

ANTI-HIGHER CRITICISM

OR

TESTIMONY TO THE INFALLIBILITY

OF

THE BIBLE

BY

PROFESSOR HOWARD OSGOOD, D.D., LL.D.

PRESIDENT W. HENRY GREEN, D.D., LL.D.

PROFESSOR WILLIAM G. MOOREHEAD, D.D.

TALBOT W. CHAMBERS, D.D., LL.D.

JAMES H. BROOKES, D.D.

GEORGE S. BISHOP, D.D.

B. B. TYLER, D.D.

PROFESSOR ERNST F. STROETER, Ph.D.

PROFESSOR JAMES M. STIFLER, D.D.

WILLIAM DINWIDDIE, D.D.

EDITED AND COMPILED BY

REV. L. W. MUNHALL, M.A.

*Author of "Furnishing for Workers," "The Lord's Return and Kindred Truth,"
"The Highest Critics vs. The Higher Critics," etc.*



NEW YORK: HUNT & EATON
CINCINNATI: CRANSTON & CURTS

1894

Copyright, 1893, by
HUNT & EATON,
NEW YORK.

Composition, electrotyping, printing, and binding by
HUNT & EATON,
150 Fifth Avenue, New York.

THE BOOK OF JOB.

BY PROFESSOR WILLIAM G. MOOREHEAD, D.D.,
United Presbyterian Theological Seminary, Xenia, O.

THE Book of Job is, in many respects, one of the most attractive that can engage our attention. The personages introduced into it; the mysterious problems it discusses, such as the cause and intent of human suffering; Satan's place and agency in the divine government; the Lord's inexplicable ways with the righteous and wicked, all invest it with a peculiar interest. Besides, it is one of the noblest poems in existence. All the qualities that the highest poetry possesses are traceable in it. If poetry be "the natural language of intense feeling, expressing itself in forms of corresponding intensity," then Job is entitled to the first rank; for the action of the poem sweeps through every emotion of the soul, strikes every chord of the heart. As a work of art alone Job is the grandest of human writings. Men to whose judgment in matters of art all must bow, as Goethe, Carlyle, and Froude, have set this book in the first place of literary merit.

Like every other book of the Bible, Job has been assailed by the newer school of criticism. The date so long held by Christians, the historical character, and the integrity of portions of its contents are either called in question or summarily rejected. In the new Bible with which it is proposed to enlighten the world we are told that various colored inks, black, blue, green, and red, will indicate the emendations and interpolations with which

it is alleged the book abounds. Accordingly, the unlearned Bible reader will be enabled by this convenient plan to tell at a glance "the parallel compositions" in blue, "the polemical interpolations directed against the tendency of the poem" in green, and "the corrected interpolations conforming the speeches of Job to the spirit of the orthodox doctrine of retribution" in red.*

It is not proposed in this paper to enter into a discussion of the various questions raised by modern criticism respecting this book. The aim, rather, will be to advance some reason why we accept what is almost scornfully called the "traditional view;" then to offer some remarks on the structure and design of the book.

I. IS JOB A REAL OR FICTITIOUS CHARACTER?

His actual existence is denied by many. Maimonides, of the twelfth century, was among the first to avow this opinion. Michaelis, Semler, and others adopted it. In current literature it is very confidently asserted that the book is the work of the imagination, and it is argued that fictitious characters do not affect its integrity; they rather further the writer's purpose. Of course there are weighty names that might be mentioned on the other side, men of first-rate scholarship, who as strongly defend the historical credibility of the book. Professor Lee dwells on the extreme circumstantiality of the details—the description of Job, his family, his property, his country, his friends, with their names and special designations, the genealogy of Elihu, the exact account of the feasting of his sons, the particular mention of the plunderers, and justly concludes, "These all, with a variety of other points of the like nature, mark rather the history than the parable." Furthermore, it is worth while to recall the statement of Ewald, a statement reaffirmed by that great archæologist of the British Museum, George Smith,

* *Independent*, May 25, 1893.

