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Excerpts from the Book of Job (Chapters 22-37)

The Third Course of the Controversy

Chapter 22 *Eliphaz' Third Speech*

"Is a man profitable unto God? No, indeed! the intelligent man is profitable to himself. Hath the Almighty any profit if thou art righteous, or gain if thou strivest to walk uprightly? Will He reprove thee for thy fear of God, will He go with thee into judgment? Is not thy wickedness great, thine iniquities infinite? . . . Thou sentest widows away empty, and the arms of the orphan are broken. . . . So then thou thinkest: 'What doth God know? Can He judge through the thick cloud? Clouds veil Him that He seeth not, and in the vault of heaven He walketh at His pleasure.' . . . Make friends now with Him, so hast thou peace; thereby good will come unto thee. . . . If thou returnest to the Almighty, thou shalt be built up again; if thou puttest away iniquity far from thy tents. . . . For then thou shalt delight thyself in the Almighty, and lift up thy countenance to Eloah; if thou prayest to Him, He will hear thee, and thou shalt pay thy vows." (Job 22:2-27)

The speech of Eliphaz opens the third course of the controversy. In the first course of the controversy the speeches of the friends, though bearing upon the question of punishment, were embellished with alluring promises. But these promises were incapable of comforting Job because they proceeded upon the assumption that he is suffering as a sinner deserving of punishment, and can only become free from his punishment by turning to God. In the second course of the controversy, since Job gave no heed to their exhortations to penitence, the friends drew back their promises and began the more unreservedly to punish and to threaten by presenting to Job, in the most terrifying pictures of the ruin of the evil-doer, his own threatening destruction. The misconstruction which Job experiences from the friends has the salutary effect on him of rooting him still more deeply in the hope that God will not let him die without having borne witness to his innocence. But the mystery of the present is nevertheless not cleared up for Job by this glimpse of faith into the future. On the contrary, the second course of the controversy ends so that to the friends who unjustly and uncharitably deny instead of solving the mystery of his individual lot, Job now presents that which is mysterious in the divine distribution of human fortune in general, the total irreconcilableness of experience with the idea of the just divine retribution maintained by them. In that speech (ch. 21), which forms the transition to the third course of the controversy, Job uses the language of the doubter, not without sinning against God. But since it is true that the outward lot of man by no means always corresponds to his true moral condition, and never warrants an infallible conclusion respecting it, he certainly in that speech gives the death-blow to the dogma of the friends.

The poet cannot possibly allow them to be silent over it. Eliphaz, the most discreet and intelligent, speaks. His speech, considered in itself, is the purest truth, uttered in the most appropriate and beautiful form. But as an answer to the speech of Job, the dogma of the friends itself is destroyed in it by the false conclusion by which it is obliged to justify itself to itself. The greatness of the poet is manifest from this, that he makes the speeches of the friends, considered in themselves and apart from the connection of the drama, express the most glorious truths while they are proved to be inadequate, indeed perverted and false insofar as they are designed to solve the existing mystery. According to their general substance, these speeches are genuine diamonds; according to their special application, they are false ones.

How true is what Eliphaz says, that God neither blesses the pious because he is profitable to Him nor punishes the wicked because he is hurtful to Him; that the pious is profitable not to God but to himself; the wicked is hurtful not to God but himself; that therefore the conduct of God towards both is neither arbitrary nor selfish! But if we consider the conclusion to which, in these thoughts, Eliphaz only takes a spring, they prove themselves to be only the premises of a false conclusion. For Eliphaz infers from them that God rewards virtue as such and punishes vice as such; that therefore where a man suffers, the reason of it is not to be sought in any secondary purpose on the part of God but solely and absolutely in the purpose of God to punish the sins of the man. The fallacy of the conclusion is this: that the possibility of any other purpose, which is just as far removed from self-interest, in connection with God's purpose of punishing the sins of the man is excluded.

It is now manifest how near theoretical error and practical falsehood border on one another, so that dogmatic error is really in the rule at the same time $\alpha\delta\iota\kappa\iota\alpha$. For after Eliphaz (in order to defend the justice of divine retribution against Job) has again indissolubly connected suffering and the punishment of sin without acknowledging any other form of divine rule but His justice (any other purpose in decreeing suffering than the infliction of punishment, from the recognition of which the right and true comfort for Job would have sprung up), he is obliged in the present instance against his better knowledge and conscience to distort an established fact, to play the hypocrite to himself, and persuade himself of the existence of sins in Job of which the confirmation fails him, and to become false and unjust towards Job even in favor of the false dogma. For the dogma demands wickedness in an equal degree to correspond to a great evil, unlimited sins to unlimited sufferings. Therefore the former wealth of Job must furnish him with the ground of heavy accusations, which he now expresses directly and unconditionally to Job. He whose conscience, however, does not accuse him of mammon worship is suffering the punishment of a covetous and compassionless rich man. Thus is the dogma of the justice of God rescued by the unjust abandonment of Job.

