

FRANZ DELITZSCH

Excerpts from the Book of Job (Chapters 11-21)

Chapter 11 *Zophar's First Speech*

"Shall the torrent of words remain unanswered, and shall the prater be in the right? Shall thy vain talking silence the people, so that thou mockest without any one putting thee to shame, and sayest: my doctrine is pure, and I am guiltless in Thine eyes? But oh that Eloah would speak, and open His lips against thee, and make known to thee the secrets of wisdom, that she is twofold in her nature--Know then that Eloah forgetteth much of thy guilt." (Job 11:2-6)

"When He passes by and arrests and calls to judgment, who will oppose Him? For He knoweth the men devoid of principle, and seeth wickedness without observing it. But before an empty head gaineth understanding, a wild ass would become a man." (Job 11:10-12)

That Zophar, in the mind of the poet, is the youngest of the three speakers may be concluded from his introducing him last of all, although he is the most impetuous. Zophar manifests a still greater inability than the other two to bring Job to a right state of mind. His standpoint is the same as that of the others. Like them, he regards the retributive justice of God as the principle on which alone the divine government in the world is exercised, and to which every act of this government is to be attributed, and it may indeed be assumed to be at work even when the relation of circumstances is mysterious and impenetrably dark to us. This limited view which the friends take of the matter readily accounts for the brevity of their speeches in comparison with Job's. This one *locus communis* is their only theme, which they reiterate constantly in some new and modified form; while the mind of Job is an exhaustless fountain of thought, suggested by the direct experiences of the past.

Before the present dispensation of suffering came upon Job, he enjoyed the peace of true godliness; and all his thoughts and feelings were under the control of a consciousness, made certain by his experience, that God makes himself known to those who fear Him. Now, however, his nature, hitherto kept in subjection by divine grace, is let loose in him. The powers of doubt, mistrust, impatience, and despondency have risen up. His inner life is fallen into the anarchy of conflict. His mind, hitherto peaceful and well-disciplined, is become a wild chaotic confusion. And hence his speeches, in comparison with those of the friends, are as roaring cataracts to small confined streams. But in this chaos lie the elements of a new creation. The harsh pertinacity with which the friends maintain their one dogma only tends to give an impulse to it. The new truth, the solution of the mystery, springs from this spiritual battle Job has to fight, from which, although not unscathed, he still shall come forth as conqueror.

When, therefore, Zophar regards the speeches of Job (which are the involuntary expression of the severity of his conflict) as a torrent of words, he shows that from the haughty elevation of his narrow dogma he does not understand this form of experience. And when he reproaches Job by saying, Whoever can babble so much shows that he is not in the right, he makes use of a maxim which is true enough in itself, but its application to Job proceeds from the most uncharitable misconstruction of his suffering friend. As he looks upon Job, who in the midst of his fierce conflict struggles after comfort but thrusts away all false consolation, he regards him as a cavilling opponent because he cuts the knot instead of untying it. He is so blinded by the idea that he is in possession of the key to the mystery that he malignantly reproaches Job with being an incorrigible "empty-pate" [empty head]. As though there could be hollowness where there is a heart that seethes like metal in the refiner's crucible. And as though the dogma of the friends, which forms the sole contents of their hollowness, could possibly impart light and peace to a heart so sorely troubled!

Is the dogma of the friends, then, so pure a doctrine as that which, according to Zophar's words, Job claims for himself? On Zophar's side it is maintained that God always acts in accordance with justice; and Job maintains that God does not always so act. The maxim of the friends is false in the exclusiveness with which they maintain it. The conclusion to which they are urged gives evidence of the fallacy of the premises. They must condemn Job and consequently become unjust in order to rescue the justice of God. Job's maxim, on the other hand, is true. But it is so unconnected as it stands that it may be turned over any moment and changed into a falsehood; for, that God does not act everywhere as the Just One is a truth, but that He sometimes acts unjustly is blasphemy. Between these two, Job hangs in suspense. For the steadfast consciousness of his innocence proves to him that God does not always act as the Just One; shall he therefore suppose that God deals unjustly with him? From this blasphemous inversion of his maxim Job seeks refuge in the absolute power of God, which makes that just which is unjust according to the clearest *human* consciousness. This is the feeble thread on which Job's piety hangs. Should this be cut, it would be all over with him. The friends do their best to cut it in twain. Zophar's speech is like a sword-thrust at it.

For while Eliphaz and Bildad, with cautious gentleness, describe suffering more as chastisement than as punishment, Zophar proceeds more boldly and demands of Job that he should humble himself as one who has incurred punishment from God. Of sin on Job's part, which may have called down the divine judgment, Zophar knows as little as Job himself. But he wishes that God would grant Job some revelation of His infinite wisdom since he refuses to humble himself. Then he would confess his folly and see that God not only does not punish him unjustly, but even allows much of his guilt to go unpunished. Job is therefore to turn penitently to God, and to put away that evil which is the cause of his suffering, in order that he may be heard. Then shall his hopeless condition become bright with hope; whereas, on the other hand, the downfall of the wicked is beyond recovery.

What impression will this harsh treatment of Zophar's produce on Job? Job is to humble himself as a sinner who is undergoing the punishment of his sin, though the measure of it

is far below the degree of his guilt. And while he does not deny his sinful weaknesses, he is nevertheless convinced that he is righteous; and having as such experienced the favor of God, [he] cannot become an object of punishment. Brentius discriminatingly observes here: *Videntur et Sophar et reliqui amici Hiob prorsus ignorare quid sit aut efficiat Evangelion et fides in promissionem Dei; sic argumentantur contra Hiobem, quasi nullus unquam possit coram Deo fide justificari.* The language is rather too much in accordance with the light of the New Testament; but it is true that the friends know nothing whatever of the condition of a truly righteous man over whom the law with its curse, or the retributive justice of God, has no power. The interpretation of affliction in accordance with the recognition of this principle is strange to them. And this is just the issue which is developed by the drama in the case of Job--the idea which comes to light in the working out of the plot.

Even Job does not perceive the solution of the mystery, but in the midst of the conflict is in a state of ignorance which excites compassion. The ignorance of the friends arising from their shallowness of understanding, on the contrary, creates aversion. When Zophar, therefore, wishes that God would grant Job some revelation of His infinite wisdom, it is indeed true that Job is greatly in need of it; but is self-deceiving pride which leads Zophar to imagine that he has not need of it himself. For this Wisdom which has decreed the suffering of Job is hidden from him also, and yet he does not treat the suffering of his friend as a divine mystery. He explains it as the working of the retributive justice of God. But since he endeavors thus to explain the mystery, he injures his cause, and if possible injures also the slender thread by which Job's faith hangs. For should Job regard his sufferings as a *just* divine retribution, he could then no longer believe on God as the Just One.