that the ancient peoples had true historical grounds for all they recorded; that they never invented pure fiction, in the modern sense of the term. Rawlinson concurs, and adds that a late fictitious writer could not have so accurately reproduced patriarchal times. We have the very best of reasons for receiving the record of the book as historically true, namely, Holy Scripture. The Lord, by Ezekiel, says: "Though these three men, Noah, Daniel, and Job, were in it, they should deliver but their own souls by their righteousness, saith the Lord God" (Ezek. xiv, 14, 20). The subject is the certainty of national punishment for national sins. So sure is the chastisement to be inflicted, that men eminent for their righteousness cannot avert it. The Lord selects three men from ages far apart and from the greatest diversity of circumstances—Noah, a preacher of righteousness; Daniel, an exile at Babylon, yet loyal to God and true; and Job, though bereft of all earthly comforts, smitten of God and afflicted, holding fast his integrity. Obedient, steadfast, and patient were all the three. Yet, saith the unchangeable God, even these, the best of my servants, could not turn judgment away from a guilty land. Noah's righteousness did not prevent the flood; Daniel's splendid fidelity did not exempt either himself or his fellow-exiles from suffering, and Job's unswerving integrity did not shield him from unexampled tribulation.

This testimony is conclusive. If Noah and Daniel are historical persons, so is Job. God invests him with the same qualities of righteousness and faithfulness which he ascribes to the other two. If Job is a myth, what are Noah and Daniel? If all three are fabulous, why not Abraham, Jacob, Moses, David—in short, the whole list of Old Testament worthies?

The apostle James (v, 11) bears a still more striking

witness to the reality of Job's existence: "Behold, we call them blessed which endured: ye have heard of the patience of Job, and have seen the end of the Lord, how that the Lord is full of pity, and merciful" (R. V.). He speaks of "the patience of Job;" that is, of his endurance and steadfastness amid all his fiery trial, and he commemorates "the end of the Lord;" that is, the aim and outcome of the patriarch's afflictions, namely, the crowning blessing with which the Lord doubled to his servant his original plenty. Here is an additional attestation to the reality of Job's existence; but here is much more: here is the indorsement by an inspired apostle of the main facts of his life; here is the seal set to the truth of Job's endurance through a long course of uncommon sufferings and of his triumphant issue out of them. Job's experience, according to James, is an illustrious proof of the good wrapped up in divinely appointed afflictions and of the Lord's supreme pity and tenderness. Carefully examined, the testimonies of Ezekiel and James point to something more than the mere historical fact that Job really lived. It is absolutely inconceivable that they should have referred, in the way they have done, to Job's character and history, if that character were not in its main features genuine, if that history were not essentially true. The grounds, therefore, for believing in the truthfulness of the record contained in this book are the witness of the prophet Ezekiel and the apostle James.

II. THE AGE IN WHICH JOB LIVED.

Usher's chronology fixes at a period shortly before the exodus from Egypt. If the book were contemporary with that event, or subsequent to it, we would naturally expect to find some reference to it, particularly in a discussion in which human suffering and God's providence are the theme. That Job lived in patriarchal times is

altogether probable. Only the briefest outline of the evidence in support of this proposition can be given.

1. The style is archaic, and finds a parallel only in the oldest poetry of the Bible, as in the Pentateuch, the song of Deborah, and the earliest Psalms. Canon Cook writes: "Firm, compact, sonorous as the ring of a pure metal, severe and at times rugged, yet always dignified and majestic, the language belongs to a period when thought was slow but profound and intensely concentrated."

2. The manners, customs, institutions, and general mode of life described in the book are such as belong especially to the times which are commonly called "patriarchal." The pastoral descriptions clearly belong to the ancient days, while the city life is exactly that of the earliest settled communities. Rawlinson says: "The civilization, if such it may be called, is of the primitive type, with rock inscriptions, mining such as was practiced by the Egyptians in the Sinaitic peninsula from B. C. 2000, great buildings, ruined sepulchers, tombs watched over by sculptured figures of the dead. The historical allusions touch nothing of a recent date; they include no mention—not the faintest hint—of any of the great events of Israelite history, nor the Exodus, nor the passage of the Red Sea, nor the giving of the law at Sinai, much less of the conquest of Canaan, nor of the stirring times of the judges and the first great kings of Israel." He concludes that the book was written long before any of these events.

3. The sacrifice which Job offered for his children (i, 5), and that of his three friends (xlii, 8), was the patriarchal burnt offering, which combined in it the essential idea of the sin sacrifice afterward appointed by Moses.