Further, how true is Eliphaz' condemnatory judgment against the free-thinking, which, if it does not deny the existence of God, still regards God as shut up in the heavens without concerning himself about anything that takes place on earth! The divine judgment of total destruction came upon a former generation that had thought thus insolently of God, and to the joy of the righteous the same judgment is still executed upon evil-doers of the same

mind. This is true, but it does not apply to Job for whom it is intended. Job has denied the universality of a just divine retribution, but not the special providence of God. Eliphaz sets retributive justice and special providence again here in a false correlation. He thinks that so far as a man fails to perceive the one, he must at once doubt the other--another instance of the absurd reasoning of their dogmatic one-sidedness. Such is Job's relation to God that even if he failed to discover a single trace of retributive justice anywhere, he would not deny His rule in nature and among men. For his God is not a mere notion, but a person to whom he stands in a living relation. A notion falls to pieces as soon as it is found to be self-contradictory. But God remains what He is however much the phenomenon of His rule contradicts the nature of His person. The rule of God on earth Job firmly holds, although in manifold instances he can only explain it by God's absolute and arbitrary power. Thus he really knows no higher motive in God to which to refer his affliction. But nevertheless he knows that God interests himself about him, and that He who is even now his Witness in heaven will soon arise on the dust of the grave in his behalf. For such utterances of Job's faith Eliphaz has no ear. He knows no faith beyond the circle of his dogma.

The exhortations and promises by which Eliphaz then seeks to lead Job back to God are in and of themselves true and most glorious (22:21-30). There is also somewhat in them which reflects shame on Job. They direct him to that inward peace, to that joy in God which he had entirely lost sight of when he spoke of the misfortune of the righteous in contrast with the prosperity of the wicked. But even these beautiful words of promise are blemished by the false assumption from which they proceed. The promise--the Almighty shall become Job's precious ore--rests on the assumption that Job is now suffering the punishment of his avarice, and has as its antecedent, "Lay thine ore in the dust, and thine Ophir beneath the pebbles of the brook."

Thus do even the holiest and truest words lose their value when they are not uttered at the right time, and the most brilliant sermon that exhorts to penitence remains without effect when it is prompted by pharisaic uncharitableness. The poet, who in general has regarded the character of Eliphaz as similar to that of a prophet (*vid.* 4:12 sqq.), makes him here at the close of his speech against his will prophesy the issue of the controversy. He who now preaches penitence to Job shall be one of the first who need Job's intercession as the servant of God, and whom he is able mediatorially to rescue by the purity of his hands.

Chapters 23 and 24 Job's First Answer

"Even today my complaint still biddeth defiance, my hand lieth heavy upon my groaning. Oh that I knew where I might find Him, that I might come even to His swelling-place! I would lay the cause before Him, and fill my mouth with arguments: I should like to know the words He would answer me, and attend to what He would say to me. . . . Yet I go eastward, He is not there, and westward, but I perceive Him not . . . For He knoweth the way that is with me: If He should prove me, I should come forth as gold." (Job 23:2-10)

"Wherefore are not bounds reserved by the Almighty, and they who honor Him see not His days? They remove the landmarks, they steal flocks and shepherd them. . . . They tear the fatherless from the breast, and defraud the poor. In the city vassals groan, and the soul of the oppressed crieth out--and Eloah heedeth not the anomaly." (Job 24:1-12)

"And He preserveth the mighty by His strength; such a one riseth again, though he despaired of life. He giveth him rest, and he is sustained, and His eyes are over their ways. They are exalted--a little while--then they are no more, and they are sunken away, snatched away like all others, and as the top of the stalk they are cut off. And if it is not so, who will charge me with lying, and make my assertion worthless?" (Job 24:22-25)

The bold accusations in the speech of Eliphaz, in which the uncharitableness of the friends attains its height, must penetrate most deeply into Job's spirit. But Job does not answer like-by-like. Even in this speech in opposition to the friends he maintains the passionless repose which has once been gained. Although the misjudgment of his character has attained its height in the speech of Eliphaz, his answer does not contain a single bitter personal word. In general he does not address them, not as though he did not wish to show respect to them, but because he has nothing to say concerning their unjust and wrong conduct that he would not already have said, and because he has lost all hope of his reproof taking effect, all hope of sympathy with his entreaty that they would spare him, all hope of understanding and information on their part.

In the first part of the speech (ch. 23) he occupies himself with the mystery of his own suffering lot, and in the second part (ch. 24) with the reverse of this mystery, the evil-doers' prosperity and immunity from punishment. How is he to vindicate himself against Eliphaz, since his lament over his sufferings as unmerited is accounted by the friends more and more as defiant obstinacy and consequently tends to bring him still deeper into that suspicion which he is trying to remove? His testimony concerning himself is of no avail, for it appears to the friends more self-delusive, hypocritical, and sinful the more decidedly he maintains it. Consequently the judgment of God can alone decide between him and his accusers. But while the friends accuse him by word of mouth, God himself is pronouncing sentence against him by His acts--his affliction is a *de facto* accusation of God against him. Therefore, before the judgment of God can become a vindication of his affliction against the friends, he must first of all himself have defended and proved his innocence in opposition to the Author of his affliction. Hence the accusation of the friends, which in the speech of Eliphaz is become more direct and cutting than heretofore, must urge on anew with all its power the desire in Job of being able to bring his cause before God.