Chapters 12, 13, and 14 ***Job's Third Answer***

"Truly then ye are the people, and wisdom shall die with you! . . . Contempt belongs to misfortune, according to the ideas of the prosperous; it awaits those who are ready to slip. . . . But ask now even the beasts--they shall teach it thee; and the birds of heaven--they shall declare it to thee: or look thoughtfully to the ground--it shall teach it thee; and the fish of the sea shall tell it thee. Who would not recognize in all this that the hand of Jehovah hath wrought this, in whose hand is the soul of every living thing, and the breath of all mankind?! . . . Behold, He restraineth the waters and they dry up, and He letteth them out and they overturn the earth. With Him is might and existence, the erring and the deceiver are His." (Job 12:2-16)

"Oh that ye would altogether hold your peace, it would be accounted to you as wisdom. Hear now my instruction, and hearken to the answers of my lips! Will ye speak what is wrong for God, and speak what is deceitful for Him? Will ye be partial for Him, or will ye play the part of God's advocates? Would it be pleasant if He should search you out, or can ye jest with Him, as one jesteth with men? He will surely expose you if ye secretly act with partiality. Will not His majesty confound you, and His fear fall upon you?" (Job 13:7-11)

"Man that is born of a woman, short of days and full of unrest, cometh forth as a flower and is cut down; he fleeth as a shadow, and continueth not. . . . For there is hope for a tree: if it is hewn down, it sprouts again, and its shoot ceaseth not. If its root becometh old in the ground, and its trunk dieth off in the dust: at the scent of water it buddeth, and bringeth forth branches like a young plant. But a man dieth, he lieth there stretched out, man giveth up the ghost, and where is he? . . . So man lieth down and riseth not again; till the heavens pass away they wake not, and are not aroused from their sleep. Oh that Thou wouldst hide me in Sheol, that Thou wouldst conceal me till Thine anger change, that Thou wouldst appoint me a time and then remember me! If man dieth, shall he live again? All the days of my warfare would I wait, until my change should come." Job 14:1-14)

This speech of Job falls into three parts, which correspond to the divisions into chapters. In the impassioned speech of Zophar, who treats Job as an empty and conceited babler, the one-sided dogmatic standpoint of the friends was maintained with such arrogance and assumption that Job is obliged to put forth all his power in self-defense. The first part of the speech (ch. 12) triumphantly puts down this arrogance and assumption. Job replies that the wisdom of which they profess to be the only possessors is nothing remarkable, and the contempt with which they treat him is the common lot of the innocent, while the prosperity of the ungodly remains undisturbed. In order, however, to prove to them that what they say of the majesty of God (before which he should humble himself) can neither overawe nor help him, he refers them to creation, which in its varied works testifies to this majesty, this creative power of God, and the absolute dependence of every living thing on Him; and proves that he is not wanting in an appreciation of the truth contained in the sayings of the ancients by a description of the absolute majesty of God as it is manifested in the works of nature, and especially in the history of man, which excels everything that the three had said. This description is, however, throughout a gloomy picture of disasters which God brings about in the world, corresponding to the gloomy condition of mind in which Job is and the disaster which is come upon himself.

As the friends have failed to solace him by their descriptions of God, so his own description is also utterly devoid of comfort. For the wisdom of God of which he speaks is not the wisdom that orders the world in which one can confide, and in which one has the surety of seeing every mystery of life sooner or later gloriously solved. But this wisdom is something purely negative and repulsive rather than attractive. It is abstract exaltation over all created wisdom, whence it follows that he puts to shame the wisdom of the wise. Of the justice of God he does not speak at all, for in the narrow idea of the friends he cannot recognize its control. And of the love of God he speaks as little as the friends, for as the sight of the divine love is removed from them by the one-sidedness of their dogma, so is it from him by the feeling of the wrath of God which at present has possession of his whole being. Hegel has called the religion of the Old Testament the religion of sublimity (*die Religion der Erhabenheit*); and it is true that so long as that manifestation of love, the incarnation of the Godhead, was not yet realized, God must have relatively transcended the religious consciousness. From the book of Job, however, this view can be brought back to its right limits. For, according to the tendency of the book, neither the idea of God

presented by the friends nor by Job is the pure undimmed notion of God that belongs to the Old Testament. The friends conceive of God as the absolute One who acts only according to justice. Job conceives of Him as the absolute One who acts according to the arbitrariness of His absolute power. According to the idea of the book, the former is dogmatic one-sidedness, the latter the conception of one passing through temptation. The God of the Old Testament consequently rules neither according to justice alone nor according to a "sublime whim."

After having proved his superiority over the friends in perception of the majesty of God, Job tells them his decision--that he shall turn away from them. The sermon they address to him is to no purpose, and in fact produces an effect the reverse of that intended by them. And while it does Job no good, it injures them because their very defense of the honor of God incriminates themselves in the eyes of God. Their aim is missed by them, for the thought of the absolute majesty of God has no power to impart comfort to any kind of sufferer. Nor can the thought of His absolute justice give any solace to a sufferer who is conscious that he suffers innocently. By their confidence that Job's affliction is a decree of the *justice* of God, they certainly seem to defend the honor of God. But this defense is reversed as soon as it is manifest that there exists no such *just* ground for inflicting punishment on him. Job's self-consciousness, however, which cannot be shaken, gives no testimony to its justice. Their advocacy of God is therefore an injustice to Job and a miserable attempt at doing God service, which cannot escape the undisguised punishment of God. It is to be carefully noted that in 13:6-12 Job seriously warns the friends that God will punish them for their partiality, *i.e.* that they have endeavored to defend Him *at the expense of truth*.

We see from this how sound Job's idea of God is, so far as it is not affected by the change which seems, according to the light which his temptation casts upon his affliction, to have taken place in his personal relationship to God. While above (ch. 9) he did not acknowledge an objective right (and rather evaded the thought of God's dealing unjustly towards him by the desperate assertion that what God does is in every case right because God does it), he here recognizes an objective truth which cannot be denied, even in favor of God, and the denial of which, even though it were a *pientissima fraus*, is strictly punished by God. God is the God of truth, and will therefore be neither defended nor honored by any perverting of the truth. By such pious lies the friends involve themselves in guilt, since in opposition to their better knowledge they regard Job as unrighteous and blind themselves to the incongruities of daily experience and the justice of God. Job will therefore have nothing more to do with them; and to whom does he now turn? Repelled by men, he feels all the more strongly drawn to God. He desires to carry his cause before God. He certainly considers God to be his enemy, but, like David, he thinks it is better to fall into the hands of God than into the hands of man. He will plead his cause with God and prove to Him his innocence. He will do it even though he be obliged to expiate his boldness with his life; for he knows that morally he will not be overcome in the contest. He requires compliance with but two conditions: that God would grant a temporary alleviation of his pain, and that He would not overawe him with the display of His majesty.

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 the God against which he fights is not the God he has known, but a God that he is unable to recognize--the phantom which the temptation has presented before his dim vision instead of the true God. This phantom is still the real God to him, but in other respects in no way differing from the inexorable ruling fate of the Greek tragedy. As in this the hero of the drama seeks to maintain his personal freedom against the mysterious power that is crushing him with an iron arm, so Job, even at the risk of sudden destruction, maintains the steadfast conviction of his innocence, in opposition to a God who has devoted him, as an evil-doer, to slow but certain destruction.

This tragic conflict with the divine necessity is but the middle, not the beginning nor the end, of the book; for this god of fate is not the real God but a delusion of Job's temptation. Human freedom does not succumb, but it comes forth from the battle, which is a refining fire to it, as conqueror. The dualism which the Greek tragedy leaves unexplained is here cleared up. The book certainly presents much which, from its tragic character, suggests this idea of destiny, but it is not its final aim--it goes far beyond. It does not end in the destruction of its hero by fate, but the end is the destruction of the idea of this fate itself.

We have seen in this speech that Job is as little able as the friends to disconnect *suffering* from the idea of the *punishment of sin*. If Job were mistaken or were misled by the friends respecting his innocence, the history of his sufferings would be no material for a drama, because there would be no inner development. But it is just Job's steadfast conviction of his innocence, and his maintenance of it in spite of the power which this prejudice exercises over him, that makes the history of his affliction the history of the development of a new and grand idea, and makes him as the subject (on whom it is developed) a tragic character.

In conformity with his prepossession, Job sees himself put down by his affliction as a great sinner; and his friends actually draw the conclusion from false premises that he is such. But he asserts the testimony of his conscience to his innocence. And because this contradicts those premises, the one-sidedness of which he does not discern, God himself appears to him to be unjust and unmerciful. And against this God whom the temptation has distorted and transformed to the miserable image of a ruler guided only by an absolute caprice, he struggles on; and places the truth and freedom of his moral self-consciousness over against the restraint of the condemnatory sentence, which seems to be pronounced over him in the suffering he has to endure.

