest revelation God ever made of Himself to the world, which was Jesus Christ, the standard is at the highest point it has ever reached. In Job's day this relative perfection could not have been called Christian perfection, as it may now be called, but religious perfection, only. As the revelation can not lessen, the standard can not lower. God does not even measure men by the light which they have, but by the light He has made it possible for them to have by His revelation. The standard, then, with which God measured men in Job's day was a lower standard than that with which He measures men today. Should any one be tempted to offer any criticism of Job's words or conduct, he should remember this fact.

Lest some one fail to understand the subject of perfection, let it be clearly noted that Christian perfection does not place men beyond the possibility of falling, although it does greatly reduce the probability; it does not make anyone infallible, or immune from mistakes or errors in judgment. It deals with the heart more particularly than with the head. It means that God's work of grace provided in the atonement of Christ is completed, finished, or perfected in that individual.

JOB'S PIETY

The standard of religious life experienced by Job was productive of great piety, as is evidenced by his devotions (1:5).

His devotions were family-wide: He made sacrifices for all his children. On the altar of his devotion, offerings were made for every member of his family, regardless of expense or any other consideration, though they numbered seven sons and three daughters (1:2). In Job's day man could not approach God without bringing with him the blood of his offerings, but such offerings were made to the number of them all. Family devotion was expensive in his day. In our own day, the perfect offering having now been made, which was Jesus Christ, we may bring as a free gift, upon the altar of our devotions, the merits of His atoning blood. Yet professedly religious fathers, unlike Job, neglect the family-wide, pious devotion.

Further, we note that these offerings were made "in the morning," preceding the labors of the day. No more opportune time could be found for such devotion than the morning. At this time God's gracious care during the unconscious hours is thankfully recounted, and His guidance for the waking hours earnestly sought.

One other phase of this devotion which impresses us is its unbroken regularity, as is expressed by the word "continually." No pressing labor nor busy season could deter Job from his devotion. No presence of friend or stranger could intimidate him. To him these devotions were a matter of vital concern, and he could not afford to pass the opportunity by, for a single time. Religion was the important thing in his life, compared to which ordinary affairs appeared of little consequence.

JOB'S FAMILY

Though not necessarily related to the subject of Job's Perfection, we must not pass unnoticed his interesting and ideal family which consisted of seven sons and three daughters. Although the children numbered ten, not one was overlooked nor forgotten in the unbroken family devotion.

JOB'S RICHES

The possessions of Job were unusually large, consisting of seven thousand sheep, three thousand camels, five hundred yoke of oxen, and five hundred she asses. For the grazing of the sheep, camels and asses, and the cultivation for five hundred yoke of oxen, a large amount of land would be necessary. Allowing ten acres for each team of oxen, five thousand acres would be

required for cultivation alone, besides the pasture land. He also had "a very great household," meaning men servants and maid servants. All these facts indicate that Job was a great man, probably one of the greatest men of his day. He was God's man whom God had chosen as a world example, and, as will be seen later, God placed Job on exhibition before men, devils and angels as an example of righteousness, that was to be thoroughly tested.

* * * * *

Chapter 3 THE FIRST CHALLENGE Job 1:6-12

The author of the Book of Job gives to us a very unusual opportunity. Holding aside the curtain which prevents our view of the eternal world, he gives us a glimpse of the council chamber of heaven, and permits us to hear a part of the conversation which took place at that particular convening of the heavenly council.

The meeting was one at which the "sons of God" came together, meaning, no doubt, the angels. There are evidently times when the angelic host comes together, into the very presence of God, to render to Him homage, to report their doings, and to receive His mandates.

Strange as it may seem to us, at first, there appeared at this heavenly council a personality very unlike the sons of God. His name is said to have been Satan. Shocked at the presence of Satan in this heavenly council, we hasten to make inquiry who he is, what his occupation may be and what his mission. Zechariah saw him standing at the right hand of Joshua, the high priest, to be his adversary (Zech. 3:1, 2); and St. John discovers him to be the accuser of the brethren, who accuses them before God day and night (Rev. 12:10).

Satan, when asked by God from whence he came, replied: "From going to and fro in the earth." Satan's own answer indicates his field of activity, "the earth," no doubt meaning the earth in contrast to heaven from which he had been cast out. His field of operation, then, is the human heart, the human family, and all that belongs to the lower plane. This testimony harmonizes with what Jesus pronounced Satan to be, "the prince of this world" (John 14:30). Paul also speaks of him as the "prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the sons of disobedience" (Eph. 2:2).

Satan also acknowledges his own untiring and unceasing activity in his reply: "Walking to and fro." St. Peter speaks thus of him: "Be sober, be watchful: your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour" (I Peter 5:8). Here again his unceasing vigilance and activity are testified to.

While there are those who would interpret this "Satan" as not being identical with the Satan of the New Testament, but rather a servant of God, all evidence goes to prove that he is the adversary, the accuser, the slanderer, the devil mentioned throughout the Bible. He appears first in the garden of Eden, and last when cast into the bottomless pit (Rev. 20:10). His record from Genesis to Revelation has been the same, and no good word can be said concerning him.

A perfectly legitimate question is almost sure to arise at this time. It is, how came Satan to be present at the heavenly council? There is a satisfactory answer to this question, and it will be given a little later, where Satan appears again at the second convening of the heavenly council. We have one assurance, however, which is, that his operations will some time cease for ever, as we have seen from the previously-cited text, which reads: "And the devil that deceived them was cast into the lake of fire and brimstone, where are also the beast and false prophet; and they shall be tormented day and night for ever and ever."

GOD'S CHALLENGE TO SATAN (Verse 8)

Turning our attention again to the heavenly council, we hear God challenging Satan concerning Job, saying: "East thou considered my servant Job? for there is none like him in the earth, a perfect and upright man, one that feareth God, and turneth away from evil." The Pulpit Commentary paraphrases this text as follows: "Thou that art always spying out some defect or other in a righteous man, hast thou noted my servant Job and discovered any fault in him?" It is certainly a wonderful thing for God to speak thus of a man, realizing that God judges not from outward appearances, but from the heart.

SATAN'S REPLY (Verses 9, 10 and 11)

Immediately Satan replies to God's challenge, charging that Job serves him from selfish motives, and that a "hedge" has been set around him, shielding him from the temptations and trials which others are obliged to meet and endure. "Doth Job fear God for naught? Hast thou not made a hedge about him, and about his house, and about all that he hath on every side? Thou hast blest the works of his hands, and his substance is increased in the land." Here Satan may have reviewed the riches of Job, which have been previously enumerated.

It is easy enough to be good, reasons Satan, when a man is rich, and possesses all his heart can wish, especially when shielded from temptation and trial by a special providence. "Put forth thy hand now, and take away all that he hath, and he will curse thee to thy face." Replying to Satan's accusation that God has made a favorite of Job, extending to him special care, God says: "Behold, all that he hath is in thy power, only upon himself put not forth thy hand." Special note should be taken here that, in the giving over of Job to be tested by Satan, God made certain restrictions. God knows the limit to which His saints can bear testing. We should remember, too, that God has set certain boundaries for Satan beyond which he can not go one step unless God gives him permission. In this instance Job is given over for testing to the extent of Satan's accusations concerning him, and Satan is privileged to do anything he chooses with all those things for which he declares Job is serving God.

Accepting the challenge, Satan goes from the presence of God. He may have believed that Job could be induced to curse God, knowing as he did the weaknesses of humanity, and having little confidence in man's sincerity in the worship of his God.

* * * * *

Chapter 4 THE FIRST TRIAL Job 1:13-22

The scene now changes from the heavenly council to earthly activities. What Satan has been doing since going forth from the presence of God we are not told, but we now find Job's trial on, in the form of a calamity which is cumulative in its nature, one stroke following another in quick succession.

THE FIRST STROKE

The first stroke resulted in the loss of all his oxen and asses. The oxen were plowing, and the asses were grazing near them, and the Sabeans came and took them away. They also slew all of the servants, except one, who came, running, to Job, and told him of the loss. The Sabeans were a people who lived, at an early date, in certain parts of Arabia. Sometimes the term was applied, in a general way, to the Arabs.

THE SECOND STROKE

While the young man was telling Job of the carrying away of the oxen and asses, and of the slaying of the servants, another servant, the keeper of sheep, came and said: "The fire of God is fallen from heaven, and hath burned up the sheep and the servants, and consumed them; and I only am escaped alone to tell thee." This "fire" may possibly have been something like lightning, as certain other references to similar visitations of "fire" seem to indicate. See Numbers 11:1-3 and II Kings 1:10-14. This interpretation seems all the more reasonable when we take into account the fact that Satan is spoken of as the "prince of the power of the air," indicating that he, in some measure, controls the elements (Eph. 2:2). The destruction of the sheep and the servants, by fire from heaven, constituted the second stroke of the calamity.

THE THIRD STROKE

Before the words were out of the mouth of the second messenger, another came and declared that the camels had been stolen. The Chaldeans had made out three bands and had come upon the drivers suddenly, slaying all of the servants but one, and taking away the camels. The Chaldeans were probably early settlers in Babylonia. The making out of "three bands" indicates the tactics of Oriental brigands, for the purpose of being able to approach and to attack from three sides. The loss of Job's camel caravans, and their drivers, as well as whatever merchandise they may have been loaded with was very heavy. It constituted the third, and a very severe, stroke in Job's first and cumulative calamity.

THE FOURTH STROKE

Severe as the former strokes were, the fourth and last stroke was much more severe. It was the instantaneous and accidental death of all his children, seven sons and three daughters. This catastrophe probably occurred upon the birthday of the eldest son, as they were celebrating it by a feast, according to Oriental custom. Suddenly a strong wind blew upon the house and, tornado-like, caused the house to fall, killing the sons and daughters of Job, also the servants, all except one, who bravely brought the sad message to the grief stricken father.