At the outset he is confident of victory, for his consciousness does not deceive him. And God, although He is both one party in the cause and judge, is influenced by the irresistible force of the truth. Herein the want of harmony in Job's conception of God, the elevation of which into a higher unity is the goal of the development of the drama, again shows itself. He is not able to think of the God who pursues him (the innocent one) at the present time with suffering, as the just God; on the other hand, the justice of the God who

will permit him to approach His judgment throne is to him indisputably sure: He will attend to him and forever acquit him. Now Job yields to the arbitrary power of God; but then he will rise by virtue of the justice and truth of God. His longing is, therefore, that the God who now afflicts him may condescend to hear him. This seems to him the only way of convincing God, and indirectly the friends, of his innocence and himself of God's justice.

The basis of this longing is the desire of being free from the painful conception of God which he is obliged to give way to. For it is not the darkness of affliction that enshrouds him which causes Job the intensest suffering, but the darkness in which it has enshrouded God to him--the angry countenance of God which is turned to him. But if this is sin, that he is engaged in a conflict concerning the justice of the Author of his affliction, it is still greater that he indulges evil thoughts respecting the Judge towards whose throne of judgment he presses forward. He thinks that God designedly avoids him because He is well aware of his innocence. Now, however, he will admit no other thought but that of suffering him to endure to the end the affliction decreed.

Job's suspicion against God is as dreadful as it is childish. This is a profoundly tragic stroke. It is not to be understood as the sarcasm of defiance, [but], on the contrary, as one of the childish thoughts into which melancholy bordering on madness falls. From the bright height of faith to which Job soars in 19:25 sqq., he is here again drawn down into the most terrible depth of conflict in which, like a blind man, he gropes after God, and because he cannot find Him thinks that He flees before him, lest He should be overcome by him. The God of the present, Job accounts his enemy; and the God of the future to whom his faith clings, who will and must vindicate him so soon as He only allows himself to be found and seen--this God is not to be found! He cannot get free either from his suffering or from his ignominy. The future for him is again veiled in a twofold darkness.

Thus Job does not so much answer Eliphaz as himself, concerning the cutting rebukes he has brought against him. He is not able to put them aside, for his consciousness does not help him; and God, whose judgment he desires to have leaves him still in difficulty. But the mystery of his lot of affliction, which thereby becomes constantly more torturing, becomes still more mysterious from a consideration of the reverse side, which he is urged by Eliphaz more closely to consider, terrible as it may be to him. He, the innocent one, is being tortured to death by an angry God, while for the ungodly there come no times of punishment, no days of vengeance. Greedy conquerors, merciless rulers oppress the poor to the last drop of blood, who are obliged to yield to them and must serve them, without wrong being helped by the right. Murderers who shun the light, thieves and adulterers carry on their evil courses unpunished; and swiftly and easily without punishment overtaking them, or being able to overtake them, Sheol snatches them away as heat does the melted snow. Even God himself preserves the oppressors long in the midst of extreme danger; and after a long life free from care and laden with honor permits them to die a natural death, as a ripe ear of corn is cut off.

Bold in the certainty of the truth of his assertion, Job meets the friends: if it is not so, who will convict me as a liar?! What answer will they give? They cannot long disown the

mystery, for experience outstrips them. Will they therefore solve it? They might, had they but the key of the future state to do it with! But neither they nor Job were in possession of that, and we shall therefore see how the mystery, without a knowledge of the future state, struggled through towards solution; or even if this were impossible, how the doubts which it excites are changed to faith and so are conquered.

Chapter 25 **Bildad's Third Speech**

"Dominion and terror are with Him, He maketh peace in His high places. Is there any number to His armies, and whom doth not His light surpass? How could a mortal be just with God, and how could one born of woman be pure? Behold, even the moon, it shineth not brightly, and the stars are not pure in His eyes. How much less mortal man, a worm, and the son of man, a worm!" (Job 25:2-6)

The friends, as was to be expected, are unable to furnish any solution of the mystery why the ungodly often live and die happily; and yet they ought to be able to give this solution if the language which they employ against Job were authorized. Bildad alone speaks in the above speech, Zophar is silent. But Bildad does not utter a word that affects the question. This designed omission shows the inability of the friends to solve it as much as the tenacity with which they firmly maintain their dogma. And the breach that has been made in it either they will not perceive or yet not acknowledge, because they think that thereby they are approaching too near to the honor of God. Moreover, it must be observed with what delicate tact, and how directly to the purpose in the structure of the whole, this short speech of Bildad's closes the opposition of the friends.

Two things are manifest from this last speech of the friends. First, that they know nothing new to bring forward against Job, and nothing just to Job's advantage; that all their darts round back from Job; and that, though not according to their judgment yet in reality, they are beaten. This is evident from the fact that Bildad is unable to give any answer to Job's questions but can only take up the one idea in Job's speech, that he confidently and boldly thinks of being able to approach God's throne of judgment. He repeats with slight variation what Eliphaz has said twice already concerning the infinite distance between man and God (4:17-21; 15:14-16), and [which] is not even denied by Job himself (9:2; 14:4).