4. The duration of Job's life is proof that he lived in patriarchal times. He survived his sore trial one hun-

dred and forty years (xlii, 16). He must have been of considerable age when his calamities came upon him, for he was the father of ten children, who seem at the time to have been grown. He could be hardly less than fifty, perhaps sixty or seventy, when his reverses came on him; and his entire life must have been two hundred years at least. Men had ceased to live to this age long before the time of Moses. Perah lived two hundred and five years, Abraham one hundred and seventy-five, Moses one hundred and twenty. Job lived nearer Abraham, probably, than Moses.

5. An ingenious attempt has been made to fix the date of Job's trial by astronomical calculation, founded on the mention of certain constellations in chapters ix, 9; xxxviii, 31, 32. Three mathematicians, Gouget, Ducoutant, and Binkley, calculating by the precession of the equinoxes, arrived almost at the same date, there being but forty-six years difference between them, namely, B. C. 2176 and B. C. 2130. There may be error in these calculations, as it is confessedly difficult to identify the constellations referred to; still, it is remarkable that three independent investigators should reach almost the same results. From the facts now adduced the conclusion of Canon Rawlinson seems legitimate, that the Book of Job is more ancient than any other of the Bible, unless we except that of Genesis.

The question of its authorship cannot be settled. It has been ascribed to Job himself, to Elihu, Solomon, Ezra, and Moses. There is something very attractive in the view that while Moses sojourned in Midian he compiled this book as well as Genesis, but it cannot be verified. Its anonymous character, however, does not invalidate it. The authorship of the Epistle to the Hebrews is likewise unknown, yet no one would venture to cast a doubt on its canonicity. I am strongly inclined

to the belief that Paul wrote that epistle, yet I do not forget that Origen, who lived within two centuries of John, the last survivor of the apostles, said, "The author of Hebrews is known only to God."

III. STRUCTURE OF THE BOOK.

It consists of three parts: Part I. Introductory narrative in prose (i, ii). Part II. The poem (iii–xlii, 6). Part III. Concluding narrative in prose (xlii, 7–17). A broad analysis of the poem is the following: 1. Job's monologue (iii). 2. The great debate (iv–xxxix). It consists of three rounds. Each of the comforters speaks three times, save Zophar, who speaks but twice, and Job replies to each in turn. 3. The addresses of Elihu (xxxii–xxxvii). 4. The Lord's appearance on the scene, and the blessed result (xxxviii–xlii, 6). It will be observed that in form the poem is quite regular and simple. Its order is natural throughout. And yet it is replete with art. With admirable skill and great force the problem is introduced, the frightful disproportion of happiness and misery in this world. The sad plight of Job, the losses he sustains, the disease that consumes his flesh and racks his frame, the agonizing wail he at length pours forth, the dark questions that haunt his mind, the black doubts that assail his faith—these in awful language are set before the three comforters with a masterly hand. And the comforters are powerless to solve the problem. The great debate ends in failure. The splendid monologue of Elihu follows, who, while he does not solve the problem, pours a flood of light on the mystery of suffering. God finally intervenes, Job is set right, and rich blessing ensues.

IV. THE DESIGN OF THE BOOK.

It appears to us to be threefold: 1. To refute the slander of Satan. 2. To discuss the question of suffering, particularly the suffering of the righteous. 3. To reveal

Job to himself, and so prepare him for the reception of the blessing which God purposed to bestow upon him.

Touching Job's nationality little is known. There is no account of his ancestry, no mention of his parentage. He comes before us in mature manhood, whence no one knows (even the location of Uz is conjectural); he disappears in the grave when his fitful life, with its strange vicissitudes, is over. This is characteristic. It is the problem God keeps before us—the mystery of providence, the malice of Satan, the good inclosed in afflictions, not so much the man.

Job's prosperity for a time was uninterrupted. In his own striking imagery he washed his steps with butter, and the rock poured him out rivers of oil (xxix, 6). His personal character is thus described: "And that man was perfect and upright, and one that feared God, and eschewed evil" (i, 1, 8). He was honest and guileless. No duplicity either toward God or man was found in him. He was happy in his relations with God, happy in his family, possessed of princely wealth, loved and trusted by his fellows; in short, one of the most devout and powerful sheiks in the East. But in a day his prosperity ended, and catastrophes the most appalling in rapid and dreadful succession came upon him.