SPECIAL NOTES ON JOB'S CALAMITY

These various strokes crowded upon each other rapidly . . . "While he was yet speaking," is the language used to indicate their quick and rapid succession. The world's entire history knows no parallel.

The calamity came in a day of great activity. "The oxen were plowing," and the camel caravans were doubtless upon journeys of commerce, and so forth.

Both the forces of nature and the cruelty of man combine to bring ruin upon Job. This shows Satan's control over both. Notice further, that the forces of nature and cruelty of man alternate in their efforts to destroy Job. Another testimony to the subservience of the forces both of nature and of wicked men to Satan.

ISSUE OF THE FIRST TRIAL

(1:20, 21)

Having noted the reply which Satan made to God when Job was named as a perfect man, and his acceptance of God's challenge, also the severity of the cumulative calamities which befell Job, we are made to wonder what may be the issue of the trial. The issue was quite contrary to the expectation of Satan and to his boastful remarks. Job "rent his mantle." This was an Oriental way of expressing grief. He "shaved his head," and by so doing put off even the adornment which nature gave him. He "fell upon the ground," thus assuming a reverential attitude, and significant -- remarkably significant -- "he worshipped." Many a man has seen his possessions go up in smoke, be carried away by armies or be devastated by flood; but few, at such times have assumed the reverential attitude and "worshipped." Many have been called upon to give up a child, a parent, a father or mother, or some other loved one; but, standing beside the bier, the attitude has frequently been that of heart rebellion, rather than heart worship. Job, having lost all his children at one stroke, worshipped. He said: "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."

VERDICT OF THE FIRST TRIAL

(1:22)

Whatever any one else may say concerning Job, God's verdict of his first and sore trial was: "In all this Job sinned not, nor charged God foolishly." Although innocent of the fact that he had been given over to testing and was being made a world spectacle, Job proved himself a man of sterling character, possessed of a faith which could not be subdued even by the most sudden and overwhelming adversity. Though he could not see Satan back of the successive strokes of his

calamity, he seemed to see God back of all. Satan said Job would curse God; instead, Job "worshipped." Keen must have been Satan's disappointment when, instead of renouncing God bitterly, even unto curses, Job fell upon his face and worshipped!

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Chapter 5 THE SECOND CHALLENGE Job 2:1-7

Again the curtain is drawn aside and the heavenly council has again convened. Here, as upon the former occasion, the angels have come together, and Satan is again present. At the first council he may have been present as a spectator, a spy, or to criticize or accuse. Since we have learned that one of the specific missions of Satan is to accuse, and that continuously, we conclude that accusation was his mission at the first heavenly council. This conclusion is also supported by the fact that God proposed a person to whom Satan's criticisms or accusations might be directed, resulting in the challenge, the acceptance of that challenge, and the calamity of Job.

At this meeting Satan is present with a stated purpose -- "to present himself before the Lord." No doubt he appeared before God, chagrined and blushing with shame because of his defeat, yet of necessity he must report the results of the challenge concerning Job. Though Satan knows himself defeated, he will not recant. He still feels that he will win out.

SPECIAL NOTE ON HEAVEN'S COURT

At this point it is necessary to consider the question previously asked, but not answered, "How came Satan into the council of heaven?"

The court of heaven is the court of the universe. Here, God, the Judge, sits upon His imperial throne, and here before Him, men's cases are weighed in His balance. All the courts of earth are but vague unrealities compared to this court, where angels are the messengers and servants. Unseen by mortal eye, the cases of men are tried, in the presence of the Judge.

Satan's name, "adversary" or "accuser," makes him the prosecutor. Jesus Christ is declared to be our "Advocate" with the Father (I John 2:1). An advocate suggests the idea of one who intercedes for, or defends, another. Jesus Christ was also promised by prophecy as a "Counselor" (Isaiah 9:6). Here again the idea of an attorney is suggested. The picture is then complete the throne occupied by the Judge of the Universe, with Satan appearing on the one hand as the prosecutor, and Jesus Christ appearing on the other hand as the defense. It is in this court of heaven where accuser or plaintiff (Satan) and Advocate or Defense (Jesus Christ) meet face to face and argue the cases of men in the presence of the Judge.

Again the question is asked, "Why does God allow Satan such liberties as these?" Perhaps the best answer to this question is, that this is God's way of retaining a righteous superiority over Satan. It is necessarily in keeping with God's dignity, justice, superiority and glory that Satan, who is His rival, and who was thrust out of heaven because of his own ambition, as an archangel, to be

equal with God, should be given opportunity to present his claims. Even Satan must and does receive justice at the hands of God. That this is God's way of retaining a righteous superiority is indicated by the fact that at the close of the millennium, during which time Satan will have been bound, he is to be loosed for a little season, to try God's work (Rev. 20:7, 8). It should further be noted that Satan is only allowed to appear in the court of heaven as a subdued foe. He dares not venture to speak or to present his case except upon God's invitation.

GOD'S SECOND CHALLENGE (2:2, 3)

Satan having appeared at the second convening of the heavenly council, God again addresses him, asking him from whence he came. As if hesitant about discussing the subject of the former challenge and defeat, he replies: "From going to and fro in the earth, and from walking up and down in it." Breaking the silence upon the subject, the Lord said to him: "Hast thou considered my servant Job? for there is none like him in all the earth, a perfect and an upright man, one that feareth God and turneth away from evil: and he still holdeth fast his integrity, although thou movedst me against him, to destroy him without cause." It will be noted that God speaks about Job, in this second challenge, in the same terms as He did in the first, even adding extra emphasis upon the righteous character of Job. Although this servant of His has undergone a calamity, unparalleled in the world's history, God has not changed His mind concerning him.

SATAN'S SECOND REPLY (2:4, 5)

With an answer which seems to be premeditated, Satan replies to God by saying: "Skin for skin, yea, all that a man hath will be give for his life. But put forth thy hand now, and touch his bone and flesh, and he will curse thee to thy face," Property and family, reasons Satan, have little significance compared to one's life. If Job's body is afflicted, "he will curse thee to thy face." To this the Lord replies, "Behold, he is in thy hand; only spare his life;" and Job is again given over for further testing. It will be noted, too, that once more restrictions are placed on Satan, and that beyond these limitations he can not go. He was privileged to subject Job to anything in the way of disease and suffering, but dared not take his life. God never gives a saint over for testing without placing the restriction. He knows how much any true servant of His can bear, and Satan can not go beyond that divine limitation.

Still, determined to accomplish the undertaking in which he had failed -- to cause Job to curse or renounce God -- Satan accepts the second challenge, goes out from the presence of God, and plans a calamity calculated to reach the extreme limits of the restriction placed upon him by God.

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Chapter 6 THE SECOND TRIAL Job 2:7-10

The scene is again changed. Satan, having accepted God's second challenge, begins his operations anew. Could Job only have known what we now know, it might have helped him to bear up under the pressure of the trial; but such knowledge would have spoiled God's plan of giving to the world an example of righteousness, thoroughly tested.

THE FIRST STROKE

(2:7, 8)

The first stroke of Job's second calamity came in the form of extreme affliction. Having searched the catalogue for the most trying, most painful, most disgusting disease, Satan selects one of which Job becomes the subject. He is smitten with sore boils from the crown of his head to the soles of his feet. The disease is thought to have been elephantiasis, so named because the swollen limbs and blackened, rough skin appear like the skin of an elephant.

SYMPTOMS OF JOB'S DISEASE

The following are a few of the symptoms of Job's disease as cited by Prof. Davidson:

It was accompanied by intolerable itching. "He took him a potsherd to scrape himself" (2:8). So terrible and deep-seated was the itching that the nails of his swollen fingers could not relieve the distress, so he took broken pieces of pottery (potsherd) with which to scrape himself. It is almost impossible to imagine such a condition of bodily suffering as this.

It disfigured his countenance. His friends "knew him not" (2:12).

It caused his breath to become fetid, and the odor drove persons from his presence (19:17).

His sores bred worms (7:5).

His disease caused his body to be swollen and emaciated, alternately (16:8).

He suffered unearthly dreams (7:14), and restless nights (7:4).

It caused his bones to burn (30:30) and his limbs to feel like one with his feet in the stocks (13:27).

As a result of this intense suffering and inexpressible anguish he was frequently driven to long for death. Death, to him, would indeed have been welcome.

THE SECOND STROKE

(2:8)

Such a loathsome disease, with all of the suffering resulting from it, would seem almost more than mortal man could endure. Anyone who must experience such affliction ought to be provided with the best of comforts and have the tenderest hands to administer to him. Instead of

this, as a second stroke in Job's second trial, he was segregated. "He sat down among the ashes." This evidently means that Job was segregated outside of the walls of the city, and was compelled to find lodgment among the refuse or garbage. He did not have so much as a pest-house or an isolation hospital to receive him. We of today look upon the convenience of pest-houses and hospitals almost as a curse. To Job they would have been an unspeakable comfort. But he was an outcast.

THE THIRD STROKE

(2:9)

In addition to the first stroke of affliction and the second stroke of segregation, comes a third stroke which, if anything, is more severe. His wife now becomes his spiritual enemy. "Curse God and die," is her advice to her husband, to whom life has no more charm, but who longs for relief. She allies herself with Satan and becomes his agent.

The German version of this text says: "Bless God and die," but Job's reply is sufficient evidence that the English version is correct. It is rather unfortunate that, in this instance, an original Hebrew word is used which under certain conditions is translated "bless," but under other conditions is translated "curse." The context alone must determine the translation and the meaning. This accounts for the two different translations of this verse.