But, secondly, the poet cannot allow us to part from the friends with too great repugnance, for they are Job's friends notwithstanding. And at the close we see them willingly obedient to God's instruction to go to Job, that he may pray for them and make sacrifice on their behalf. For this reason he does not make Bildad at last repeat those unjust incriminations which were put prominently forward in the speech of Eliphaz (22:5-11). Bildad only reminds Job of the universal sinfulness of the human race once again without direct accusation, in order that Job may himself derive from it the admonition to humble himself. And this admonition Job really needs, for his speeches are in many ways contrary to that humility which is still the duty of sinful man, even in connection with the

best justified consciousness of right thoughts and actions towards the holy God.

Chapter 26 **Job's Second Answer**

"How hast thou helped him that is without power, raised the arm that hath no strength! . . . Sheol is naked before him, and the abyss hath no covering. He stretched the northern sky over the emptiness; He hung the earth upon nothing. . . . He compasseth the face of the waters with bounds, to the boundary between light and darkness. . . . By His breath the heavens become cheerful; His hand hath formed the fugitive dragon. . . . Behold, these are the edges of His ways, and how do we hear only a whisper thereof! But the thunder of His might--who comprehendeth it?" (Job 26:2-14)

As in the speech of Bildad the poet makes the opposition of the friends to fade away and cease altogether, as incapable of any further counsel and hence as conquered, so in Job's closing speech (which consists of three parts, ch. 26, 27-28, 29-31) he shows how Job in every respect as victor maintains the field against the friends. The friends have neither been able to loose the knot of Job's lot of suffering, nor the universal distribution of prosperity and misfortune. Instead of loosing the knot of Job's lot of suffering, they have cut it by adding to Job's heavy affliction the invention of heinous guilt as its ground of explanation. And the knot of the contradictions of human life in general with divine justice they have ignored, in order that they may not be compelled to abandon their dogma--that suffering everywhere necessarily presupposes sin, and sin is everywhere necessarily followed by suffering. Even Job, indeed, is not at present able to solve either one or other of the mysteries. But while the friends' treatment of these mysteries is untrue, he honors the truth and keenly perceives that which is mysterious. Then he proves by testimony and an appeal to facts that the mystery may be acknowledged without therefore being compelled to abandon the fear of God. Job firmly holds to the objective reality and the testimony of his consciousness. In the fear of God he places himself above all those contradictions which are unsolvable by, and perplexing to, human reason. His faith triumphs over the rationalism of the friends, which is devoid of truth, of justice, and of love.

Job first answers Bildad. He characterizes his poor reply as what it is: as useless, and not pertinent in regard to the questions before them. It is of no service to him, it does not affect him, and is moreover a borrowed weapon. For he also is conscious of and can praise God's exalted and awe-inspiring majesty. He has already shown this twice (9:4-10; 12:13-25), and shows [it] here for the third time. Its operation is not confined merely to those creatures that immediately surround God in the heavens, [but] it extends without being restrained by the sea, even down to the lower world; and it makes the angels above to tremble, so there it set the shades in consternation. From the lower world Job's contemplation rises to the earth, as a body suspended in space without support; to the clouds above, which contain the upper waters without bursting and veil the divine throne of which the sapphire blue of heaven is the reflection; and then he speaks of the sea lying between Sheol and heaven, which is confined within fixed bounds, at the extreme

boundaries of which light passes over into darkness. He celebrates all this as proof of the creative might of God. Then he describes the sovereign power of God in the realm of His creation--how He shakes the pillars of heaven, rouses the sea, breaks the monster in pieces, lights up the heavens by chasing away the clouds and piercing the serpent, and thus setting free the sun. But all these (thus he closes) are only meager outlines of the divine rule, only a faint whisper which is heard by us as coming from the far distance. Who has the comprehension necessary to take in and speak exhaustively of all the wonders of His infinite nature, which extends throughout the whole creation?

From such a profound recognition and so glorious a description of the exaltation of God, the infinite distance between God and man is most clearly proved. Job has adequately shown that his whole soul is full of that which Bildad is anxious to teach him; a soul that only requires a slight impulse to make it overflow with such praise of God as is not wanting in a universal perception of God, nor is it full of wicked devices. When therefore Bildad maintains against Job that no man is righteous before such an exalted God, Job ought indeed to take it as a warning against such unbecoming utterances concerning God as those which have escaped him; but the universal sinfulness of man is no ground of explanation for his sufferings, for there is a righteousness which avails before God. And of this, Job, the suffering servant of God, has a consciousness that cannot be shaken.