Such is the struggle against God which we behold in the second part of the speech (ch. 13). Ready to prove his innocence, he challenges God to trial. But since God does not appear, his confidence gives place to despondency and his defiant tone to a tone of lamentation, which is continued in the third part of the speech (ch. 14).

We inquire here: Can we say that the poet knew nothing of a resurrection and judgment after death? If we look to the psalms of the time of David and Solomon, we must reply in the negative. Since, however, as the Grecian mysteries fostered and cherished ἠδυστέρως

ελπιδας, the Israelitish Chokma also, by its constant struggles upwards and onwards, anticipated views of the future world which reached beyond the present (*Psychol.* S. 410). It may be assumed, and from the book of Job directly inferred, that the poet had a perception of the future world which went beyond the dim perception of the people, which was not yet lighted up by any revelation. For, on the one hand, he has reproduced for us a history of the patriarchal period not merely according to its external but also according to its internal working, with as strict historical faithfulness as delicate psychological tact. On the other, he has with a master hand described for us in the history of Job what was only possible from an advanced standpoint of knowledge--how the hope of a life beyond the present, where there is no express word of promise to guide it, struggles forth from the heart of man as an undefined desire and longing, so that the word of promise is the fulfilment and seal of this desire and yearning. For when Job gives expression to the wish that God would hide him in Sheol until His anger turn, and then, at an appointed time, yearning after the work of His hands raise him again from Sheol, this wish is not to be understood other than that Sheol might be only his temporary hiding-place from the divine anger instead of being his eternal abode. He wishes himself in Sheol so far as he would thereby be removed for a time from the wrath of God, in order that after an appointed season he might again become an object of the divine favor. He cheers himself with the delightful thought, All the days of my warfare would I wait till my change should come, etc.; for then the warfare of suffering would become easy to him because favor, after wrath and deliverance from suffering and death, would be near at hand.

We cannot say that Job here expresses the hope of a life after death. On the contrary, this hope is wanting to him, and all knowledge respecting the reasons that might warrant it. The hope exists only in imagination, as Ewald rightly observes, without becoming a certainty, since it is only the idea--How glorious it would be if it were so--that is followed up. But on the other side the poet shows us by this touching utterance of Job how totally different would be his endurance of suffering if he but knew that there was really a release from Hades. On the other side, he shows us in the wish of Job the incipient tendency of the growing hope that it might be so, for what a devout mind desires has a spiritual power which presses forward from the subjective to the objective reality.

The hope of eternal life is a flower, says one of the old commentators, which grows on the verge of the abyss. The writer of the book of Job supports this. In the midst of this abyss of the feeling of divine wrath in which Job is sunk, this flower springs up to cheer him. In its growth, however, it is not hope but only at first a longing. And this longing cannot expand into hope because no light of promise shines forth in that night by which Job's feeling is controlled, and which makes the conflict darker than it is in itself. Scarcely has Job feasted for a short space upon the idea of that which he would gladly hope for, when the thought of the reality of that which he has to fear overwhelms him. He seems to himself to be an evil-doer who is reserved for the execution of the sentence of death. If it is not possible in nature for mountains, rocks, stones, and the dust of the earth to resist the force of the elements, so is it an easy thing for God to destroy the hope of a mortal all at once. He forcibly thrust him hence from this life; and when he is descended to Hades, he knows nothing whatever of the lot of his own family in the world above. Of the life and knowledge of the living nothing remains to him but the senseless pain of his dead body,

which is gnawed away, and the dull sorrow of his soul which continues but a shadowy life in Sheol.

Thus the poet shows us in the third part of Job's speech a grand idea, which tries to force its way but cannot. In the second part Job desired to maintain his conviction of innocence before God. His confidence is repulsed by the idea of the God who is conceived of by him as an enemy and a capricious ruler, and changes to despair. In the third part the desire for a life after death is maintained. But he is at once overwhelmed by the imagined inevitable and eternal darkness of Sheol; but overwhelmed soon to appear again above the billows of temptation until, in ch. 19, the utterance of faith respecting a future life rises as a certain confidence over death and the grave. The γνῶσις which comes forth from the conflict of the πιστις anticipates that better hope which in the New Testament is established and ratified by the act of redemption wrought by the Conqueror of Hades.

Chapter 15 **Eliphaz' Second Speech**

"Doth a wise man utter vain knowledge and fill his breast with the east wind? Contending with words that profit not, and speeches by which no good is done? Moreover, thou makest void the fear of God, and thou restrainest devotion before God; for thy mouth exposeth thy misdeeds, and thou chooseth the language of the crafty. Thine own mouth condemneth thee and not I, and thine own lips testify against thee." (Job 15:2-6)

"Let him not trust in evil--he is deceived, for evil shall be his possession. His day is not yet, then it is accomplished, and his palm-branch loseth its freshness. He teareth off as a vine his young grapes, and He casteth down as an olive-tree his flower." (Job. 15:31-33)

With the speech of Eliphaz, the eldest among the friends who gives a tone to their speeches, the controversy enters upon a second stage. In his last speech Job has turned from the friends and called upon them to be silent. He turned to God, and therein a sure confidence but at the same time a challenging tone of irreverent defiance is manifested. God does not enter into the controversy which Job desires, and the consequence is that that flickering confidence is again extinguished and the tone of defiance is changed into despair and complaint. Instead of listening to the voice of God, Job is obliged to content himself again with that of the friends, for they believe the continuance of the contest to be just as binding upon them as upon Job. They cannot consider themselves overcome, for their dogma has grown up in such inseparable connection with their idea of God, and therefore is so much raised above human contradiction, that nothing but a divine fact can break through it. And they are too closely connected with Job by their friendship to leave him to himself as a heretic. They regard Job as one who is self-deluded, and have really the good intention of converting their friend.

Eliphaz' speech, however, also shows that they become still more and more incapable of producing a salutary impression on Job. For, on the one hand, in this second stage of the controversy also they turn about everywhere only in the circle of their old syllogism:

suffering is the punishment of sin, Job suffers, therefore he is a sinner who has to make atonement for his sin. On the other hand, instead of being disconcerted by an unconditioned acceptation of this maxim, they are strengthened in it. For while at the beginning the *conclusio* was urged upon them only by premises raised above any proof, so that they take for granted sins of Job which were not otherwise known to them, now, as they think, Job has himself furnished them with proof that he is a sinner who has merited such severe suffering. For whoever can speak so thoughtlessly and passionately, so vexatiously and irreverently as Job has done, is in their opinion his own accuser and judge. It remains unperceived by them that Job's mind has lost its balance by reason of the fierceness of his temptation, and that in its nature and grace have fallen into a wild, confused conflict. In those speeches they see the true state of Job's spirit revealed. What, before his affliction, was the determining principle of his inner life seems to them now to be brought to light in the words of the sufferer. Job is a godless one; and if he does affirm his innocence so solemnly and strongly, and challenges the decision of God, this assurance is only hypocritical and put on against his better knowledge and conscience in order to disconcert his accusers, and to evade their admonitions to repentance. It is a mere stratagem, like that of one who is guilty, who thinks he can overthrow the accusations brought against him by assuming the bold bearing of the accuser. Seb. Schmid counts up *quinque vitia* with which Eliphaz in the introduction to his speech (15:1-13) reproaches Job: vexatious impious words, a crafty perversion of the matter, blind assumption of wisdom, contempt of the divine word, and defiance against God. Of these reproaches the first and last are well-grounded; Job does really sin in his language and attitude towards God. With respect to the reproach of assumed wisdom, Eliphaz pays Job in the same coin. And when he reproaches Job with despising the divine consolations and gentle admonitions they have addressed to him, we must not blame the friends since their intention is good. If, however, Eliphaz reproaches Job with calculating craftiness, and thus regards his affirmation of his innocence as a mere artifice, the charge cannot be more unjust, and must certainly produce the extremest alienation between them. It is indeed hard that Eliphaz regards the testimony of Job's conscience as self-delusion. He goes still further and pronounces it a fine-spun lie, and denies not only its objective but also its subjective truth. Thus the breach between Job and the friends widens, the entanglement of the controversy becomes more complicated, and the poet allows the solution of the enigma to ripen by its becoming increasingly enigmatical and entangled.