That Job's wife has become an ally of Satan is evidenced by the fact that she advises Job to do exactly what Satan said he would do provided his body became afflicted. Her advice proves Satan to be the author of her very words. Here Satan again shows his diplomacy. Well does he remember how in the Garden of Eden he had employed a woman to tempt the first man, and how successful were the results. Again he shrewdly employs a woman as his agent, to tempt Job, and, as in the former case, expects to be successful. Further, Job had been rendered most susceptible to temptation by sickness in addition to his former calamity. We must not forget that Job was innocent of the fact that God was making of him a world example of righteousness tested, or the case would be entirely different.

This third stroke of Job's second and cumulative calamity is all the more severe because of the person who became his enemy and Satan's ally. It was his own wife -- she whom he had loved as a maiden, to whom he had vowed, and who had vowed to him, lifetime faithfulness. It was she who was the mother of his ten children -- all now dead; she, who had shared with him, his joys and sorrows. what an exceedingly sad thing to have his wife, the bride of his youth, the mother of his children assume such an attitude! Prof. Pierson says: "Mrs. Job spoke but once, but it would have been to her credit had she kept still."

ISSUE OF THE SECOND TRIAL

(2.10)

Remembering the challenges made by God concerning Job, to Satan, in the heavenly councils, also the former defeat of Satan in trying to cause Job to curse his God, and thus prove that righteousness is merely a pretense, that those who serve God do so from selfish motives only, we can but be vitally interested in the issue of a trial of this nature. Robbed of all his property;

childless because of apparent providential calamity; afflicted beyond description; his wife, the one above all others who should help and comfort him, now appears before him and subtly betrays him. As surely as Satan was back of the kiss which betrayed our Lord, so surely was it he who prompted and directed this betrayal. Will Job fall? Will he curse his God? The issue of the trial depends upon the attitude which Job will assume. If he does as Satan declared he would, God's case will be lost and Satan's won.

With a keen sense of spiritual perception, Job detects the folly of his wife; and though he does not understand it, he accepts his calamity as coming from God. Perhaps Job spoke better than he knew when he said: "Shall we receive good at the hand of God, and not evil?" While the evil coming to him was not from the hand of God, but from Satan, it was permitted by God, who stood ready, as He always does in behalf of His children, to transform His curse into a blessing. Job's faith reached farther than the curse, and even now began to claim deliverance. Having discovered the folly of Mrs. Job, and having exercised faith in his God when he could neither see nor understand, he severely rebukes his wife by saying: "Thou speakest as one of the foolish women speaketh." Conscious of her own guilt, this stinging and straightforward rebuke of Job proves sufficient. Mrs. Job is not heard from again throughout the entire book.

VERDICT OF THE SECOND TRIAL (2:10)

Whatever may be our opinion of the outcome of Job's second trial, we are anxious to know the divine verdict. God has kept watch every moment, has heard every word, and knows even the secret thoughts of Job's heart. Without preamble or apology, here is God's verdict: "In all this did not Job sin with his lips."

As truly as the trials were cumulative, so were the verdicts. The verdict of the first trial was. "In all this Job sinned not, nor charged God foolishly." The verdict of the second trial is: "In all this did not Job sin with his lips." Not even in word was Job guilty of having sinned. Here is man's most subtle temptation -- to murmur or complain, if not to curse. As the New Testament says: "If any stumbleth not in word, the same is a perfect man, able to bridle the whole body also" (James 3:2). It was perfection which God had claimed for Job, and the second trial now being over, the cause of perfection is vindicated and the docket is clear. The judge has spoken the verdict. "Acquitted." Whatever may result in the future trial of Job, the world has now an example of righteousness tested and triumphant. Even interpreting the verdict in the most charitable manner, Satan has failed in his second attempt to overthrow Job, and, unless he can devise some far more successful plan, he is destined to final defeat.

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Chapter 7 THE THIRD TRIAL Chapter 2:11-37:24

For reasons unknown to us, we are introduced to Job's third trial, without having been permitted to hear the conversation which took place between God and Satan at the close of the

second trial. Anyone wishing to argue that there was no "third trial," should note that the second trial has ended; that we already know the "issue" and have heard the "verdict." That a third trial did take place is evidenced by the fact that, at the close, another verdict, of a cumulatively strong nature, is rendered. This fact will be made clearer, but it is mentioned here because some interpreters maintain that a third trial never did take place.

Having heard of the affliction of Job, three men came to visit him. They were:

Eliphaz the Temanite.

Bildad the Shuhite.

Zophar the Naamathite.

These men came from various countries and from localities quite a distance apart. Eliphaz came from Tema a place in the eastern part of Idumea. Bildad was a descendant of Abraham through Keturah and Shuab, but his home is unknown: Zophar probably came from a place in Arabia.

It is also evident that these three men met by appointment, and came on together. What significance attaches to the phrase "by appointment," may be an interesting though a disputed question. But it is quite probable that a careful study will disclose that he who "appointed" the elements and the wrath of men to bring calamity upon Job in his first great trial, and who "appointed" horrible disease, and betrayal from his own wife, as a second and greater calamity, also had some relation to the "appointment" of these three men whose visit and whose speeches with all that they contained constituted the third, and greatest of his trials. May this not be the third, stubborn, prolonged and final effort on the part of Satan to destroy Job's faith, upon which Satan's success or defeat depends?

Further, these three men professed to be friends, and probably had been. The customary Oriental expressions of sympathy and grief were observed:

They wept.

They rent their mantles.

They sprinkled dust upon their heads.

Orientals are very emotional and express grief by wailing. They also rend their garments., symbolically reflecting their grief, which, as they think, rends their hearts. As a further act of humiliation they put dust upon their heads, making a very unsightly appearance. These expressions of grief were practiced by Job's friends, continuing for seven days, during which time they sat down with Job upon the ground, not speaking a word to him. Though they may have spoken together, not a word was spoken to Job in this period of time. Some one has said that their grief was so great that they could not speak, but there is probably a better answer to the question of their silence. The days of their weeping were seven. This was the exact period of time devoted to weeping for the dead, as will be found by reading Gen. 50:10. It is evident, then, that upon reaching Job they found his condition such that they treated him as though he were dead and as though they were in the presence of a corpse. He was so changed in his appearance that they knew him not, and perhaps the only thing which they thought remained to be done was to bewail him and

return to their homes. The silence was broken by Job, when he began to speak, and as a result an interesting conversation follows.

JOB'S LAMENTATION AND ITS MEANING (Chapter 3)

The silence of the seven days of mourning was broken by him who was being bemoaned as dead. Prompted by all of the cumulative calamities which had befallen him and by his inexpressible sufferings, and probably by the strange actions and suspicious conduct of his visitors, he speaks, not to them, but in their presence.

We have now arrived at a point in the discussion of the Book of Job where it is necessary to pause long enough for a brief, critical study, since much depends upon a correct understanding of Job's conduct under the successive and cumulative strokes of the first and second trials. If Job did what Satan said he would, the cane is lost, and God is defeated. Let us see.

There are six words in the Hebrew language, in which the Old Testament was written, which may be translated "curse." Only three of these need enter into our investigation.

Arar is the strongest word, and never means less than "to curse." In the active voice it means to pronounce an anathema upon some person or thing. In the passive voice it means to have a curse pronounced upon one. It is the word which is used when God told Abraham that He, Himself, would curse the one who should dare to curse Abraham (Gen. 12:3). Though this word is used once in the Book of Job, it is not used to predicate anything concerning Job's conduct.

Qalal is another Hebrew word translated "curse," and it is also found in the verse cited above. Of the three Hebrew words which we shall consider, qalal is the mildest. The promise to Abraham reads: "And I will bless them that bless thee, and him that curseth thee will I curse." In this single statement two Hebrew words translated curse are used. There is significance to this. Let us substitute the Hebrew words for the English, and the line reads: "Him that qalals thee will I arar."

The word qalal sometimes means to curse; sometimes to revile; and sometimes to speak lightly of a person or thing. As in the case with many Hebrew words, the context alone must determine their translation. The line then translated literally may well be: "Him that speaks lightly of thee will I curse."

Barak is the third Hebrew word, translated sometimes "curse" or "renounce," and sometimes "bless." It is the word used in Job 2:9, where of Job's wife it is said that she told Job to "renounce God, and die." In this instance, Luther's German version translates the line, "bless God, and die." It is evident from the context that the German version is incorrect, but the context alone must determine the translation, since in some connections the word means to bless, and, in others, to curse. Barak is the second strongest of the Hebrew words coming within the range of this study. This brief perspective upon Hebrew words which may be translated "curse" orients the reader not familiar with Hebrew into the problem of the interpretation of Job, at this point.

Now to the critical question: How interpret Job's conduct?

For emphasis, let it be repeated, that the strongest Hebrew word, arar, is not used at all in connection with Job's accusation or conduct.

Returning to chapter 1, verse 11, Satan told God that if He would touch Job's property, Job would renounce (or curse) Him to His face. Here the word barak is used, which might mean either to bless or to curse. It can not mean bless; therefore it must mean curse. In chapter 2, verse 5, Satan is reported to have said to God: "Put forth thy hand now, and touch his bone and his flesh, and he will renounce thee to thy face." The word barak is again used, and must mean curse, or something uncomplimentary. The word "renounce" is employed by the translators. Here are the two accusations made against Job by Satan, and the meaning of his accusations is evident. In both of these challenges of Satan to God, the King James Version uses the word "curse" to translate the Hebrew word barak.

Another shade of meaning conveyed by the Hebrew word barak, is given in Young's Analytical Concordance. It is that of "turning away from," or "bidding farewell to." According to this meaning of the word, Satan declared to God that under certain unfavorable conditions which he named, Job would bid farewell to God and cease to serve Him. This meaning is in harmony with Satan's insinuation when he said: "Doth Job fear God for nought?" (1:9). In the light of this probable meaning of the Hebrew word used by Satan in his accusations against Job, the whole book must be read and carefully studied in order to determine whether Job did what Satan said he would do.