How are we to explain the patriarch's reverses? This leads us to the contemplation of the first design of the book, namely, to prove once for all that loyalty to God is not founded on the temporal advantages that piety secures; that selfishness is not the secret of the allegiance of God's people to him.

Satan's slander against Job, i, 9-11; ii, 4, 5. The singular spectacle is presented of the prince of darkness appearing in the train of the Most High. But Satan is there for a definite purpose, namely, to accuse and malign (Rev. xii, 10). One question he starts, as full of

subtlety as of malice: "Doth Job serve for naught?" "Is not the allegiance which receives such direct and tangible rewards only a refined form of selfishness? His fealty is mercenary, his attachment is for hire." "He serveth not God, but himself." And Satan boldly asserts that if those external blessings were withdrawn Job's allegiance would be cast off—"he will curse thee to thy face." One main feature of the problem which the book discusses is thus distinctly propounded: Can goodness exist irrespective of reward? Can the fear of God live when every inducement is withdrawn? Is allegiance to God based on the love and knowledge of him, or does it exist only for the advantages it secures, the immunities it enjoys? The problem is one of infinite moment; for if the love and grace of God only serve to produce a refined selfishness, then his whole work is abortive, and God is unable to retrieve the ruin of sin.

There is no method by which these slanderous accusations can be more effectively silenced than by the removal of those things on account of which the adversary asserted Job's fidelity depended. And so the servant of God was tested to the uttermost. The trial was twofold. First, his wealth and his children were suddenly snatched away from him. The book clearly teaches that it was through Satanic agency, in the mysterious government of God, that these dreadful losses were sustained. But out of this furnace Job issues without the smell of fire on his garments (i, 22): "In all this Job sinned not, nor charged God foolishly." In this assault Satan was forbidden to touch Job's person (i, 12). He next affirms that Job will give up all for his life (ii, 4). That this is also a lie the devil knows perfectly well. Myriads of God's dear people have gone to the worst forms of death for the name and the love of Christ. Permission, however, is given up to the point only this side of death, and

he is smitten with a loathsome disease—elephantiasis it is thought to have been, a disease believed by many in the East to be the judgment of God. The patriarch sat down on the ash heap in unspeakable desolation, anguish, and woe, bereft of property, children, health; his wife advising him to renounce the God whom he had served so long. Will he finally break with God? Is there anything left to keep him faithful? Blessed be God for sustaining and conquering grace! Out of the final trial Job comes forth triumphantly: “In all this did not Job sin with his lips” (ii, 10).

It is proved, therefore, once for all, and never more to be disputed, that Job’s loyalty is not grounded in selfishness, that true piety lives when all external advantages are withdrawn, and that God’s grace is more than a match for Satan’s malice and the deep-rooted egotism of sin. Thus, one prime object of the book stands disclosed. But God had other and greater ends in the sufferings of his servant, which will appear in the sequel. It was not needful to send Job to such a terrible school of affliction merely to prove the devil a liar. He was that from the beginning (John viii, 44). There *must* be ulterior designs.

Note how prominently Satan is in the earlier chapters of the book. *We* know that he was the real instigator of Job’s woes. Probably the patriarch himself did not; and so all the more inexplicable and mysterious his sufferings must have appeared to him and his friends, the comforters. Now, some things respecting this great evil spirit we gather from this inspired record. 1. His personality. Satan is no myth. Every attribute, quality, action, mark, and sign which can indicate personality are ascribed to him with a precision of language which refuses to be explained away. If we attempt to interpret this and the like Scripture as only meaning the principle of evil and not a person, then there is an end to all rules of

fixed thought, and the Bible may mean anything and everything we please. 2. His power. It is simply tremendous. He brought fire from heaven to consume the sheep (electricity); the storm from the desert, which crushed the house where the young people were feasting; that is, he can, when permitted, wield the forces of nature for the accomplishment of his wicked designs. 3. His enmity is even greater than his power. He pursues his evil ends with tireless energy and sleepless vigilance. 4. Still, he is subordinate. He can afflict only so far as and when God for inscrutable purposes permits him. There was "a hedge" about Job through which Satan could not break. No doubt, like the lion he is (1 Peter v, 8), he traveled round and round that hedge, but always on the *outside*. "He can go only the length of his chain."