In this second round of the friends' speeches we meet with no new thoughts whatever; only "in the second circle of the dispute everything is more fiery than in the first" (Oetinger). The only new thing is the harsher and more decided tone of their maintenance of the doctrine of punishment, with which they confront Job. They cannot go beyond the narrow limits of their dogma of retribution, and confine themselves now to even the half of that narrowness. For since Job contemns the consolations of God with which they have hitherto closed their speeches, they now exclusively bring forward the terrible and gloomy phase of their dogma in opposition to him. After Eliphaz has again given prominence to the universal sinfulness of mankind, which Job does not at all deny, he sketches from his own experience and the tradition of his ancestors (which demands respect by reason of their freedom from all foreign influence) with brilliant lines a picture of the evil-doer who being tortured by the horrors of an evil conscience is overwhelmed by the wrath of God in

the midst of his prosperity; and his possessions, children, and whole household are involved in his ruin. The picture is so drawn that in it, as in a mirror, Job shall behold himself and his fate, both what he has already endured and what yet awaits him.

In man Eliphaz sees only the life of nature and not the life of grace, which, because it is the word of God, makes man irreproachable before God. He sees in Job only the rough shell and not the kernel; only the hard shell and not the pearl. We know, however, from the prologue that Yahweh acknowledged Job as His servant when he decreed suffering for him. And this sufferer, whom the friends regard as one smitten of God, is and remains, as this truly evangelical book will show to us, the servant of Yahweh.

Chapters 16 and 17 **Job's First Answer**

"I have now heard such things in abundance, troublesome comforters are ye all! Are windy words now at an end, or what goadeth thee that thou answerest? . . . They have gaped against me with their mouth, in contempt they smite my cheeks; they conspire together against me. . . . My face is exceeding red with weeping, and on mine eyelids is the shadow of death, although there is no wrong in my hand and my prayer is pure. . . . Lay down now, be bondsman for me with Thysel; who else should furnish surety to me?! For Thou hast closed their heart from understanding, therefore wilt Thou not give authority to them." (Job 16:2-17:4)

"If I hope, it is for Sheol as my house, in darkness I make my bed. I cry to corruption: Thou art my father! To the worm: Thou art my mother and sister! Where now therefore is my hope? And my hope, who seeth it? To the bars of Sheol it descends, when at the same time there is rest in the dust." (Job 17:13-16)

As from the first speech of Eliphaz, so also from this first speech of Job, it may be seen that the controversy takes a fresh turn, which brings it nearer to the maturity of decision. From Eliphaz' speech Job has seen that no assertion of his innocence can avail to convince the friends, and that the more strongly he maintains his innocence, even before God, he only confirms them in the opinion that he is suffering the punishment of his godlessness, which now comes to light like a wrong that has been hitherto concealed. Job thus perceives that he is incapable of convincing the friends, for whatever he may say only tends to confirm them in the false judgment, which they first of all inferred from their false premises but now from his own words and conduct. He is accounted by them as one who is punished of God, whom they address as the preachers of repentance. Now, however, they address him so that the chief point of their sermon is no longer bright promises descriptive of the glorious future of the penitent, but fearful descriptions of the desolating judgment which comes upon the impenitent sinner. This zealous solicitude for his welfare seems to be clever and to the point, according to their view. It is, however, only a vexatious method of treating their friend's case. It is only roughly and superficially molded according to the order of redemption, but without an insight into the spiritual experience and condition of him with whom they have here to do. Their *prudencia*

pastoralis is carnal and legal. They know nothing of a righteousness which avails before God, and nothing of a state of grace which frees from the divine vengeance. They know not how to deal with one who is passing through the fierce conflict of temptation, and understand not the mystery of the cross.

By such unjust and uncharitable treatment from the friends, Job's sufferings stand forth before him in increased magnitude. He exceeds himself in the most terrible figures in order to depict the sudden change which the divine dispensation of suffering has brought upon him. The figures are so terrible, for Job sees behind his sufferings a hostile hideous God as their author. They are the outburst of His anger, His quivering looks, His piercing darts, His shattering missiles. His sufferings are a witness *de facto* against him, the sufferer. But they are this not merely in themselves, but also in the eyes of the people around him. To the sufferings which he has directly to endure in body and soul there is added, as it were, as their other equally painful part, misconstruction and scorn which he has to suffer from without. Not only does he experience the wrath of God contrary to the testimony to his righteousness which his consciousness gives him, but also the scoff of the ungodly who now deridingly triumph over him. Therefore he clothes himself in mourning and lies with his former majesty in the dust. His face is red with weeping and his eyes are become almost blind, although there is no wrong in his hand and his prayer is free from hypocrisy.

All that Job says here of the scorn that he has to endure by being regarded as one who is punished of God and tormented agrees exactly with the description of the sufferings of the servant of Yahweh in the Psalms and the second part of Isaiah. Job says, *they gape at me with their mouth*; and in Ps. 22:8 it is, *all they that see me laugh me to scorn, they open wide the lips, they shake the head*. Job says, *they smite my cheeks in contempt*; and the servant of Yahweh, Isa. 50:6, is compelled to confess, *I gave my back to the smiters and my cheeks to them that pluck off the hair; I hid not my face from shame and spitting*. Like Job, the servant of Yahweh in the Psalms and in Isaiah II. is delivered over into the hands of the unrighteous and reckoned among evil-doers, although he is the servant of Yahweh and knows himself to be Yahweh's servant. The same hope that he expresses in Isa. 50:8 sq. in the words, *he is near who justifieth me, who will condemn me!*--the same hope in Job breaks through the night of conflict, with which his direct and indirect suffering has surrounded him.

Just when Job becomes conscious of his doubled affliction in all its heaviness, when he feels himself equally rejected of men as of God, must this hope break forth. For there is only a twofold possibility for a man who thinks God has become his enemy and that he has not a friend among men: either he sinks into the abyss of despair, or if faith still exists he struggles upwards through his desertion by God and man to the love that lies deep in the heart of God, which in spite of hostile manifestation cannot abandon the righteous. Whither shall Job turn when God seems to him as an enemy, and when he nevertheless will not renounce God? He can only turn from the hostile God to the God who is differently disposed towards him, and that is equivalent to saying from the imaginary to the real God to whom faith clings throughout every outward manifestation of wrath and wrathful feeling. Since both, however, is one God, who only seems to be other

than He is, that bold grasp of faith is the exchange of the phantom-god of the conflict of temptation for the true God. Faith, which in its essence is a perception capable of taking root, seizes the real existence behind the appearance, the heart behind the countenance, that which remains the same behind the change, and defies a thousand contradictions with the saintly Nevertheless: God *nevertheless does not belie himself*.

Job challenges the earth not to hide his blood; unceasingly without restraint shall the cry of his blood rise up. What he says in 16:18 is to be taken not so much as the expression of a desire as of a demand, and better still as a command. For even in case he should succumb to his sufferings, and consequently in the eyes of men die the death of a sinner, his clear consciousness of innocence does not allow him to renounce his claim to a public declaration that he has died guiltless. But to whom shall the blood of the slain cry out? To whom else but God, and yet it is God who has slain him?