Now, since so much apparently hinges upon Job's lamentation as found in the third chapter, it is necessary to give it some further careful and critical consideration.

It is certainly unfortunate that the American revisers employed the word "curse" in the first verse of the chapter, making the line to read: "Job opened his mouth and cursed his day." In translating this same verse the American Version follows the King James Version. Accordingly, the unskilled and superficially -- thinking reader throws up his hands and concludes that Job has done exactly what Satan said he would do, and that God's case is therefore lost. If this were true, the only world example which God ever held up to men, angels, and devils, as a specimen of righteousness, would have proved a disappointing failure; Satan would have been honored; God would have been defeated -- an occasion for weeping on the part of men and angels. This is, however, a wrong translation, a wrong interpretation, and an erroneous conclusion, as we shall soon see.

The word translated "cursed" in Job 3:1 is not arar, the strong Hebrew word for curse. Neither is it the next stronger word, harak, which is used in Satan's challenges to God concerning Job (2:5), and is sometimes translated "bless" and sometimes "curse," depending upon the context, but doubtless here meaning to renounce in the sense of turning away from. But the milder word, qalal, which means to revile, or to lightly esteem is used. The reader can easily see that a divine purpose must have lain in the choice of this word for recounting Job's reaction to his severe and testing trials. The translation would then more likely be correct, if it should be made to read as

follows: "Job opened his mouth and reviled [or spoke lightly of] his day," meaning the day of his birth.

Then, too, it is strange that the object of Job's cursing, or reviling, or lightly esteeming, whichever it be, should have been overlooked. It was not God, but the day of Job's birth which came in for treatment. Had he pronounced a curse or an anathema, it would not have been upon God, thus doing what Satan said he would, but upon the day of his own birth. Whatever fault may be lodged against Job for esteeming lightly, or reviling, the day when he was born, a world of difference lies between this and cursing God or turning away from Him.

Tracing Job's lamentation in chapter 3, we discover in it definite progress. First, he regrets that he was conceived, and born. Then, he wishes that it might have been his good fortune to have died at birth. However, since he was conceived and born, and since he did not die at birth, he can not understand why his life must be prolonged in this miserable state. This is a Summary of Job's lament.

While there may be little to gain by comparing one Old Testament character with another, there is nothing to lose by so doing. Jeremiah lived in a much later time than Job, and had advantages far superior to his. Furthermore, Jeremiah is listed among the greatest of prophets. By examining the twentieth chapter of Jeremiah's prophecy, beginning at verse fourteen, it will be found that he did exactly the same thing which Job did. The only difference between the two laments is in Job's favor, for in recording the words of Jeremiah, the strong Hebrew word for curse, arar, is used. The line reads: "Cursed be the day wherein I was born... Cursed be the man who brought tidings to my father..."

In closing this discussion on Job's Lament, a line from Butler's Bible Works (Volume on Job), is pertinent: "The dispute between God and Satan concerning Job was not whether Job had infirmities (which must have been granted) but whether he was a hypocrite, and secretly hated God, and under provocation would prove it."

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Chapter 8 LIBERAL AND CONSERVATIVE VIEWS

Before we pursue our study further, by taking up the speeches of Eliphaz, Bildad and Zophar, which bitterly arraign Job, and constitute successive strokes in his third, lingering and cumulative calamity, it will be interesting and profitable to note the liberal and conservative views both concerning Job's "Comforters" and Job himself.

CONCERNING JOB'S COMFORTERS

Liberal View

1. Present-day, liberal interpreters see in these three comforters deep piety and pure motives.

2. They look upon their own interpretative conclusions as being based upon the early Hebrew conception of God as in direct relation to the world, doing all that is done, without recognizing the intervention of second causes. Consequently, if evil comes upon a man, God sends it; and back of that evil there must be sin in the life, which is being justly punished.

3. They consider the speeches of these men as being, in the main, consistent, and as purely the result of a desire to befriend Job, and to help him into right relation with God.

Conservative View

1. Conservative interpreters find, in the speeches of these men, ignorance, assumption and even dishonesty.

2. Conservative interpreters also think that whether or not these three men are conscious of their alliance with Satan, they are tools of his, and are being directed by him in a final and lingering effort to cause Job to do what Satan had prophesied that he would do -- curse God.

CONCERNING JOB

Liberal View

1. Job has been overcome with the difficulties he has met, and needs rebuke. He is self-righteous and must be chastised.

2. Job has, in his complaint, well nigh approached a cursing of God.

Conservative View

1. Job's speeches, although proceeding from anguish indescribable and physically unendurable, have in them a deep tone of assurance and submissiveness.

2. Although Job challenges the Almighty to manifest Himself and solve the problem of his life, he does so with the consciousness that he is innocent and perfect before God, and with the expectation of being exonerated.

3. Job has not sinned. There is no occasion for speeches such as those made by these three men; nor is there any explanation other than that they are of Satanic design.

Things to Be Considered in Connection with the Study of Job's Words and Conduct

1. The emotional nature of Orientals.

2. The unenlightened age in which he lived -- many centuries before Christ came.

3. The extreme severity, multiplicity and cummulativeness of his calamities.

4. The provocation he received from the suspicious looks and bitter words of his "friends."

5. That he had no written promises of grace, divine presence, help and deliverance, such as we have today. A single written promise such as "God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation also make a way of escape; that ye may be able to bear it" (I Cor. 10:13), or, "We know that to them that love God all things work together for good" (Rom. 8:28), would have given him an anchorage and certainty such as he did not possess. Job's critics, before speaking harshly of him, should place themselves in his day and circumstances.

6. That, living before Israelitish history, Job had no historical incidents of similar character which could possibly shed any light upon his own case.

7. That he, being human, was likely to err as well as we are, but that he had access to the Advocate to plead his cause for error unwittingly or innocently committed, just as we do.

8. That the "perfection" which Job possessed was not absolute but relative; God, only, having absolute perfection. Neither was his an angelic perfection, for that belongs only to angels. Nor was it Adamic, or creation, perfection; for that belonged only to man unmarred by sin. It was not resurrection perfection which he enjoyed, for that places men beyond mortality from which Job is suffering inexpressibly. Job's was religious perfection, or the completion of the work of Grace in his heart and life, which met every requirement of heaven, enabling God to look upon him as a "perfect man" -- one who stands complete or finished so far as the work of Grace is concerned.

9. That the scale of relative perfection, which God adjusts in keeping with the revelation He makes of Himself, being lower in Job's day than in ours, the standard with which God measured Job was not the standard with which He measures men today.

10. That although Job possibly said things, at times, which would be inconsistent with our light and knowledge, they were not inconsistent with his -- a fact that critics of Job overlook. Job's was the case of a wrong head but a right heart. In his accusers it was a case of wrong heads and wrong hearts. This truth is evident from the final verdict and from Job's Divine Vindication.

Advance Conclusion

Job did nothing and said nothing which was contrary to the standard of "perfection" which God required of men in Job's day.

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Chapter 9

THE FIRST CYCLE OF SPEECHES: THE THIRD TRIAL -- Continued

Chapters 4-14

Following the lamentation of Job, there begin three cycles of speeches. Eliphaz and Bildad each speak three times. Zophar speaks twice, but drops out in the third cycle. In each case the speeches are answered by Job.

We will note each speech made, and Job's answer, and in every case we will try to find the keynote. In some instances only a few verses will be quoted, but enough to indicate the character of the speech. Should any reader think our selections partial, in any way, their comments will be thankfully received.

FIRST SPEECH OF ELIPHAZ

(Chapters 4 and 5)

The first speech of Eliphaz, which opens the cycle, will be examined quite carefully, since it establishes a precedent which was imitated by the other speakers, and may be said to be the keynote of all the speeches that follow:

If one assay to commune with thee, wilt thou be grieved?
But who can withhold himself from speaking?
Behold, thou hast instructed many,
And thou hast strengthened the weak hands.
Thy words have upholden him that was falling,
And thou hast made firm the feeble knees.
But now it is come unto thee, and thou faintest;
It toucheth thee and thou art troubled.
Is not thy fear of God thy confidence,
And the integrity of thy ways thy hope?
Remember, I pray thee, whoever perished, being innocent?
Or where were the upright cut off?
According as I have seen, they that plow iniquity,
And sow trouble, reap the same.
By the breath of God they perish,
And by the blast of His anger are they consumed." 4:2-9.

The very first part of this first speech by Eliphaz is a thrust at Job. It charges him with having been able to comfort others under affliction, but now, when he himself is afflicted, he is fainting. Neither does it stop with this thrust at Job's courage, and patience, but goes on to indict Job's innocency and uprightness:

Whoever perished being innocent?
Or where were the upright cut off?"

He then proceeds to an argument based upon a well-known law of nature:

"They That plow iniquity,
And sow trouble, reap the same."

The conclusion is that Job is reaping iniquity and trouble; consequently he must have sown the same.

Eliphaz then continues by relating a spirit vision which he has had:

"Now a thing was secretly brought to me,
And mine ear received a whisper thereof,
In thoughts from the visions of the night,
When deep sleep falleth on men,
Fear came upon me, and trembling,
Which made all my bones to shake.
Then a spirit passed before my face;
The hair of my flesh stood up.
It stood still, but I could not discern the appearance thereof;
A form was before mine eyes:
There was silence, and I heard a voice, saying,
Shall mortal man be more just than God?
Shall a man be more pure than his Maker?
Behold, He putteth no trust in His servants;
And His angels He chargeth with folly:
How much more them that dwell in houses of clay,
Whose foundation is in the dust,
Who are crushed before the moth!
Betwixt morning and evening they are destroyed:
They perish forever without any regarding it.
Is not their tent-cord plucked up within them?
They die, and that without wisdom." 4:12-21.