Chapters 27 and 28 **Job's Final Speech to the Friends**

[Then Job continued to take up his proverb, and said:] . . . *"Far be it from me to grant that you are in the right; till I die I will not remove my innocence from me. My righteousness I hold fast, and let it not go. My heart reproacheth not any of my days. . . . This is the lot of the wicked man with God, and the heritage of the violent which they receive from the Almighty: If his children multiply, it is for the sword, and his offspring have not bread enough. . . . The east wind lifteth him up, that he departeth, and hurleth him forth from his place. God casteth upon him without sparing, before His hand he fleeth utterly away. They clap their hands at him, and hiss him away from his place."* (Job 27:5-23)

"He layeth his hand upon the pebbles; He turneth up the mountains from the root. He cutteth canals through the rocks; and his eye seeth all kinds of precious things. That they may not leak, he dammeth up rivers; and that which is hidden he bringeth to light. But wisdom, whence is it obtained? And where is the place of understanding? A mortal knoweth not its price, and it is not found in the land of the living. . . . The topaz of Ethiopia is not equal to it, it is not outweighed by pure fine gold. Whence, then, cometh wisdom, and which is the place of understanding? . . . Behold, the fear of the Lord is wisdom, and to depart from evil is understanding." (Job 28:9-28)

After Job has refuted Bildad, and continuing his description has celebrated in such lofty strains the majesty of God, it can hardly be expected that the poet will allow Zophar to speak for the third time. Bildad is unable to advance anything new, and Zophar has already tried his utmost to terrify Job for the second time. Besides, Job's speech

furnishes no material for a reply (a motive which is generally overlooked), unless the controversy were designed to ramble on into mere personalities. Accordingly the poet allows Job to address the friends once more but no longer in the extreme and excited tone of the previous dialogue, but (since the silence of the friends must produce a soothing impression on Job, tempering him to gentleness and forbearance) in a tone of confession conscious of victory yet altogether devoid of haughty triumph--a confession in which only one single word of reproach escapes him (27:12*b*).

Job once again most solemnly asserts his innocence before the friends. All attempts on the part of the friends to entice or to extort from him a confession which is against his conscience have therefore been in vain. Joyous and victorious he raises his head, invincible even to death in the conviction of that which is a fact of his consciousness, that cannot be got rid of by denial. He is not an evil-doer; accordingly he must stand convicted as an evil-doer who treats him as such. For although he is not far from death and is in sore vexation, he has not manifested the hopelessness and defection from God in which the evil-doer passes away. Job has indeed even expressed himself despondingly, and complained of God wrath; but the true essence of his relation to God came to light in such words [as those found in] 16:19-21, 17:9, 19:25-27. If the friends had not been blind to such brilliant aspirations of his life in God, how could they regard him as a godless man and his affliction as the punishment of such a one? His affliction has, indeed, no connection with the terrible end of the evil-doer.

Job here comes before the friends with the very doctrine they have so frequently advanced, but infatuated with the foolish notion that it is suited to his case. He here gives it back to them, to show them that it is not suited to him. He also does not deny that in the rule the evil-doer meets a terrible end, although he has hitherto disputed the assertion of the friends because of the exclusiveness with which it was maintained by them. His counter-assertion respecting the prosperity of the evil-doer, which from the beginning was not meant by him so exclusively as the friends meant theirs respecting the misfortune of the evil-doer, is here indirectly freed from the extreme appearance of exclusiveness by Job himself, and receives the necessary modification. Job does not deny, yea, he here brings it under the notice of the friends, that the sword, famine, and pestilence carry off the descendants of the evil-doer, and even himself; that his possessions at length fall into the hands of the righteous, and contain within themselves the germ of destruction from the very first; that God's curse pursues and suddenly destroys the godless rich man himself. Thus it comes to pass. For while silver and other precious things come from the depths of the earth, wisdom, whose worth far transcends all earthly treasures, is to be found with no created being but is with God alone; and the fear of God, to avoid evil, is the share of wisdom to which man is directed according to God's primeval decree.

The object of the section, chapter 28, is primarily to confirm the assertion concerning the judgment that befalls the evil-doer, 28:13-23. The confirmation is, however, at the same time according to the delicately laid plan of the poet, a glorious general confession in which Job's dialogue with the friends comes to a close. This panegyric of wisdom (similar to Paul's panegyric of charity, 1 Cor. 13) is the presentation of Job's predominant principle, and as such is like a song of triumph with which, without vain-glory, he closes

the dialogue in the most appropriate manner. If Job's life has such a basis, it is not possible that his affliction should be the punishment of an ungodly man. And if the fear of God is the wisdom appointed to man, he also teaches himself that though unable to see through the mystery of his affliction, he must still hold on to the fear of God; and teaches the friends that they must do the same and not lay themselves open to the charge of injustice and uncharitableness towards him, the suffering one, in order to solve the mystery. Job's conclusion, which is first intended to show that he who does not fear God is overtaken by the merited fate of a fool who rebels against God's moral government, shows at the same time that the afflictive lot of those who fear God must be judged of in an essentially different manner from that of the ungodly.