We see distinctly here how Job's idea of God is lighted up by the prospect of a decisive trial of his cause. The God who abandons Job to death as guilty and the God who cannot (and though it should be even after death) leave him unvindicated, come forth distinct and separate as darkness from light, from the chaos of the conflict of temptation. Since, however, the thought of a vindication after death for Job (who knows only of a seeming life after death according to the notion that rules him, and which is here not yet broken through) is only the extreme demanded by his moral consciousness, he is compelled to believe in a vindication in this world. And he expresses this faith (16:19) in these words: "Even now, behold, my Witness is in heaven, and One who acknowledgeth me is in the heights." He pours forth tears to this God that He would decide between God and him, between his friends and him. He longs for this decision now, for he will now soon be gone beyond return. Thus Job becomes here the prophet of the issue of his own course of suffering. And over his relation to Eloah and to the friends, of whom the former abandons him to the sinner's death and the latter declare him to be guilty, hovers the form of the God of the future, which now breaks through the darkness, from whom Job believingly awaits and implores what the God of the present withholds from him.

The book of Job has proved itself a mirror of consolation for the people, faithful to God, who had cause to complain (as in Ps. 44), and a mirror of warning to their scoffers and persecutors who had neither true sympathy with the miserable state of God's people nor a true perception of God's dealings. At the same time, however, Job appears in the light which the New Testament history, by the fulfilment of the prophecies of suffering in the Psalms, Isaiah, and also Zechariah, throws upon him as a type of Him who suffers in like manner, in order that Satan may have his deserts and thereby be confounded; who also has an affliction to bear which in itself has the nature and form of wrath, but has its motive and end in the love of God; who is just so misjudged and scorned of men in order at length to be exalted and to enter in as intercessor for those who despised and rejected Him. At the same time it must not be forgotten that there remains an infinite distance between the type and anti-type, which, however, must be in the very nature of a type, and does not annul the typical relation which exists only *exceptis excipiendis*. Who could fail to recognize the involuntary picture of the three friends in the penitent ones of Isa. 53, who esteemed the servant of Yahweh as one smitten of God, for whom, however, at last His

sacrifice and intercession avail?

Job at last considers his friends as devoid of wisdom, because they try to comfort him with the nearness of light while darkness is before him; because they give him the hope of a bodily restoration while he has nothing to expect but death, and earnestly longs for the rest of death. It is surprising that the speech of Job plunges again into complete hopelessness after he has risen to the prospect of being vindicated in this life. He certainly does not again put forth that prospect, but he does not even venture to hope that it can be realized by a blessing in this life after a seeming curse. It is in this hopelessness that the true greatness of Job's faith becomes manifest. He meets death, and to every appearance is overwhelmed by death, as a sinner while he is still conscious that he is righteous. Is it not faith in and fidelity to God then, that, without praying for recovery he is satisfied with this one thing--that God acknowledges him? The promises of the friends ought to have rested on a different foundation if he was to have the joy of appropriating them to himself. He feels himself to be inevitably given up as a prey to death, and as from the depth of Hades into which he is sinking he stretches out his hands to God. Not that He would sustain him in life, but that He would acknowledge him before the world as His. If he is to die even, he desires only that he may not die the death of a criminal. And is this intended at the same time for the rescue of his honor? No, after all, for the honor of God who cannot possibly destroy as an evil-doer one who is in everything faithful to Him.

When, then, the issue of the history is that God acknowledges Job as His servant, and after he is proved and refined by the temptation preserves to him a doubly rich and prosperous life, Job receives beyond his prayer and comprehension. And after he has learned from his own experience that God brings to Hades and out again, he has forever conquered all fear of death; and the germs of a hope of a future life, which in the midst of his affliction have broken through his consciousness, can joyously expand. For Job appears to himself as one who is risen from the dead, and is a pledge to himself of the resurrection from the dead.

Chapter 18 **Bildad's Second Speech**

"How long will ye hunt for words?! Attend, and afterwards we will speak. Wherefore are we accounted as beasts, and narrow-minded in your eyes? . . . For he is driven into the net by his own feet, and he walketh over a snare. . . . His calamity looketh hunger-bitten, and misfortune is ready for his fall. It devoureth the members of his sin; the first-born of death devoureth his members. That in which he trusted is torn away out of his tent, and he must march on to the king of terrors. Beings strange to him dwell in his tent; brimstone is strewn over his habitation. . . . Those who dwell in the west are astonished at his day, and trembling seizeth those who dwell in the east. Surely thus it befalleth the dwellings of the unrighteous, and thus the place of him that knew not God." (Job 18:2-21)

This second speech of Bildad begins like the first, with the reproach of endless babbling.

But it does not end like the first. The first closed with the words, "Thy haters shall be clothed with shame, and the tent of the godless is no more." The second is only an amplification of the second half of this conclusion, without taking up again anywhere the tone of promise, which there also embraces the threatening.

It is manifest also from this speech that the friends, to express it in the words of the old commentators, know nothing of evangelical but only of legal suffering, and also only of legal, nothing of evangelical, righteousness. For the righteousness of which Job boasts is not the righteousness of single works of the law, but of a disposition directed to God, of conduct proceeding from faith, or (as the Old Testament generally says) from trust in God's mercy, the weaknesses of which are forgiven because they are exonerated by the habitual disposition of the man and the primary aim of his actions. The fact that the principle, "suffering is the consequence of human unrighteousness," is accounted by Bildad as the formula of an inviolable law of the moral order of the world, is closely connected with that outward aspect of human righteousness. One can only thus judge, when one regards human righteousness and human destiny from the purely legal point of view. A man, as soon as we conceive him in faith, and therefore under grace, is no longer under that supposed exclusive fundamental law of the divine dealing. Brentius is quite right when he observes that the sentence of the law certainly is modified for the sake of the godly who have the word of promise. Bildad knows nothing of the worth and power which a man attains by a righteous heart. By faith he is removed from the domain of God's justice, which recompenses according to the law of works; and before the power of faith even rocks move from their place.

Bildad then goes off into a detailed description of the total destruction into which the evil-doer, after going about for a time oppressed with the terrors of his conscience as one walking over snares, at last sinks beneath a painful sickness. The description is terribly brilliant, solemn, and pathetic, as becomes the stern preacher of repentance with haughty mien and pharisaic self-confidence. It is none the less beautiful and, considered in itself, also true; a masterpiece of the poet's skill in poetic idealizing and in apportioning out the truth in dramatic form. The speech only becomes untrue through the application of the truth advanced, and this untruthfulness the poet has most delicately presented in it. For with a view of terrifying Job, Bildad interweaves distinct references to Job in his description. He knows, however, also how to conceal them under the rich drapery of diversified figures. The first-born of death that hands the ungodly over to death itself, the king of terrors by consuming the limbs of the ungodly, is the Arabian leprosy, which slowly destroys the body. The brimstone indicates the fire of God, which having fallen from heaven has burned up one part of the herds and servants of Job. The withering of the branch [is] the death of Job's children, whom he himself as a drying-up root that will also soon die off, has survived. Job is the ungodly man who, with wealth, children, name, and all that he possessed, is being destroyed as an example of punishment for posterity both far and near.

But in reality Job is not an example of punishment, but an example for consolation to posterity. And what posterity has to relate is not Job's ruin, but his wondrous deliverance. He is a righteous man; he knows God better than the friends, although he

contends with Him, and they defend Him. It is with him as with the righteous One, who complains, "*Contempt hath broken my heart, and I became sick. I hoped for sympathy, but in vain; for comforters, and found none*" (Ps. 69:21). "*My lovers and my friends stand aloof from my stroke, and my kinsmen stand afar off*" (Ps. 38:12). Not without a deep purpose does the poet make Bildad to address Job in the plural. The address is first directed to Job alone. Nevertheless it is so put that what Bildad says to Job is also intended to be said to others of a like way of thinking, therefore, to a whole party of the opposite opinion to himself.