The relating of a spirit vision attracts special attention, and often produces unusual effect. Waiving, for the moment, the question of the truth or falsehood of the vision, it manifests diplomacy upon the part of the speaker.

Let us now investigate the spirit vision which caused the speaker's hair to stand up, and which he possibly recited in hushed tones, for sake of effect. What principally interests us is the message which the spirit is reported as having spoken:

"Shall mortal man be more just than God?
Shall a man be more pure than his Maker?
Behold, He putteth no trust in His servants;
And His angels He chargeth with folly:
How much more them that dwell in houses of clay,
Whose foundation is in the dust"

Listening to the message which the spirit is reported to have brought, we can but note the strangeness of that message, and how unlike what we have previously heard in the heavenly

council. God has not charged His angels with folly, neither His servants. Instead, He challenges Satan, himself, to test His servant, Job, whom He twice declared to be "perfect" and "upright." O Job, could we of this modern day but tell thee what we have seen, and read, and heard, the story of the spirit vision would not disturb thee! But, could we have told thee, God's plan of making thee a world example would have been spoiled.

Spirit visions need always to be carefully considered. "Try the spirits" was as good advice in Job's time as it is today. (Beware of the man who has seen a spirit vision in the night.) The object of the speaker was, evidently, to undermine Job's faith in God and discredit his relation to God. Whether or not the speaker, ignorant of the deceptions of spiritism, as many are today, and really believing in communications in this manner, was being made the tool of Satan, may be a difficult question; but it is evident that Satan, through the speaker, was making a diplomatic effort to impress Job, the suffering listener, with the things absolutely contrary to God's nature and what He has said. God declared, "Job, my servant, is a perfect and upright man." The spirit said: "He [God] putteth no trust in His servants." Yes, more, "He chargeth [even] His angels with folly." The "accuser" is still at work. As truly as Mrs. Job became the mouthpiece of Satan, so also did Eliphaz.

Turning again to the spirit message, we detect in it a personal thrust of Satan at God. Satan who had at one time been a shining archangel, was cast out of heaven because he sought equality with God. That, of course, occurred during the period of angelic probation in the heavenly world -- a probation which had long since ceased, as will man's also at some time. As a fallen archangel Satan is God's enemy, determined to overthrow God's work. In this spirit message that evil one puts into the lips of Eliphaz a thrust against the justice of God, thereby attempting to justify himself, also to indict God, and to destroy Job's faith in God.

Among other words which Eliphaz spoke, were:
"Behold, happy is the man whom God correcteth.
Therefore despise not thou the chastening of the Almighty." 5:17.

Thus, according to the reasoning of Eliphaz, Job should receive these chastenings as a correction from God, and count himself happy to do so.

JOB'S FIRST REPLY TO ELIPHAZ (Chapters 6 and 7)

To the first speech of Eliphaz, Job replies, that his calamity is beyond measure:

"Oh, that my vexation were but weighed,
And all my calamity laid in the balances!
For now it would be heavier than the sand of the seas:
Therefore have my words been rash." 6:2, 3.

Continuing, he expresses his intense suffering:

"When I lie down, I say,

When shall I arise, and the night be gone?
And I am full of tossings to and fro unto the dawning of the day.
My flesh is clothed with worms and clods of dust; My skin closeth up, and breaketh out afresh."
7:4, 5.

Friends usually show kindness to one in distress, even if, as Eliphaz has said concerning Job, he has forsaken God; but Job has been deceitfully dealt with. The pity he should have been accorded is denied him:

"To him that is ready to faint kindness should be showed from his friend;
Even to him that forsaketh the fear of the Almighty.
My brethren have dealt deceitfully as a brook,
As the channel of brooks that pass away;
Which are black by reason of the ice,
And wherein the snow hideth itself." 6:14-16.

BILDAD'S FIRST SPEECH (Chapter 8)

The second speaker, Bildad, now addresses Job. His speech is not so lengthy, and advances very little beyond what the former speaker has said, except to suggest that Job is probably being punished for the sins of his children:

"If thy children have sinned against Him,
And He hath delivered them into the hand of their transgression:
If thou wouldest seek diligently unto God,
And make thy supplication to the Almighty;
If thou wert pure and upright:
Surely now He would wake for thee,
And make the habitation of thy righteousness prosperous." 8:4-6.

Note again that Satan has put into the mouth of the speaker a denial of the very truth which God affirmed, the uprightness of Job. Bildad also takes advantage of the death of Job's children to make against them a painful charge as to their sins. Although Job has been pious, and had daily brought his sons and daughters to God by his sacrifices, and though Satan has, himself, brought about their death, it is all charged against Job. Once again the accuser has found human lips through which to speak.

Toward the close of Bildad's speech he seemingly becomes sympathetic; and, if we may hope that he is not speaking sarcastically, he gives Job a few words of consolation:

"Behold, God will not cast away a perfect man,
Neither will He uphold the evil doers.
He will yet fill thy mouth with laughter,
And thy lips with shouting.
They that hate thee shall be clothed with shame;

And the tent of the wicked shall be no more."
8:20-22.

JOB'S FIRST REPLY TO BILDAD (Chapters 9 and 10)

Bildad having finished speaking, Job proceeds to answer him, reviewing God's omnipotence in a way so masterly that it has surprised the greatest astronomers; and students of nature. His reference to "Arcturus" (the Great Bear), to "Orion" (the Giant); also to "the Pleiades," and to "the Chambers of the South," now well-defined arrangements of constellations, prove that the science of astronomy was well developed in the ancient days in which the Book of Job was written. Perhaps even more significant, is the mention of these things at that time, so far in advance of the general development of the science of astronomy, proves the inspiration of the book. God, of course, knew the heavens far better than we do now, and could put into the mouths of His speakers utterances which they did not understand. Taking into account the astronomy in the Book of Job, and that found in the writings of the Psalmist, as in Psalm 19:1: "The heavens declare the glory of God," etc., no wonder that the great astronomer and naturalist, Sir Isaac Newton, should have said that he could get more astronomy by reading his Bible a single hour, than by watching in his observatory all night.

Job's rehearsal of God's omnipotence is given in the following sublime sentences:

"Of a truth I know that it is so:
But how can man be just with God?
If he be pleased to contend with Him,
He can not answer Him one of a thousand.
He is wise in heart and mighty in strength:
Who hath hardened himself against Him, and prospered?
Him that removeth the mountains, and they know it not,
When He overturneth them in His anger;
That shaketh the earth out of its place,
And the pillars thereof tremble,
That commandeth the sun, and it riseth not,
And sealeth up the stars;
That alone stretcheth out the heavens,
And treadeth upon the waves of the sea;
That maketh the Bear, Orion, and the Pleiades,
And the chambers of the south;
That doeth great things past finding out,
Yea, marvelous things without number." 9:2-10.

After this sublime review of God's omnipotence, Job proceeds to review his own case. Although he can not understand, he insists upon his guiltlessness and affirms:

"Thou knowest that I am not wicked,
And there is none that can deliver out of Thy hand." 10:7.

ZOPHAR'S FIRST SPEECH (Chapter 11)

At the close of Job's reply to Bildad, Zophar, the last of the trinity of speakers, addresses him. From the very first word he unsparingly scathes Job, accusing him of a "multitude of words," even "boastings" and "iniquity," proceeding thus:

"Should not the multitude of words be answered? And should a man full of talk be justified?
Should thy boastings make men hold their peace?
And when thou mockest, shall no man make thee ashamed?
For thou sayest, Thy doctrine is pure,
And I am clean in thine eyes.
But O that God would speak,
And open his lips against thee,
And that He would show thee the secrets of wisdom!
For He is manifold in understanding.
Know therefore that God exacteth of thee less than thine iniquity deserveth." 11:2-6.

Having finished his accusations against Job's words, and against the uprightness of his character, Zophar advises Job to repent:

"If thou set thy heart aright,
And stretch out thy hands toward Him;
If iniquity be in thy hand, put it far away,
And let not unrighteousness dwell in thy tents."
11:13, 14.

JOB'S FIRST REPLY TO ZOPHAR (Chapter 12, 13, 14)

When professed friends came to visit Job he had reason to expect some words of comfort at least. They have all three now spoken, but instead of offering consolation they have taunted, upbraided and accused him. In their efforts to prove their superior wisdom, they have drawn conclusions which Job recognized as absolutely false. Job now proceeds to answer Zophar, addressing all three of them by the use of justifiable and appropriate irony:

"No doubt but ye are the people
And wisdom shall die with you." 12:2.

Continuing, Job denies any inferiority to them and announces that he too has understanding:

"But I have understanding as well as you;
I am not inferior to you:
Yea, who knoweth not such things as these?"
"What ye know, the same do I know also:

I am not inferior unto you." 12:3; 13:2.

Job does not object to the contention of his professed friends that God has sent upon him his calamity, but he does resent their conclusion as to the cause for which his calamity has been sent. Job even assumes that both animate and inanimate creation have wisdom such as that, and replies:

"But ask now the beasts, and they shall teach thee;
And the birds of the heavens, 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 Jehovah hath wrought this,
In whose hand is the soul of every living thing
And the breath of all mankind." 12:7-10.

Relative to their unwarranted conclusions as to causes, and as to the remedy they suggest, Job replies:

"But ye are forgers of lies;
Ye are all physicians of no value.
Your memorable sayings are proverbs of ashes, Your defences are defences of clay." 13:4, 12.

Probably because all three visitors have spoken to his keen disappointment, and have brought him no comfort, Job, having reviewed their shallow wisdom and false conclusions, (as above), again declares that though he should be slain, yet he will trust in God. (13:15).

Then, after reviewing his own mysterious and hopeless condition, he compares himself to

"A rotten thing that consumeth,
Like a garment that is moth-eaten." 13:28.