It is noteworthy that nearly all the revelation we have of this great evil spirit is found in the New Testament. Rarely is he mentioned in the Old—in Eden, in Job, David, Joshua the high priest. God delayed the full disclosure of him to later times, and gave him twenty-eight names, which fully describe him.

V. OTHER FEATURES OF THE BOOK.

The other great features of the poem are now to be pointed out. These are two: the meaning of human suffering, particularly the suffering of the righteous; and the revelation of Job to himself. The first is the theme of the great debate (chapters iv—xxxix). The second is traceable through the entire poem from chapter iii to chapter xlii, and is this: that the patriarch, with all his pre-eminent excellencies, secretly cherished, and probably unwittingly cherished, somewhat of self-righteousness, a kind of religious pride which marred his lovely character and hindered the blessing God would bestow upon him; and this, cost what it might, must be cut up by the roots.

1. *Job's first monologue*, iii. It is unexampled for its expression of anguish and for its pathos. What language is there, and what imagery! He curses his birthday and hurls anathemas upon his life; asks that God may expunge that day from his calendar of time, that it may be frightened with horrible sounds and chased forever by devouring death, that in eternity it may be a sunless day and a starless night. A similar instance of the effect of accumulated sorrows is found in the life of Jeremiah (xx, 14-18). It does not appear that the friends had uttered a word. Job opened the dialogue. They sat in total silence, covered with dust, gazing on a grief too profound for them to reach. It is impossible to read this monologue, touching as it is, and not feel that one who had learned in any measure to say, "Thy will be done," could ever curse his day. He broke down in the very thing for which he was noted, patience. But let us remember that Job did not know himself. He was complacently resting in his "integrity," which is another name for self-righteousness. There was root of bitterness in him of which he seems to have been ignorant, but which must be eradicated. He had to learn the lesson to which all the saints are set down, namely, that the egotism of nature is offensive to God; that there is no confidence to be put in the flesh. And so one aim of the book is to reveal Job to himself and thus deliver him from the evil his afflictions were meant to remove. But let it be remembered that he curses his day, not his God, as Satan would have him do. He curses the day of his natural birth, not the day of his new birth. Amid all his doubts and darkness never for a moment does his faith in God waver—"Though he slay me, yet will I trust in him," is his magnificent resolution.

2. *The debate*. It consists of three rounds. Each of the three philosophers speaks three times, save Zophar,

who speaks but twice, and Job replies to each in succession (chapters iv-xxxi).

The first round, chapters iv-xiv. The question is propounded by Eliphaz very skillfully and strongly (iv, v). God blesses the just, punishes the unjust. The proposition of Eliphaz is this: He that sins must suffer; as Job is a dreadful sufferer he must be guilty of some grievous sin. Job replies (vi-vii), complaining that there is no adequate cause for his afflictions; that God treats him as if an irrational being, a sea or a sea-monster. His plaint resembles that of chapter iii, only more subdued and humble. Bildad follows in the same strain of Eliphaz (viii): "If thou wert pure and upright, surely now he would awake for thee;" and since he does not something must be frightfully wrong.

Job stoutly resists the imputation and appeals to God, who knows that he is not wicked, as charged (ix, x). Zophar urges that he is certainly guilty, and exhorts him to repentance (xi). Job's reply (xii-xiv) is remarkable. He shows how the wicked often prosper, how God does as he pleases with great and small, and appeals from them to God.

In the second round (chapters xv-xxi) the comforters increase in the severity of their tone and urge with considerable vehemence that it is the wicked who are scourged, not the righteous, and assail the integrity of Job, intimating broadly that he is guilty of some secret sin, some colossal crime. Zophar, the most impetuous and severe of all, insinuates that there is hypocrisy in the case, that God has at length torn the mask from the false face, and he now stands revealed in his true character. The patriarch refutes the reasoning, proves that the wicked often grow old and prosper, that apparently God treats the good and the bad alike in this life, and the dark doubts which the psalmist felt (Psalm lxxiii) haunt and

harass his mind. With righteous indignation he flings from him the unworthy innuendos of the comforters and accuses them of intensifying his misery. After giving his wonderful confession of faith (xix, 25-27), he points his argument with these telling words: "But ye should say, Why persecute we him, seeing the root of the matter is found in me? Be ye afraid of the sword."