Who are these like-minded? Hirzel rightly refers to 17:8 sq. Job is the representative of the suffering and misjudged righteous, in other words, of the "congregation," whose blessedness is hidden beneath an outward form of suffering. One is hereby reminded that in the second part of Isaiah the עֶבֶד יְהוָה [Servant of Yahweh] is also at one time spoken of in the singular and at another time in the plural; since this idea, by a remarkable contraction and expansion of expression (*systole* and *diastole*), at one time describes the one servant of Yahweh, and at another the congregation of the servants of Yahweh, which has its head in Him. Thus we again have a trace of the fact that the poet is narrating a history that is of universal significance, and that, although Job is no mere personification, he has in him brought forth to view an idea connected with the history of redemption. The ancient interpreters were on the track of this idea when they said in their way, that in Job we behold the image of Christ, and the figure of His church. *Christi personam figuraliter gessit*, says Beda; and Gregory, after having stated and explained that there is not in the Old Testament a righteous man who does not typically point to Christ, says: *Beatus Iob venturi cum suo corpore typum redemptoris insinuat.*

Chapter 19 **Job's Second Answer**

"How long will ye vex my soul and crush me with your words? These ten times have ye reproached me; without being ashamed ye astound me. . . . My way He hath fenced round that I cannot pass over, and He hath set darkness on my paths. He hath stripped me of mine honor and taken away the crown from my head. . . . My bone cleaveth to my skin and flesh, and I am escaped only with the skin of my teeth." (Job 19:2-20)

"Have pity upon me, have pity upon me, O ye my friends, for the hand of Eloah hath touched me. Wherefore do ye persecute me as God, and are never satisfied with my flesh? Oh that my words were but written, that they were recorded in a book with an iron pen, filled in with lead, graven in the rock forever! And I know: my Redeemer liveth, and as the last One will He arise from the dust. And after my skin, thus torn to pieces, and without my flesh shall I behold Eloah, whom I shall behold for my good, and mine eyes shall see Him and no other." (Job 19:21-25)

The speech of Job most clearly shows us how Job's affliction, interpreted by the friends as a divine retribution, becomes for Job's nature a wholesome refining crucible. We see also

from this speech of Job that he can only regard his affliction as a kindling of divine wrath, and God's meeting him as an enemy. But the more decidedly the friends affirm this and describe the root of the manifestation as lying in himself (in his own transgression), and the more uncharitably (as we have seen it at last in Bildad's speech) they go to an excess in their terrible representations of the fate of the ungodly--with unmistakable reference to him--, the more clearly is it seen that this indirect affliction of misconstruction must tend to help him in his suffering generally to the right relation towards God. For since the consolation expected from man is changed into still more cutting accusation, no other consolation remains to him in all the world but the consolation of God. And if the friends are to be in the right when they persist unceasingly in demonstrating to him that he must be a heinous sinner because he is suffering so severely, the conclusion is forced upon him in connection with his consciousness of innocence that the divine decree is an unjust one. From such a conclusion, however, he shrinks back, and this produces a twofold result.

The crushing anguish of soul which the friends inflict on him by forcing upon him a view of his suffering which is as strongly opposed to his self-consciousness as to his idea of God (and must therefore bring him into the extremest difficulty of conscience), drives him to the mournful request, "Have pity upon, have pity upon me, O ye my friends" (19:21). They shall not also pursue him whom God's hand has touched, as if they were a second divine power in authority over him that could dispose of him at its will and pleasure. They shall, moreover, ease from satisfying the insatiable greed of their nature upon him. He treats the friends in the right manner, so that if their heart were not encrusted by their dogma they would be obliged to change their opinion. This in Job's conduct is an unmistakable step forward to a more spiritual state of mind. But the stern inference of the friends has a beneficial influence not merely on his relation to them, but also on his relation to God. To the wrathful God, whom they compel him to regard also as unjust, he cannot in itself cling. He is so much the less able to do this, as he is compelled the more earnestly to long for vindication the more confidently he is accused.

When he now wishes that the testimony which he has laid down concerning his innocence, and which his contemporaries do not credit, might be graven in the rock with an iron pen and filled in with lead, the memorial in words of stone is but a dead witness. And he cannot even for the future rely on men, since he is so contemptuously misunderstood and deceived by them in the present. This impels his longing after vindication forward from a lifeless thing to a living person, and turns his longing from man below to God above. He has One who will acknowledge his misjudged cause and set it right,--a *Goel*, who will not first come into being in a later generation but *liveth*, who has not to come into being but *is*. There can be no doubt that he means the same person of whom in 16:19 he says, "Behold, even now *in heaven* is my Witness, and One who acknowledges me is *in the heights*." From this--that the heights of heaven is the place where this witness dwells--is to be explained the manner in which Job (19:25*b*) expresses his confident belief in the realization of that which he (16:20 sq.) at first only importunately implores: as the Last One, whose word shall avail in the ages of eternity when the strife of human voices shall have long been silent, He shall stand forth as finally decisive witness over the dust in which Job passed away as one who, in the eye of man, was regarded as an object of divine punishment. And after his skin in such a manner destroyed, and free from his flesh

which is even now already so fallen that the bones may be seen through it (19:20), he will behold Eloah. And he who according to human judgment has died the death of the unrighteous shall behold Eloah on his side, *his* eyes shall see and not a stranger. For entirely for his profit, in order that he may bask in the light of His countenance, will He reveal himself.

This is the picture of the future, for the realization of which Job longs so exceedingly that his reins within him pine away with longing. Whence we see that Job does not here give utterance to a transient emotional feeling, a merely momentary flight of faith. But his hidden faith, which during the whole controversy rests at the bottom of his soul and over which the waves of despair roll away, here comes forth to view. He knows that although his outward man may decay, God cannot, however, fail to acknowledge his inner man. But does this confidence of faith of Job really extend to the future life? It has, on the contrary, been observed that if the hope expressed with such confidence were a hope respecting the future life, Job's despondency would be trifling, and to be rejected. Further, that his hope stands in contradiction to his own assertion, 14:14, "*If man dies, shall he live again? All the days of my warfare would I wait, till my change should come.*" Thirdly, that Job's character would be altogether wrongly drawn and would be a psychological caricature if the thought slumbering in Job's mind, which finds utterance in 19:25-27, were the thought of a future vision of God. And finally, that the unraveling of the knot of the puzzle, which continually increases in entanglement by the controversy with the friends, at the close of the drama is effected by a theophany which issues in favor of one still living, not, as ought to be expected by that rendering, a celestial scene unveiled over the grave of Job.

But such a conclusion was impossible in an Old Testament book. The Old Testament as yet knew nothing of a heaven peopled with happy human spirits arrayed in white robes (the *stola prima*). And at the time when the book of Job was composed, there was also neither a positive revelation nor a dogmatic confession of the resurrection of the dead, which forms the boundary of the course of this world, in existence. The book of Job, however, shows us how, from the conflict concerning the mystery of this present life, faith struggled forth towards a future solution. The hope which Job expresses is not one prevailing in his age (not one that has come to him from tradition), not one embracing mankind, or even only the righteous in general. All the above objections would be really applicable if it were evident here that Job was acquainted with the doctrine of a beholding of God after death, which should recompense the pious for the sufferings of this present time. But such is not the case. The hope expressed is not a finished and believably appropriating hope. On the contrary, it is a hope which is first conceived and begotten under the pressure of divinely decreed sufferings which make him appear to be a transgressor, and of human accusations which charge him with transgression. It is impossible for him to suppose that God should remain, as now, so hostilely turned from him without ever again acknowledging him. The truth must at last break through the false appearance, and wrath again give place to love. That it should take place after his death is only the extreme which his faith assigns to it.