We may imagine what impression these last words of Job to the friends must have made upon them. Since they were obliged to be silent, they will not have admitted that they are vanquished, although the drying up of their thoughts, and their involuntary silence, is an actual proof of it. But does Job make them feel this oppressively? Now that they are become so insignificant, does he read them a severe lecture? Does he in general act towards them as vanquished? No indeed, but solemnly and without vaunting himself over his accusers he affirms his innocence. Earnestly, but in a winning manner, he admonishes them by tempering and modifying what was vehement and extreme in his previous replies. He humbly submits himself to the divine wisdom by setting the fear of God as man's true wisdom before himself and the friends as their common aim. Thus he utters "the loftiest words, which must surprise the opponents as they exhibit him as the not merely mighty, but also wonderfully calm and modest conqueror, who here for the first time wears the crown of true victory, when, in outward victory conquering himself he struggles on towards a more exalted clearness of perception."

Chapters 29, 30, and 31 **Job's Monologue**

"O that I had months like the times of yore, like the days when Eloah protected me . . . When I went forth to the gate of the city, prepared my seat in the market, then the young men hid themselves as soon as they saw me, and the aged rose up, remained standing. . . . I put on justice, and it put me on; as a robe and turban was my integrity. . . . I was eyes to the blind, and feet was I to the lame. I was a father to the needy, and the cause of the unknown I found out, and broke the teeth of the wicked, and I cast the spoil forth out of his teeth. . . . I chose the way for them, and sat as chief, and dwelt as a king in the army, as one that comforteth the mourners." (Job 29:2-25)

"And now they who are younger than I have me in derision, those whose fathers I disdained to set with the dogs of my flock. . . . And now I am become their song, and a by-word to them. They avoid me, they flee far from me, and spare not my face with spitting. . . . And now my soul is poured out within me, days of suffering hold me fast. The night rendeth my bones from me, and my gnawers sleep not. . . . He hath cast me into the mire, and I am in appearance as dust and ashes. . . . I am become a brother of the jackals and a companion of ostriches. My skin having become black peels off from me, and my bones are parched

with dryness. My harp was turned to mourning, and my pipe to tones of sorrow." (Job 30:1-31)

"I have made a covenant with mine eyes, and how should I fix my gaze upon a maiden! What then would be the dispensation of Eloah from above, and the inheritance of the Almighty from the heights--Doth not calamity overtake the wicked, and misfortune the workers of evil? Doth He not see my ways and count all my steps? . . . If I despised the cause of my servant and my maid when they contended with me, what should I do if God should rise up, and if He should make search, what should I answer Him? Hath not He who formed me in the womb formed him also, and hath not One fashioned us in the belly? . . . If I saw the sunlight when it shone, and the moon walking in splendor, and my heart was secretly enticed, and I threw them a kiss by my hand, this also would be a punishable crime, for I should have played the hypocrite to God above. If I rejoiced over the destruction of him who hated me, and became excited when evil came upon him--yet I did not allow my palate to sin by calling down a curse upon his life. . . . O that I had one who would hear me! Behold my signature--the Almighty will answer me--and the writing which my opponent hath written! Truly I will carry it upon my shoulder, I will wind it about me as a crown. The number of my steps I will recount to Him, as a prince will I draw near to Him." (Job 31:-37)

After Job, in chapters 27 and 28, has closed the controversy with the friends, in the first part of this trilogy, chapter 29, he wishes himself back in the months of the past and describes the prosperity, the activity, for the good of his fellow-men, and the respect in which he at that time rejoiced when God was with him. It is to be observed here, how among all the good things of the past which he longs to have back, Job gives the pre-eminence to the fellowship and blessing of God as the highest good, the spring and fountain of every other. Five times at the beginning of chapter 29, in diversified expressions he describes the former days as a time when God was with him. Look still further from the beginning of the monologue to its close. The activity which won every heart to Job, and toward which he now looks back so longingly, consisted of works of that charity which weeps with them that weep and rejoices not in injustice (29:12-17). The righteousness of life with which Job was enamored, and which manifested itself in him, was therefore charity arising from faith (*Liebe aus Glauben*). He knew and felt himself to be in fellowship with God; and from the fulness of this state of being apprehended of God he practiced charity. He, however, is blessed who knows himself to be in favor with God, and in return loves his fellow-men, especially the poor and needy, with the love with which he himself is loved of God. Therefore does Job wish himself back in that past, for now God has withdrawn from him. And the prosperity, the power, and the important position which were to him the means for the exercise of his charity are taken from him.

This contrast of the past and present is described in chapter 30. Men who have become completely animalized, rough hordes driven into the mountains with whom he sympathized--but without being able to help them as he had wished on account of their degeneracy--these mock at him by their words and acts. Now scorn and persecution for the sake of God is the greatest honor of which a man can be accounted worthy. But, apart from the consideration that this idea could not yet attain its rightful expression in

connection with the present temporal character of the Old Testament, it was not further from anyone than from him who in the midst of his sufferings for God's sake regards himself, as Job does now, as rejected of God. That scorn and his painful and loathsome disease are to him a decree of divine wrath. God has, according to his idea, changed to a tyrant; He will not hear his cry for help. Accordingly, Job can say that his welfare as a cloud is passed away. He is conscious of having had pity on those who needed help, and yet he himself finds no pity now when he implores pity, like one who seated upon a heap of rubbish involuntarily stretches forth his hand for deliverance.