In the third round (chapters xxii-xxvi) the comforters are turned into headlong accusers. Invective now takes the place of calm reasoning; and Job, instead of getting better, grows worse, and even yearns to appear before the throne of God, declaring that if he could do so he would order his cause before him, and fill his mouth with arguments (xxiii, 3, 4). "Job's disputing with God is as terrible as it is pitiable. It is terrible because he uplifts himself, Titan-like, against God; and pitiable because God, against whom he fights, is not the God he has known, but a phantom which his temptation has presented to his dim vision."

3. *The cause of the failure of the disputants.* The mistake of the comforters was this: They insisted that God was dealing with Job *retributively*. They labored to convict him of high-handed wickedness. They hint again and again that if all were told nothing would be too bad to impute to him. "Who ever perished, being innocent? or where were the righteous cut off?" is the foundation of their reasoning. They totally failed to discover the true cause for his suffering. They applied many principles of the moral government of God to the wrong case; and hence their argument only served to exasperate him. No wonder he reproached them for their cruelty and in the bitterness of an insulted character and wounded spirit covered them with scorn and contempt. Nor was Job less wrong. He insisted that God acted *arbitrarily*; that, having the power to do as he pleased with him, he

did so. Because he was not guilty of any crime, of notorious sin, as the philosophers sought to make out, he infers that his affliction is without adequate grounds, that it is altogether disproportionate to his case, and therefore unjust and arbitrary.

VI. THE MINISTRY OF ELIHU.

A new section of the book opens with the discourse of Elihu. Here writers who see no more in Job than a soul at war with itself are embarrassed to find an adequate explanation. Some see no more in his speeches than a repetition of the ideas of Eliphaz and his friends; and as the patriarch had fully answered them he is now silent. Others hold that Elihu adds nothing to the progress of the argument, and betrays "not the faintest conception of the real cause of Job's sufferings." Others still hold that this section forms no genuine part of the book, that it is an interpolation of a later date. The last mentioned view encounters the inconvenient fact that the section in question is found in every copy of the extant Hebrew text, and in all the ancient versions, for example, Septuagint, Vulgate, Syriac, etc. Let us see whether Elihu really adds to the argument of the book or not.

1. *His wrath was kindled.* We are told his wrath was kindled against Job because he justified himself rather than God; against his three friends, also, because they found no answer, yet condemned Job (xxxii, 2, 3). There is the whole preceding discussion in a nutshell. If the comforters cannot answer Job why should they condemn him? If reason and argument are on his side there should be no condemnation. Moreover, Job's justifying himself is virtually to condemn God. The Lord was dealing with his servant in fatherly chastisement, that his own gracious purposes might be accomplished in him. So long as he resisted and rebelled, and counted

his treatment as unjust and arbitrary, God's ends were defeated and his ways condemned. This principle is evermore true: when we justify ourselves we condemn God; when we justify God we condemn ourselves.

2. *Elihu rested his appeal to Job on the revealed truth of God.* It is described in terms appropriate to the times: "I said, Days should speak, and multitude of years should teach wisdom. But there is a spirit in man, and the breath (or the spiration) of the Almighty giveth them understanding" (xxxii, 7, 8). The friends had spoken many true things, but not the truth. Experience, tradition, observation—such as the comforters had employed—were totally inadequate to the case in hand. God alone is competent to settle such a question as this.

3. *His argument on sufferings.* God's ways of dealing with men are twofold: (1) By mysterious communications. "God speaketh once, yea, twice. . . . In a dream, in a vision of the night. . . . Then he openeth the ears of men, and sealeth their instruction, that he may withdraw man from his purpose, and hide pride from man" (xxxiii, 14-17). The object of such divine communications is here announced—to hold men back from sin and pride. (2) Afflictions are employed for the same end. Disease, pain, anguish, loss, misery, visit men, and they seem to be in the full power of the destroyer. In meting out sufferings to his people God is not occupied with the penal character of their sin. These are not proof of his judicial wrath. On the contrary, sufferings are designed to bring back the soul from the pit, to be enlightened with the light of the living (xxxiii, 24-30). Afflictions, therefore, are not the expression of divine wrath; they flow from infinite pity and love. Elihu concludes with these very suggestive words, words that might almost have been written by a New Testament apostle: "Surely it is meet to be said unto God, I have borne

chastisement, I will not offend any more: that which I see not teach thou me: if I have done iniquity, I will do no more" (xxxiv, 31, 32). The doctrine of Elihu is as distant as pole from pole from that of the comforters. Job recognizes its absolute truth, and is silent.