If we place ourselves on the standpoint of the poet, he certainly here gives utterance to a

confession to which, as the book of Proverbs also shows, the Salomonic Chokma began to rise in the course of believing thought. But also on the part of the Chokma, this confession was primarily only a *theologoumenon*, and was first in the course of centuries made sure under the combined agency of the progressive perception of the revelation and facts connected with redemption. And it is first of all in the New Testament--by the descent to Hades and the ascension to heaven of the Prince of Life--that it became a fully decided and well-defined element of the church's creed.

If, however, we place ourselves on the standpoint of the hero of the drama, this hope of future vindication which flashes through the fierceness of the conflict, far from making it a caricature gives to the delineation of this faith (which does not forsake God) the final perfecting stroke. Job is, as he thinks, meeting certain death. Why then should not the poet allow him to give utterance to that demand of faith--that he, even if God should permit him apparently to die the sinner's death, nevertheless cannot remain unvindicated. Why should he not allow him here in the middle of the drama to rise from the thought that the cry of his blood should not ascend in vain, to the thought that this vindication of his blood, as of one who is innocent, should not take place without his being consciously present and beholding with his own eyes the God (by whose judicial wrath he is overwhelmed) as his Redeemer?

This hope, regarded in the light of the later perception of the plan of redemption, is none other than the hope of a resurrection. But it appears here only in the germ and comes forward as purely personal. Job rises from the dust and, after the storm of wrath is passed, sees Eloah as one who acknowledges him in love, while his surviving opponents fall before the tribunal of this very God. It is therefore not a share in the resurrection of the righteous (which in Isa. 26 is uttered prophetically, but first of all nationally) and not a share in the general resurrection of the dead (first expressed in Dan. 12:2) with which Job consoled himself. He does not speak of what shall happen at the end of the days, but of a purely personal matter after his death. Considering himself as one who must die and thinking of himself as deceased, and indeed according to appearance overwhelmed by the punishment of his misdeeds, he would be compelled to despair of God if he were not willing to regard even the incredible as unfailing--that God will not permit this mark of wrath and of false accusation to attach to his blood and dust.

That the conclusion of the drama should be shaped in accordance with this future hope is, as we have already observed, not possible; because the poet (apart from his transferring himself to the position and consciousness of his patriarchal hero) was not yet in possession, as a dogma, of that hope which Job gives utterance to as an aspiration of his faith, and which even he himself only at first, like the psalmists, had as an aspiration of faith (Ps. 17:15, 49:15, 73:26). It was, however, also entirely unnecessary since it is indeed not the idea of the drama that there is a life after death, which adjusts the mystery of the present, but that there is a suffering of the righteous which bears the disguise of wrath but nevertheless, as is finally manifest, is a dispensation of love.

If, however, it is a germinating hope which in this speech of Job is urged forth by the strength of his faith, we can (without anachronistically confusing the different periods of

the development of the knowledge of redemption) regard it as a full, but certainly only developing, preformation of the later belief in the resurrection. When Job says that with his own eyes he shall behold Eloah, it is indeed possible by these "eyes" to understand the eyes of the spirit. But it is just as possible to understand him to mean the eyes of his renewed body (which the old theologians describe as *stola secunda* in distinction from the *stola prima* of the intermediate state). And when Job thinks of himself as a moldering corpse, should he not by his "eyes" which shall behold Eloah mean those which have been dimmed in death and are now again become capable of seeing? While, if we wish to expound grammatical-historically, not practically, not homiletically, we also dare not introduce the definiteness of the later dogma into the affirmation of Job. It is related to eschatology as the protevangelium is to soteriology. It presents only the first lines of the picture, which is worked up in detail later on, but also an outline sketched in such a way that every later perception may be added to it. Hence Schlottmann is perfectly correct when he considers that it is justifiable to understand these grand and powerful words in hymns, and compositions, and liturgies, and monumental inscriptions of the God-man, and to use them in the sense which "the more richly developed conception of the last things might so easily put upon them."

It must not surprise us that this sublime hope is not again expressed further on. On the one hand, what Sanctius remarks is not untrue: *ab hoc loco ad finem usque libri aliter se habet Iobus quam prius*. On the other hand Job here, indeed in the middle of the book, soars triumphantly over his opponents to the height of a believing consciousness of victory; but as yet he is not in that state of mind in which he can attain to the beholding of God on his behalf, be it in this world or in the world to come. He has still further to learn submission in relation to God, gentleness in relation to the friends. Hence, inexhaustibly rich in thought and variations of thought, the poet allows the controversy to become more and more involved, and the fire in which Job is to be proved, but also purified, to burn still longer.

Chapter 20 **Zophar's Second Speech**

"Knowest thou this which is from everlasting, since man was placed upon the earth: That the triumphing of the evil-doer is not long, and the joy of the godless is but for a moment? . . . If wickedness tasted sweet in his mouth, he hid it under his tongue. He carefully cherished it and did not let it go, and retained it in his palate. . . . Nothing escaped his covetousness, therefore his prosperity shall not continue. . . . The heavens reveal his iniquity, and the earth riseth up against him. The produce of his house must vanish, flowing away in the day of God's wrath. This is the lot of the wicked man from Elohim, and the heritage decreed for him from God." (Job 20:4-29)

The speech of Zophar is his ultimatum, for in the third course of the controversy he takes no part. We have already seen from his first speech, ch. 11, that he is the most impassioned of the friends. His vehemence is now the less excusable, since Job in his previous speech has used the truly spiritual language of importunate entreaty and earnest

warning in reply to the friends. The friends would now have done well if they had been silent, and still better if they had recognized in the sufferer the tried and buffeted servant of God, and had withdrawn their charges which his innermost nature repudiates. But Zophar is not disposed to allow the reproach of the correction which they received to rest upon him. In him we have an illustration of the fact that a man is never more eloquent than when he has to defend his injured honor, but that he is also never more in danger of regarding the extravagant images of natural excitement as a higher inspiration, or, however, as striking justifications coming from the fulness of a superior perception.

It has been rightly remarked that in Zophar the poet describes to us one of those hot-heads who pretend to fight for religion that is imperiled while they are zealous for their own wounded vanity. Instead of being warned by Job's threat of judgment, he thrusts back his attempt at producing dismay by a similar attempt. He has nothing new to bring forward in reply to Job. The poet has skilfully understood how to turn the heart of his readers step-by-step from the friends, and in the same degree to gain its sympathy for Job. For they are completely spent in their own dogma; and while in Job an endless multitude of thoughts and feelings surge up one after another, their heart is as hermetically closed against every new perception and emotion. All that is new in the speech of Zophar, and in those of the friends generally in this second course of the controversy, is that they no longer try to lure Job on to penitence by promises; but endeavor to bring him to a right state of mind, or rather to weaken his supposedly-mad assault upon themselves, by presenting to him only the most terrible images.

It is not possible to illustrate the principle--that the covetous, uncompassionate rich man is torn away from his prosperity by the punishment God decrees for him--more fearfully and more graphically than Zophar does it. And this terrible description is not overdrawn, but true and appropriate. But in opposition to Job it is the extreme of uncharitableness which outdoes itself. Applied to him, the fearful truth becomes a fearful lie. For in Zophar's mind Job is the godless man whose rejoicing does not last long; who indeed raises himself towards heaven, but as his own dung must he perish; and to whom the sin of his unjust gain is become as the poison of the viper in his belly. The arrow of God's wrath sticks fast in him; and though he draw it out, it has already inflicted on him a deservedly mortal wound! The fire of God, which has already begun to consume his possessions, does not rest until even the last remnant in his tent is consumed. The heavens, where in his self-delusion he seeks the defender of his innocence, reveal his guilt. And the earth, which he hopes to have as a witness in his favor, rises up as his accuser.