Immediately thereafter Job takes up a pathetic strain and utters words which, ever since his day, have been read beside many biers and open graves:

"Man that is born of a woman,
Is of few days, and full of trouble,
He cometh forth like a flower, and is cut down:
He fleeth also as a shadow, and continueth not.
And dost thou open thine eyes upon such a one,
And bringest me into judgment with thee?"
14:1-3.

Realizing that all mortal hopes have failed, Job now catches a gleam of future immortality, and raises the question of the life everlasting, reasoning from nature, as follows:

"For there is hope of a tree,
If it be cut down, that it will sprout again,
And that the tender branch thereof will not cease.
Though the root thereof wax old in the earth,
And the stock thereof die in the ground;
Yet through the scent of water it will bud,
And put forth boughs like a plant.
But man dieth, and is laid low:
Yea, man giveth up the ghost, and where is he?
As the waters fail from the sea,
And the river wasteth and drieth up;
So man lieth down and riseth not:
Till the heavens be no more, they shall not awake,
Nor be roused out of their sleep.
O that thou wouldest hide me in Sheol,
That thou wouldest keep me secret, until thy wrath be past,
That thou wouldest appoint me a set time, and remember me!
If a man die, shall he live again?
All the days of my warfare would I wait,
Till my release should come.
Thou wouldest call and I would answer thee:
Thou wouldest have a desire to the work of thy hands." 14:7-15.

* * * * *

Chapter 10

THE SECOND CYCLE OF SPEECHES: THE THIRD TRIAL -- Continued

Chapter 15-21 Inclusive

SECOND SPEECH OF ELIPHAZ (Chapter 15)

The second cycle of speeches is introduced by second address of Eliphaz, who, having listened to the first addresses of Bildad and Zophar, and to Job's replies, arrives at the conclusion that he has a most certain indictment for Job. Accusing Job of craftiness and iniquity, he declares that Job's own words convict him:

"Should a wise man make answer with vain knowledge,
And fill himself with the east wind?
Should he reason with unprofitable talk,
Or with speeches wherewith he can do no good?
Yea, thou doest away with fear,
And hinderest devotion before God.
For thine iniquity teacheth thy mouth,
And thou chooseth the tongue of the crafty.
Thine own mouth condemneth thee, and not I;

Yea, thine own lips testify against thee." 15:2-6.

Evidently feeling that Job has not, as yet, been sufficiently impressed with the spirit vision related in his former address, Eliphaz again refers to that purported message, saying:

"What is man, that he should be clean?
And he that is born of a woman, that he should be righteous?
Behold, he putteth no trust in his holy ones;
Yea, the heavens are not clean in his sight:
How much less one that is abominable and corrupt,
A man that drinketh iniquity like water!"
15:14-16.

JOB'S SECOND REPLY TO ELIPHAZ (Chapters 16 and 17)

At the close of the second address of Eliphaz, Job replies, characterizing the visitors as "miserable comforters." Further, he assures them that if they were in his place, and he in theirs, he would speak words, not of accusation and contempt, but words of comfort and solace:

"Then Job answered and said,
I have heard many such things:
Miserable comforters are ye all.
Shall vain words have an end?
Or what provoketh thee that thou answerest?
I also could speak as ye do;
If your soul were in my soul's stead,
I could join words together against you,
And shake my head at you.
But I would strengthen you with my mouth,
And the solace of my lips would assuage your grief." 16:1-5.

Although Job finds no possible way of accounting for his fearful and indescribable misery, except that it is God-permitted, he continues to plead his own innocence, and appeals to God in heaven as his witness:

"Although there is no violence in my hands,
And my prayer is pure.
O earth, cover not thou my blood,
And let my cry have no resting-place.
Even now, behold, my witness is in heaven,
And he that voucheth for me is on high.
My friends scoff at me:
But mine eye poureth out tears unto God,
That He would maintain the right of a man with God,

And of a son of man with his neighbor!
For when a few years are come,
I shall go the way whence I shall not return."
16:17-22.

SECOND SPEECH OF BILDAD (Chapter 18)

In his second address, Bildad seems to have forgotten the kindly feeling which we had thought he entertained for Job in the closing of his first address. He now becomes bold in his accusations, the entire address being a tirade against Job, comparing him to the wicked who will be driven from the face of the earth, leaving no posterity, remembrance or name in all the earth:

"How long will ye hunt for words?
Consider, and afterwards we will speak,
Wherefore are we counted as beasts,
And are become unclean in your sight?
Thou that tearest thyself in thine anger,
Shall the earth be forsaken for thee?
Or shall the rock be removed out of its place?
Yea, the light of the wicked shall be put out,
And the spark of his fire shall not shine.
The light shall be dark in his tent,
And his lamp above him shall be put out.
The steps of his strength shall be straitened,
And his own counsel shall cast him down."

* * *

"He shall be rooted out of his tent wherein he trusteth,
And he shall be brought to the king of terrors.
There shall dwell in his tent that which is none of his:
Brimstone shall be scattered upon his habitation.
His roots shall be dried up beneath,
And above shall his branch be cut off.
His remembrance shall perish from the earth,
And he shall have no name in the street.
He shall be driven from light into darkness,
And chased out of the world.
He shall have neither son nor son's son among his people,
Nor any remaining where he sojourned.
They that come after shall be astonished at his day.
As they that went before were affrighted.
Surely such are the dwellings of the unrighteous,
And this is the place of him that knoweth not God." 18:2-7 and 14-21.

JOB'S SECOND REPLY TO BILDAD (Chapter 19)

Being sorely vexed by this second speech of Bildad, as well as all that had previously been said, Job replies:

"How long will ye vex my soul,
And break me in pieces with words?
These ten times have ye reproached me:
Ye are not ashamed that ye deal hardly with me.
And be it indeed that I have erred,
Mine error remaineth with myself.
If indeed ye will magnify yourselves against me,
And plead against me my reproach;
Know now that God hath subverted me in my cause,
And hath compassed me with His net." 19:2-6.

Ignorant of the knowledge which we have been permitted to obtain, by the holding aside of the curtain, and knowing no other source from which calamities could come, Job looks upon God as the source. Pathetically he describes his condition, being entirely forsaken by his "brethren" his "acquaintance," his "kinsfolk," his "servants" and even his "wife":

"He hath put my brethren far from me,
And mine acquaintance are wholly estranged from me.
My kinsfolk have failed,
And my familiar friends have forgotten me.
They that dwell in my house, and my maids, count me for a stranger;
I am an alien in their sight.
I call unto my servant, and he giveth me no answer,
Though I entreat him with my mouth.
My breath is strange to my wife,
And my supplication to the children of mine own mother.
Even young children despise me;
If I arise, they speak against me.
All my familiar friends abhor me,
And they whom I loved are turned against me." 19:13-19.

Despite all these mental and spiritual sufferings, Job still declares his absolute faith in God:

"Oh that my words were now written!
Oh that they were inscribed in a book!
That with an iron pen and lead
They were graven in the rock for ever!
But as for me I know that my Redeemer liveth,
And at last he will stand up upon the earth:

And after my skin, even this body, is destroyed,
Then without my flesh shall I see God;
Whom I, even I, shall see, on my side,
And mine eyes shall behold, and not as a stranger.
My heart is consumed within me." 19:23-27.

The sublime declaration, "I know that my Redeemer liveth," is very significant, and seems quite in advance of Job's day. In fact, this quotation is often confused with New Testament statements, being sometimes mistakenly credited to Paul. Job's surroundings and circumstances, so dark and unfavorable, make this inspiring testimony of his to sparkle with rich luster and beauty.

SECOND SPEECH OF ZOPHAR (Chapter 20)

The second speech of Zophar, from beginning to end, will be found to be an arraignment of the wicked, which can but be intended to apply to Job. Referring to a wicked man losing his wealth, Zophar evidently thinks of Job as an example. Almost any verse selected will indicate the attitude he assumes toward Job; but the following verses are characteristic:

"Knowest thou not this of old time,
Since man was placed upon earth,
That the triumphing of the wicked is short,
And the joy of the godless but for a moment?
Though his height mount up to the heavens,
And his head reach unto the clouds;
Yet he shall perish forever like his own dung:
They that have seen him shall say, where is he?
He shall fly away as a dream, and shall not be found:
Yea, he shall be chased away as a vision of the night;
The eye which saw him shall see him no more;
Neither shall his place any more behold him
His children shall seek the favor of the poor,
And his hands shall give back his wealth.
His bones are full of his youth,
But it shall lie down with him in the dust." 20:4-11.

JOB'S SECOND REPLY TO ZOPHAR (Chapter 21)

Job proves himself equal to the task. His professed friends have constantly, by direct and indirect statement and by every conceivable figure of speech, accused him of being a sinner; and that consequently he is being justly punished. Job reminds them that God permits even the wicked to be in health and to prosper. Job's conclusion is that if God permits even the wicked to be in health and to prosper, his own sufferings and adversity are not in any sense evidences that he has sinned. Accordingly, he proves their conclusions and charges false, and closes his address by saying:

"How then comfort ye me in vain,
Seeing in your answers there remaineth only falsehood?" 21:34,

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Chapter 11
THE THIRD CYCLE OF SPEECHES: THE THIRD TRIAL -- Continued
(Chapters 22-31 Inclusive)

THIRD SPEECH OF ELIPHAZ
(Chapter 22)

The third and final speech of Eliphaz is a vehement accusation against Job. Eliphaz charges him with "great wickedness," even to the oppression of widows and orphans, and dishonesty in various forms. We, having heard what God said about Job in the beginning of our study, recognize these accusations by Eliphaz as downright lies, prompted by none other than Satan, who, from behind the curtain, is conducting Job's third and lingering trial. How any sane commentator or even half-honest interpreter can sympathize with these hell-bred and Satan-designed accusations against Job is a mystery. Hear the appalling charges which fell from the lips of Eliphaz:

"Is not thy wickedness great?
Neither is there any end to thine iniquities.
For thou hast taken pledges of thy brother for nought,
And stripped the naked of their clothing.
Thou hast not given water to the weary to drink,
And thou hast withholden bread from the hungry.
But as for the mighty man, he had the earth;
And the honorable man, he dwelt in it.
Thou hast sent widows away empty,
And the arms of the fatherless have been broken.
Therefore snares are round about thee,
And sudden fear troubleth thee,
Or darkness, so that thou canst not see,
And abundance of waters cover thee." 22:5-11.