In this gloomy picture of the present there is not even a single gleam of light. For the mysterious darkness of his affliction has not been in the slightest degree lighted up for Job by the treatment the friends have adopted. Also he is as little able as the friends to think of suffering and sin as unconnected, for which very reason his affliction appears to him as the effect of divine wrath; and the sting of his affliction is that he cannot consider this wrath just. From the demand made by his faith (which here and there breaks through his conflict), that God cannot allow him to die the death of a sinner without testifying to his innocence, Job nowhere attains the conscious conclusion that the motive of his affliction is love and not wrath.

In the third part of the speech (ch. 31), which begins with the words, "I had made a covenant," etc., without everywhere going into the detail of the visible conjunction of the thought, Job asserts his earnest struggle after sanctification by delivering himself up to just divine punishment in case his conduct had been the opposite. The poet allows us to gain a clear insight into that state of his hero's heart, and also of his house, which was well-pleasing to God--Not merely outward adultery, [but] even the adulterous look; not merely the unjust acquisition of property and goods, but even the confidence of the heart in such things; not merely the share in an open adoration of idols, but even the side-glance of the heart after them is accounted by him as condemnatory. He has not merely guarded himself from using sinful curses against his enemies, but he has also not rejoiced when misfortune overtook them. As to his servants, even when he has had a dispute with any of them he has not forgotten that master and servant, without distinction of birth, are creatures of one God. Towards orphans from early youth onwards, he has practiced such tender love as if he were their father; towards widows, as if he were their son. With the hungry he has shared his bread, with the naked his clothes; his subordinates had no reason to complain of niggardly sustenance; his house always stood open hospitably to the stranger; and, as the two final strophes affirm, he has not hedged in any secret sin, anxious only not to appear as a sinner openly, and has not drawn forth wailings and tears from the ground which he cultivated by avarice and oppressive injustice.

Who does not here recognize a righteousness of life and endeavor, the final aim of which is purity of heart, and which in its relation to man flows forth in that love which is the fulfilling of the law? The righteousness of which Job says he has put it on like a garment, and it has put him on, is essentially the same as that which the New Testament Preacher on the mount enjoins. As the work of an Israelitish poet, chapter 31 is a most important evidence in favor of the assertion that a life well-pleasing to God is not, even in the Old Testament, absolutely limited to the Israelitish nation, and that it enjoins a love which

includes man as man within itself, and knows of no distinction.

If now Job can lay down the triumphant testimony of such a genuine righteousness of life concerning himself, in opposition to men's misconstruction, the contrast of his past and present becomes for the first time mysterious. But we are also standing upon the extreme boundary where the knot that has been tied must be untied. The injustice done to Job in the accusations which the friends bring against him must be laid bare by the appearance of accusation on the part of God, which his affliction casts upon him, being destroyed. With the highest confidence in a triumphant issue, even before the trial of his cause, Job longs in the concluding words for the judicial decision of God (vers. 35-37). As a prince he will go before the Judge and bind his indictment like a costly diadem upon his brow. For he is certain that he has not merited his affliction, that neither human nor divine accusation can do anything against him, and that he will remain conqueror--as over men, so over God Himself.

Thus has the poet, in this threefold monologue of Job, prepared the way for the *catastrophe*, the unravelment of the knot of the drama. But will God enter into a controversy respecting His cause with Job? This is contrary to the honor of God; and that Job desires it is contrary to the lowliness which becomes him towards God. On this very account God will not at once acknowledge Job as His servant. Job will require first of all to be freed from the sinful presumption concerning God with which he has handled the problem of his sufferings. But he has proved himself to be a servant of God in spite of the folly into which he has fallen. The design of Satan to tear him away from God is completely frustrated. Thus, therefore, after he has purified himself from his sin into which, both in word and thought, he has allowed himself to be drawn by the conflict of temptation, Job must be proved to be the servant of God in opposition to the friends.

But before God Himself appears in order to bring about the unravelment, there follow still four speeches, chapters 32-37, of a speaker for whose appearance the former part of the drama has in no way prepared us. Since Job has come to an end with his speeches and is silent at the four speeches of a new speaker (although they strongly enough provoke him to reply), according to the idea of the poet, Elihu's appearance is to be regarded as belonging to the catastrophe itself. And since a hasty glance at the speeches of Yahweh shows that they do not say anything concerning the motive and object of Job's affliction, these speeches of Elihu (insofar as they seem to be an integral part of the whole, as they cast light upon this dark point) will therefore prove in the midst of the action of the drama what we know already from the prologue--that Job's affliction has not the wrath of God as its motive power, nor the punishment of Job as ungodly for its object.

Chapters 32 through 37
The Speeches of Elihu
(Which Prepare the Way for the Unravelment)

A short introduction in historical prose, which introduces the speaker and justifies his appearance, opens the section. The opposition of the three has exhausted itself, so that in

that respect Job seems to have come forth out of the controversy as conqueror.