4. *Job's false notions of himself.* "I am clean without transgression, I am innocent; neither is there iniquity in me" (xxxiii, 9). What words for a poor sinful mortal to utter, for one, especially, on whom God's heavy hand was resting! But more, though so pure and innocent, Job complains that God findeth occasion against him, counteth him as his enemy. Now here is a palpable discrepancy. Could a holy and just God find fault with an innocent and pure man? Impossible. Either Job is self-deceived or God is unrighteous. Elihu drives him into this dilemma, then pronounces judgment: "Behold, in this thou art not just: I will answer thee, that God is greater than man." What a simple truth! and yet most appropriate. If God be greater than man, then he must be vindicated in all his ways with his people; he must everlastingly do right. The wrong, therefore, if wrong there be in this case, must lie at Job's door, not at God's.

5. *His argument as to Job's animus.* It is a most cogent one, a word in season. The main difficulty with the patriarch lay in this, his persistent refusal to allow any reflection upon his character and conduct. His integrity must not be questioned, his righteousness he will maintain to the bitter end. The slightest imputation on his uprightness drives him into paroxysms of rage. Self-vindication, and hence judgment on God's ways with him—that is Job's trouble. The key to this book is found in chapter xxxii, 1: "So these three men ceased to answer Job, because he was righteous in his own eyes." True and loyal to God as he was at the core of his heart,

yet unwittingly he cherished the deadly secret of self-righteousness; he thought that the *flesh*, that thing in which Paul says dwelleth no good thing, might be sanctified, made pure and holy, and that he had attained it. Not precisely *sinless perfection*, but perfection in the flesh. So sure he is of his righteousness that he even longs to appear in the presence of God that he may there vindicate himself: "O that I had one to hear me! (Lo, here is my signature, let the Almighty answer me;) and that I had the indictment which mine adversary hath written!" (xxxii, 35.) What language for a mortal, for one who is crushed before the moth, to use! As if he said, "Let the Lord draw up his charges against me; I will march into his presence, head erect, and will answer him."

Elihu deals honestly and efficiently with this spirit in the Lord's stricken, half-delirious servant, and Job takes it patiently; for light is breaking in his troubled soul; peace, blessed peace, may yet be his.

VII. THE LORD'S REVELATION OF HIMSELF TO JOB.

The sublime majesty of his appearing; the solemn, overwhelming vindication of his power and glory; the moral grandeur of the scene, it would be vain to try to describe. All we now wish to do is to call attention to the effect upon Job (xlii, 5, 6), "I have heard of thee by the hearing of the ear; but now mine eye seeth thee: wherefore I abhor myself, and repent in dust and ashes." What a thorough breakdown! What profound humiliation follows the discovery that he has been wrong, all wrong! It was a self-revelation such as he never had before. It is Jacob hanging limp, his thigh out of joint, about the angel's neck, and crying, "I will not let thee go except thou bless me." A mighty but precious moment that brought him where all the arguments of the philosophers and of Elihu could not! And full blessing ensues. Property

doubled, children likewise; for ten await him yonder, and ten are given him here. And so the oldest book of the world teaches the doctrine of the immortality of the soul.

If such be the main design and object of this book of Scripture certain conclusions necessarily follow:

1. The book contains the record of individual and personal experiences, the experience of the man Job.
2. It contains absolutely nothing which on any fair principles of interpretation can be ascribed to a nation, as Israel, or to a body of sufferers, as the Babylonian exiles.
3. There is no hint, even the slightest, that it stands related to the Hebrew people as such in any period of their history.
4. Accordingly, to push its date down to the time of the Babylonian captivity in order to find an adequate motive for its composition is to do violence alike to the whole body of the internal evidence and to the external history.