JOB'S THIRD REPLY TO ELIPHAZ
(Chapters 23 and 24)

Despite all of Job's physical and mental suffering, he turns his heart and thoughts toward God, declaring his willingness to submit his ease to Him, if only he may find Him:

"Even today is my complaint rebellious:
My stroke is heavier than my groaning.
Oh that I knew where I might find Him!
That I might come even to His seat!

I would set my cause in order before Him,
And fill my mouth with arguments.
I would know the words which He would answer me,
And understand what He would say unto me.
Would He contend with me in the greatness of His power?
Nay; but He would give heed unto me.
There the upright might reason with Him;
So should I be delivered for ever from my judge." 23:2-7.

That Job is certain of the outcome and still reposes absolute confidence in God, is indicated by the following avowal:

"I have not gone back from the commandment of His lips;
I have treasured up the words of His mouth more than my necessary food.
My foot hath held fast to His steps;
His way have I kept, and turned not aside.
But He knoweth the way that I take;
When He hath tried me, I shall come forth as gold." Chapter 23, verses 12, 11, and 10,

BILDAD'S THIRD SPEECH (Chapter 25)

Having exhausted his resources, Bildad makes his third address brief. Probably for the sake of emphasis he repeats the spirit-vision argument first produced by Eliphaz -- that man can not be pure before God:

"How then can man be just with God?
Or how can he be clean that is born of a woman?
Behold, even the moon hath no brightness,
And the stars are not pure in His sight:
How much less man, that is a worm!
And the son of man, that is a worm!" 25:4-6.

JOB'S THIRD REPLY TO BILDAD (Chapters 26-31)

Replying to the third speech of Bildad, Job persists in asserting his own integrity:

"As God liveth, who hath taken away my right,
And the Almighty, who hath vexed my soul
(For my life is yet whole in me,
And the Spirit of God is in my nostrils);
Surely my lips shall not speak unrighteousness.,
Neither shall my tongue utter deceit.
Far be it from me that I should justify you:
Till I die I will not put away mine integrity from me.

My righteousness I hold fast, and will not let it go:
My heart shall not reproach me so long as I live." 27:2-6.

The remainder of Job's reply is devoted to parables and to comparison of his present contemptuously low situation with his former greatness.

THIRD SPEECH OF ZOPHAR

Naturally we expect the three cycles of addresses to be unbroken, but the last speaker, Zophar, fails to appear in the third cycle. The reason for this omission is scarcely a matter of conjecture. The third speeches of Eliphaz and Bildad proved to be nothing but a repetition of former addresses, and the speech, especially of Bildad, was very brief. Probabilities are that Zophar was entirely outwitted by Job; hence, he spared himself humiliation and disgrace by not attempting to speak when he had nothing to say. In this one piece of self-restraint Zophar set an example still worthy of imitation. It was nevertheless, a silent confession of defeat.

DISCOURSE OF ELIHU (Chapters 32-37)

Though Zophar fails to speak in the last cycle, another proposes so to do. It is Elihu. Just when he appeared upon the scene we do not know, but judging from what he says, he has listened to most of the speeches made by Eliphaz, Bildad and Zophar, and also to Job's replies. He is a young man who is so full of words, and so desirous of showing his "opinion" that he compares himself to a "wine-skin," ready to burst (32:19).

Having listened to the former speeches, his wrath is kindled against Job, because, as he interpreted it at least, Job was "righteous in his own eyes," and "justified himself rather than God." His wrath was also kindled against Eliphaz, Bildad and Zophar, because they found no answer, and yet condemned Job. Turning to the three speakers he chides them with the following words, professing to be perfect in knowledge:

"I am young, and ye are very old;
Wherefore I held back, and durst not show you mine opinion.
I said, Days should speak,
And multitude of years should teach wisdom
But there is a spirit in man,
And the breath of the Almighty giveth them understanding,
It is not the great that are wise,
Nor the aged that understand justice.
Therefore I said, Hearken to me;
I also will show mine opinion.
Behold, I waited for your words,
I listened for your reasonings,
Whilst ye searched out what to say.
Yea, I attended unto you,
And, behold, there was none that convinced Job,

Or that answered his words, among you." 32:6-12.

Proceeding, he addresses Job thus:

"Howbeit, Job, I pray thee, hear my speech,
And hearken to all my words.
Behold now, I have opened my mouth;
My tongue hath spoken in my mouth
My words shall utter the uprightness of my heart;
And that with my lips know they shall speak sincerely.
The Spirit of God hath made me,
And the breath of the Almighty giveth me life.
If thou canst answer thou me;
Set thy words in order before me, stand forth." 33:1-5.

Reviewing the spirit vision to which Eliphaz had twice referred and Bildad once, and accusing Job of presumption and self-righteousness the youthful Elihu continues, professing to be the very mouthpiece of God:

"Suffer me a little, and I wilt show thee;
For I have yet somewhat to say on God's behalf.
I will fetch my knowledge from afar,
And will ascribe righteousness to my Maker.
For truly my words are not false:
One that is perfect in knowledge is with thee." 36:2-4.

The speech of Elihu occupies six long chapters to which Job listened, no doubt, attentively. When was through Job answered him not a word. Prof. Pierson says that the reason Job did not answer Elihu was because he had not said anything. He had made much pretense, and talked much, but had said nothing. In vain may we search for any new thought or reasoning that Elihu advanced over what the others had said, although his wrath was kindled against them because they could not answer Job. His speech is almost entirely repetition. Here is another example of much talking with little saying -- a good lesson, indeed, for all who are ready to burst with talk.

Classes which I have taught have been requested to check the words of Elihu against those of Eliphaz, Bildad and Zophar, with a view to discovering anything new which he might have advanced. One careful student reported that Elihu had struck one additional note (Job 34:37), when he accuses Job of rebellion. The lines read:

"For he addeth rebellion unto his sin;
He clappeth his hands among us,
And multiplieth his words against God."

Why Elihu drops out of the scene entirely it is impossible to say. That he is not later indicted by God, together with Eliphaz, Bildad and Zophar, has been interpreted by some as

placing Elihu in a more favorable light. Since nothing more is predicated concerning him, the best procedure is to dismiss him from our conclusions..

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Chapter 12

DIVINE INTERVENTION

Chapters 38-42:6

The scene is now entirely changed. God addresses Job from His pulpit, the whirlwind. Job has spoken words beyond his own knowledge. Yet there is not a hint in all that God said to Job, charging him with having sinned. The author of this volume hereby challenges critics of Job to produce any such charge. What God said concerning Job in the opening and closing chapters of the Book of Job would be unpardonably contradicted should we be able justly to interpret a single thing said in God's address to Job, as either a direct or indirect charge that he has sinned. Supposing we should grant that God did refer to Job when he said, "Who is this that darkeneth counsel by words without 'knowledge'," etc., even then the severest charge would be that of using words without "knowledge," to which the saintliest man who lives today would doubtless be obliged to plead guilty, should God address him in person. If lack of knowledge can be excused in this day, how much more so in the days of Job.

GOD'S FIRST MESSAGE

(Chapters 38:1-40:2)

God intends to give Job a vision of his own insignificance and, in order to do so, He gives him a review of animate and inanimate creation and propounds to him some exceedingly interesting but difficult and searching questions, a part of which are as follows:

"Where wast thou when I laid the foundations of the earth?
Declare, if thou hast understanding.
Who determined the measures thereof, if thou knowest?
Or who stretched the line upon it?
Whereupon were the foundations thereof fastened?
Or who laid the corner-stone thereof,
When the morning stars sang together,
And all the sons of God shouted for joy?
Or who shut up the sea with doors,
When it brake forth, as if it had issued out of the womb;
When I made clouds the garment thereof,
And thick darkness a swaddling-band for it,
And marked out for it my bound,
And set bars and doors,
And said, hitherto shalt thou come, but no further;
And here shall thy proud waves be stayed?" 38:4-11.

Also:

"Who hath cleft a channel for the waterflood,
Or a way for the lightning of the thunder;
To cause it to rain on a land where no man is;
Or the wilderness, wherein there is no man;
To satisfy the waste and desolate ground,
And to cause the tender grass to spring forth?
Hath the rain a father?
Or who hath begotten the drops of dew?
Out of whose womb came the ice?
And the hoary frost of heaven, who hath gendered it?
The waters hide themselves and become like stone,
And the face of the deep is frozen.
Canst thou bind the cluster of the Plejades,
Or loose the bands of Orion?
Canst thou lead forth the Mazzaroth in their season?
Or canst thou guide the Bear with her train?
Knowest thou the ordinances of the heavens?
Canst thou establish the dominion thereof in the earth?" 38:25-33.

JOB'S REPLY TO GOD

Replying to these unanswerable questions propounded to him, Job says:

"Behold, I am of small account; what shall I
answer Thee?
I lay my hand upon my mouth.
Once I have spoken, and I will not answer;
Yea, twice, but I proceed no further." 40:4, 5.