Thus mercilessly does Zophar seek to stifle the new trust which Job conceives towards God, to extinguish the faith which bursts upwards from beneath the ashes of the conflict. Zophar's method of treatment is soul-destroying. He seeks to slay that life which germinates from the feeling of death, instead of strengthening it. He does not, however, succeed. For so long as Job does not become doubtful of his innocence, the uncharitableness of the friends must be to him the thread by which he finds his way through the labyrinth of his sufferings to the God who loves him, although He seems to be angry with him.

Chapter 21

Job's Third Answer

"Wherefore do the wicked live, become old, yea, become mighty in power? Their posterity is established before them . . . their houses have peace without fear . . . their children jump about. . . . They enjoy their days in prosperity, and in a moment they go down to Sheol. And yet they said to God: "Depart from us! We desire not the knowledge of Thy ways. What is the Almighty that we should serve Him? . . . 'Eloah layeth up his iniquity for his children!" May He recompense it to him that he may feel it. May his own eyes see his ruin, and let him drink of the glowing wrath of the Almighty. For what careth he for his house after him, when the number of his months is cut off?" (Job 21:7-21)

"Shall one teach God knowledge, Who judgeth those who are in heaven? One dieth in his full strength, being still cheerful and free from care. . . . And another dieth with a sorrowing spirit, and hath not enjoyed wealth. They lie beside one another in the dust, and worms cover them both." (Job 21:22-26)

Job has hitherto answered the accusations of the friends (which they express in ever-increasingly terrible representations of the end of the godless), presenting only the terrible side of their dogma of the justice of God with a steadfast attestation of his innocence, and with the ever-increasing hope of divine vindication against human accusation. In him was manifest that faith which, being thrust back by men, clings to God; and, thrust back by God, even soars aloft from the present wrath of God to His faithfulness and mercy. The friends, however, instead of learning in Job's spiritual condition to distinguish between the appearance and the reality in this confidence, which comes back to itself, see in it only a constant willful hardening of himself against their exhortations to penitence. It does not confound them that he over whom, according to their firm opinion, the sword of God's vengeance hangs, warns them of that same sword; but only confirms them still more in their conviction that they have to do with one who is grievously self-deluded.

Zophar has painted anew the end of the evil-doer in the most hideous colors in order that Job might behold himself in this mirror and be astonished at himself. We see also, from the answer of Job to Zophar's speech, that the passionate excitement which Job displayed at first in opposition to the friends has given place to a calmer tone. He has already gotten over the first impression of disappointed expectation; and the more confidently certain of the infallibility of divine justice he becomes, the more does he feel raised above his accusers. He now expects no further comfort; careful attention to what he has to say shall henceforth be his consolation. He will also complain against and of men no more, for he has long since ceased to hope for anything for himself from men. His vexation concerns the objective indefensibility of that which his opponents maintain as a primeval law of the divine government in the world. The maxim that godlessness always works its own punishment by a calamitous issue is by no means supported by experience. One sees godless persons who are determined to know nothing of God, and are at the same time prosperous. It is not to be said that God treasures up the punishment they have deserved for their children. The godless ought rather to bear the punishment themselves, since the

destiny of their children no longer concerns them after they have enjoyed their fill of life.

That law is therefore a precept which human shortsightedness has laid down for God, but one by which, however, He is not guided. The godless who have lived prosperously all their days, and the righteous who have experienced only sorrow, share the common lot of death. One has only to ask persons who have had experience of the world. They can relate instances of notorious sinners who maintained their high position until death, and who, without being overtaken by divine judgments and without human opposition and contradiction, were carried in honor to the grave; and their memory is immortalized by the monuments erected over their tomb. From this Job infers that the connection into which the friends bring his suffering with supposed guilt is a false one, and that all their answers are, after all, reducible to an unjust and uncharitable judgment by which they attack God.

Job has more than once given expression to the thought that a just distribution of prosperity and misfortune is not to be found in the world (9:22-24; 12:6). But now for the first time he designedly brings it forward in reply to the friends, after he has found every form of assertion of his innocence unavailing, and their behavior towards him with their dogma is become still more and more inconsiderate and rash. Job sins in this speech. But in order to form a correct judgment of this sinning, two things must be attended to. Job does not revel in the contradiction in which this lasting fact of experience stands to the justice of divine retribution; he had rather be ignorant of it. For he has no need of it, in spite of his affliction, in order to be able to hold fast the consciousness of his innocence. No indeed! If he thinks of this mystery he is perplexed, and shuddering comes over him (21:6). And when he depicts the prosperity of sinners, he expresses his horror of the sins of such prosperous men in the words, "*The counsel of the ungodly be far from me!*" (21:16), in order that it may not be erroneously imagined that he lusts after such prosperity.

If we compare Zophar's and Job's speeches one with another, we are obliged to say that relatively the greater right is on the side of Job. True, the Scriptures confirm what Zophar says of the destruction of the evil-doer in innumerable passages. And this calamitous end of one who has long been prosperous and defiant is the solution by which the Old Testament Scriptures remove the stumbling-block of the mysterious phenomenon of the prosperity of the evil-doer (Ps. 37, 73; Jer. 12:1-3; Hab. 1:13-17). But if we bear in mind that [1] this solution is insufficient so long as that calamitous end is regarded only outwardly and with reference to the present world, that [2] the solution only becomes satisfactory when the end is regarded as the end of all, and as the decision of a final judgment which sets all contradictions right, that [3] neither Zophar nor Job know anything of a decision beyond death but regard death as the end whither human destiny and divine retribution tend, without being capable of any further distinction, [then] we cannot deny that Job is most in the right in placing the prosperous life and death of the godless as based upon the incontrovertible facts of experience, in opposition to Zophar's primeval exceptionless law of the terrible end of the godless.

The speeches of Zophar and of Job are both true and false, both one-sided and therefore mutually supplementary. The real final end of the evil-doer is indeed none other than

Zophar describes; and the temporal prosperity of the evil-doer, lasting often until death, is really a frequent phenomenon. If, however, we consider further that [1] Job is not able to deny the occurrence of such examples of punishment, such revelations of the retributive justice of God as those which Zophar represents as occurring regularly and without exception; that, [2] however, on the other hand, exceptional instances undeniably do exist, and the friends *are obliged* to be blind to them because otherwise the whole structure of their opposition would fall in, [then] it is manifest that Job is nearer to the truth than Zophar. For it is truer that the retributive justice of God is often, but by far not always, revealed in the present world and outwardly than that it never becomes manifest.

Wherein, then, does Job's sin in this speech consist? Herein, that he altogether ignores the palpably just distribution of human destinies, which does occur frequently enough. In this he becomes unjust towards his opponent and incapable of convincing him. From it, it appears as though in the divine government there is not merely a preponderance of what is mysterious, of what is irreconcilable with divine justice, but as though justice were altogether contradicted. The reproach with which he reproaches his opponents--Shall one teach God understanding?--is one which also applies to himself. For when he says that God, if He punishes, must visit punishment upon the evil-doer himself and not on his children, it is an unbecoming dictation with regard to God's doing. We should be mistaken in supposing that the poet in 21:19-21 brings forward a concealed contradiction to the Mosaic doctrine of retribution. Nowhere in the Old Testament, not even in the Mosaic law, is it taught that God visits the sins of the fathers on the children while He allows them themselves to go free. What Job asserts, that the sinner himself must endure the punishment of his sins, not his children instead of him, is true. But the thought lying in the background, that God does not punish where He ought to punish, is sinful. Thus here Job again falls into error, which he must by-and-by penitently acknowledge and confess, by speaking unbecomingly of God. The God of the future is again vanished from him behind the clouds of temptation, and he is unable to understand and love the God of the present. He is a mystery to him, the incomprehensibility of which causes him pain. "The joyous thought of the future, which a little before struggled forth, again vanishes, because the present, into the abyss of which he is again drawn down, has remained perfectly dark the whole time, and as yet no bridge has been revealed crossing from this side to that."