GOD'S SECOND MESSAGE (Chapters 40:6-41:34)

Again God addresses Job out of the whirlwind, with a second list of questions. He now proposes that if Job can answer these questions satisfactorily, He will confess that Job can deliver himself (v. 14). In this list of questions special reference is made to the animal kingdom. God also invites Job to declare whether he is capable of ruling the universe. Of course, as no mortal man possesses these attributes and prerogatives of God, Job could not accept such a proposition as this. He can not deliver himself: he is gripped and held by the calamities which Satan has imposed in his effort to go to the last inch of the limitation God has marked out for him, in a final, unyielding purpose of causing Job to curse God. Satan will not set Job at liberty; Job can not extricate himself. It now remains for God to say it is enough. Then, and only then, will the captive be liberated.

JOB'S SECOND REPLY TO GOD

God's message to Job from His whirlwind pulpit constituted for Job a new revelation. He had never known God thus before. What he had known of God previously compared to what he knows of Him now, is like hearsay compared to sight; and Job exclaims:

"I know that Thou canst do all things,
And that no purpose of Thine can be restrained.
Who is this that hideth counsel without knowledge?
Therefore have I uttered that which I understood not,
Things too wonderful for me, which I knew not.
Hear, I beseech Thee, and I will speak;
I will demand of Thee, and declare Thou unto me.
I have heard of Thee by the hearing of the ear;
But now mine eye seeth Thee." 42:2-5.

It should be noted that Job determines to keep pace with the revelation which God has made to him of Himself. And so he immediately proceeds to humble himself before the Almighty, declaring:

"Wherefore I abhor myself, [margin, loathe my words]
And repent in dust and ashes." Verse 6.

"Repentance" in this sense is natural for even innocent violations, as when one wrongs another unintentionally, as by an error in judgment, or by accident, etc. An extreme incident of innocent violation is found in Deut. 19:4-6, where a man accidentally killed another, and although innocent, had to flee to the city of refuge for safety. God had not requested Job to "repent," therefore, whatever is meant by this statement, it is evident that what Job did was voluntary upon his part.

Further, referring to the humbling of himself, humility is progressive. The great Apostle Paul said one time: "I am the least of the apostles" (I Cor. 15:9). Later he said, "I am less than the least of all saints" (Eph. 3:8). Still later, speaking of great sinners, he said: "Of whom I am chief" (I Tim. 1:15). Not now a sinner, but a chief sinner saved by grace.

Likewise, Job's increased light and revelation demanded a deeper humility, to which he freely and cheerfully responded.

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Chapter 13 JOB VINDICATED AND REWARDED Job 42:7-17.

The secret of the proper interpretation of the Book of Job will be found in its opening and closing chapters. The poetical portion of the book abounds in highly expressive figures, which can

not be so certainly interpreted. It appears that many readers of Job so lose themselves in the poetic part, which is principally made up of the cycles of speeches, that they fail to discover the one great and grand theme of the book which constitutes the title of this volume. In the complete vindication of Job which follows, it will be discovered that the Book of Job has a definite purpose, and that to have omitted it from our Bibles would have been a serious loss. Job is the only man, of whom we have any record, whom God held up to the gaze of men, angels and devils, and made him "a world example." In this respect the Book of Job stands alone in its class.

JOB'S "FRIENDS" INDICTED (Verses 7, 8)

Following Job's reply to God, which evidences that he had learned the lesson God intended to teach him -- that of deeper humility -- God addresses Himself to Eliphaz, Bildad and Zophar. These men, if they were permitted to be auditors when God addressed Job, were no doubt elated because, as they thought, God was humbling Job and thereby exalting them. Keen must have been their disappointment when God addressed Eliphaz as follows:

"My wrath is kindled against thee, and against thy two friends; for ye have not spoken of me the thing that is right, as my servant Job hath. Now therefore, take unto you seven bullocks and seven rams, and go to my servant Job, and offer up yourselves a burnt offering; and my servant Job shall pray for you; for him will I accept, that I deal not with you after your folly; for ye have not spoken of me the thing that is right, as my servant Job hath."

A careful analysis of these verses discloses the following facts about Eliphaz, Bildad and Zophar:

1. They have spoken wrong words. Whatever they may have said which appeared as truth, in itself, was entirely discounted because the entire trend of their speeches was wrong, having been inspired by evil purposes or motives, which God knew, and by which He judged them.

2. God is angry with them. "My wrath is kindled against thee and thy two friends." God being angry with these men proves the former conclusion; for God is not angry without a cause, and the words which these men had spoken were the things which had kindled His wrath.

3. They must repent. There remains only one course for them to pursue. This command was enforced by a threat. Unless they repent, God will deal with them according to their "folly."

4. Their sin is of such a nature as to require sacrifices. "Take unto you seven bullocks and seven rams." There is positively no other way; expiation was necessary: they had sinned; therefore sacrifices were necessary.

5. Further, they need some one who is worthy of the priestly office, to intercede for them. There was no organized priesthood in those days. To whom then shall they turn? Strange as it may seem to us, and humiliating as it was to them, God selected the priest, naming Job. They may choose to reject God's appointed intercessor; but if they do so, God will reject them. "Him," [Job] says God, "will I accept."

JOB'S VINDICATION (Verses 7, 8)

A careful analysis of these verses also evidences the following truths concerning Job:

1. He has spoken right things. "Ye have not spoken of me the thing that is right, as my servant Job hath." Whatever Job may have said which appears worthy of criticism, was entirely passed by or overlooked by God, because back of what he said was a motive which was fully justifiable.

2. He is still recognized as God's servant. "My servant Job." While God claims His "servant" Job, is there not an intimation that those who reproached Job are the "servants" of another? Whose servants, then, if not Satan's? Although accused and maligned, although charged with practically every sin but murder, by his three "friends," Job is referred to by God as "my servant." Little difference does it make what men may say of us or to us when God recognizes us as His servants.

3. God required of him no repentance. As noted previously, the attitude of repentance, which Job cheerfully assumed when a new revelation of God came to him, was, more particularly, a resolute sinking into deeper humility and reverence.

4. He is promoted to the priesthood. Job is permitted to officiate as priest at the altar where Eliphaz, Bildad and Zophar sacrifice their rams and bullocks, thus atoning for their sins and receiving pardon.

5. Job alone can intercede for them. "Him will I accept, that I deal not with you after your folly." In a certain sense, Job held the destinies of these men in his hands.

Apart from him and his prayers, there was no forgiveness for them.

STRONG VERDICT

As Job's trials were cumulative, so also were their verdicts. The first calamity came suddenly, stroke crowding stroke in such quick succession that the world's history knows no parallel. The verdict of that trial was: "In all this Job sinned not, nor charged God foolishly."

The second calamity which was severer, being a second and more strongly determined effort on the part of Satan to crush Job, strikes promptly upon the first, and both weigh down upon him. The verdict of that trial which was so extremely bitter and unspeakably horrible was. "In all this did not Job sin [even] with his lips." As the lips are the instruments of complaint or any improper words, this verdict is exceedingly significant.

The third trial which was so tactfully planned, so stubbornly persistent and lingering, and which accumulated upon the first and second, now combines a trinity of calamities, any of which has no equal in the annals of history. It is a third, hell-conceived, devil-plotted, thrice-determined

effort of Satan to overthrow the only "perfect man" whom God has ever held up to be the target of hell, and to be gazed upon by men, demons and angels. Almost breathlessly have we been awaiting the outcome. Should Satan succeed, a howl of fiendish triumph will reverberate throughout all the caverns of hell: angels will weep, and men fall low in the dust. Should Satan win, his superiority to God, his wicked ambition which had cast him out of heaven, will have materialized, and across the heavens will be written in blazing, taunting letters:

"Mortal Man Can Not Be Perfect Before God."

But here at last is the verdict; not only spoken but acted: Satan's servants are severely indicted, and their only possible chance of reconciliation to God is by atonement. God's servant is completely vindicated, and becomes the only intercessor, before whom Satan's servants must fall, and through whom the forgiving ear of God can be reached in their behalf. Satan is defeated; "his assertions are so absolutely refuted and he is so completely discomfited that he passes into oblivion." -- Pulpit Commentary. What a far-reaching and significant verdict! What a triumph for the possibilities of grace!

JOB REWARDED

No trial reaches the saint without bringing its corresponding blessing. The stronger the trial, the greater the reward. Job's rewards were very great. They are here enumerated:

1. When he prayed for his "friends" his own affliction was removed. Verse 10. Our ministry to others and our own blessings are so inseparably connected that we can not engage in such ministry without ourselves receiving special blessing.

2. His friends, who had forsaken him during the dark days of his calamity, came and renewed their friendship, at the price of gifts. Verse 11. "Truth crushed to earth will rise again." Even men were compelled to recognize Job as worthy of renewed friendship and confidence.

3. God gave him double prosperity. Verse 12. Every item of his former possessions is doubled:

Instead of seven thousand sheep, he now has fourteen thousand.

Instead of three thousand camels, he now has six thousand.

Instead of five hundred yoke of oxen, he now has a thousand yoke.

Instead of five hundred asses, he now has a thousand.

4. Finally, Job is again given the same number of sons and daughter -- seven sons and three daughters -- and his daughters were very fair. At last, permitted to enjoy his increased possessions and renewed friendships, he was also privileged to look down upon four generations of posterity even to great-great-grandchildren. "So Job died, being old and full of days."

Job's reward also constitutes another strong testimony to his innocence and complete vindication. God makes no mistakes. The Book of Job is no longer a "puzzle" but a beautiful, priceless revelation. Every life will be made richer and better because of this "world example."

In conclusion, we are doubtless ready to extend the title of this little volume, now making it read instead of: "Job -- A World Example," Job -- A World Example of Righteousness T-h-o-r-o-u-g-h-l-y Tested and F-i-n-a-l-l-y TRIUMPHANT AND REWARDED.

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THE END