"So these three men ceased to answer Job, because he was righteous in his own eyes. And the wrath of Elihu . . . was kindled: against Job was his wrath kindled, because he justified himself at the expense of God. And against his three friends was his wrath kindled, because they found no answer, and condemned Job." (Job 32:1-3)

The three friends are silenced, because all their attempts to move Job to a penitent confession that his affliction is the punishment of his sins have rebounded against this fact, that he was righteous in his own eyes, *i.e.* that he imagined himself righteous; and because they now know of nothing more to say. Then Elihu's indignation breaks forth in two directions. First, concerning Job, that he justified himself מֵאֱלֹהִים [rather than Elohim], *i.e.* not *a Deo* (so that He would be obliged to account him righteous, as in 4:17), but *proe Deo*. Elihu rightly does not find it censurable in Job, that as a more commonly self-righteous man he in general does not consider himself a sinner, which the three insinuate of him, but that declaring himself to be righteous he brings upon God the appearance of injustice, or, as Yahweh also says further on (40:8), that he condemns God in order that he may be able to maintain his own righteousness. Secondly, concerning the three, that they have found no answer by which they might have been able to disarm Job in his maintenance of his own righteousness at the expense of the divine justice, and that in consequence of this they have condemned Job.

"Verily thou hast said in mine ears, and I heard the sound of thy words: 'I am pure, without transgression; spotless am I, and I have no guilt. Behold, He findeth malicious things against me, He regardeth me as His enemy; He putteth my feet in the stocks, He observeth all my paths.' Behold, therein thou art not right, I will answer thee, for Eloah is too exalted for man." (Job 33:8-12)

"Behold, God doeth all twice, thrice with man to bring back his soul from the pit, that it may become light in the light of life. Listen, O Job, hearken to me; be silent and let me speak on. Yet if thou hast words, answer me; speak, for I desire thy justification. If not, hearken thou to me; be silent and I will teach thee wisdom." (Job 33:29-33)

"Hear, ye wise men, my words, and ye experienced ones, give ear to me! For the ear trieth words, as the palate tasteth by eating. Let us find out what is right, let us explore among ourselves what is good." (Job 34:2-4)

"Men of understanding will say to me, and a wise man who listeneth to me: 'Job speaketh without knowledge, and his words are without intelligence.' O would that Job were proved to the extreme on account of his answers after the manner of evil men; for he addeth transgression to his sin, among us he clappeth and multiplieth his speeches against God." (Job 34:33-37)

"Dost thou consider this to be right, sayest thou: my righteousness exceedeth God's, that thou sayest, what advantage is it to thee, what doth it profit me more than my sin? I will

answer thee words, and thy companions with thee. Look towards heaven and see, and behold the ethereal heights: they are high above thee. If thou sinnest, what dost thou effect with Him? And if thy transgressions are many, what doest thou to Him? If thou art righteous, what dost thou give Him, or what doth He take from thy hand? To man like thee thy godlessness availeth, and to thee, a son of man, thy righteousness." (Job 35:2-8)

"Behold, God is mighty, and yet doth not act scornfully, mighty in power of understanding. He preserveth not the life of the ungodly, and to the afflicted He giveth right. He withdraweth not His eyes from the righteous, but with kings on the throne He establisheth them forever, and they are exalted." (Job 36:5-7)

"Behold, God is exalted--we know Him not entirely; the number of His years, it is unsearchable. . . . Who can altogether understand the spreadings of the clouds, the crash of His tabernacle? . . . God thundereth with His voice marvelously, doing great things incomprehensible to us. . . . Dost thou know when God designeth to cause the light of His clouds to shine? Dost thou understand the balancings of the clouds, the wondrous things of Him who is perfect in knowledge? . . . The Almighty, whom we cannot find out, the excellent in strength, and right and justice He perverteth not. Therefore men regard Him with reverence, He hath no regard for all the wise of heart." (Job 36:26-37:24)

Elihu's chief aim is to defend God against Job's charge of injustice. He shows how omnipotence, love, and justice are all found in God. When judging of God's omnipotence, we are to beware of censuring Him who is absolutely exalted above us and our comprehension. When judging of God's love, we are to beware of interpreting His afflictive dispensations, which are designed for our well-being, as the persecution of an enemy. When judging of His justice, we are to beware of maintaining our own righteousness at the cost of the Divine, and of thus avoiding the penitent humbling of one's self under His well-meant chastisement. The twofold peculiarity of Elihu's speeches comes out in the fourth as prominently as in the first: (1) They demand of Job penitential submission, not by accusing him of coarse common sins as the three have done, but because even the best of men suffer for hidden moral defects, which must be perceived by them in order not to perish on account of them. Elihu here does for Job just what in Bunyan (*Pilgrim's Progress*) the man in the Interpreter's house does when he sweeps the room, so that Christian had been almost choked with the dust the flew about. Then (2) they teach that God makes use of just such sufferings as Job's now are in order to bring man to a knowledge of his hidden defects, and to bless him the more abundantly if he will be saved from them; that thus the sufferings of those who fear God are a wholesome medicine, disciplinary chastenings, and saving warnings; and that therefore true, not merely feigned, piety must be proved in the school of affliction by earnest self-examination, remorseful self-accusation, and humble submission.

Elihu therefore in this agrees with the rest of the book, that he frees Job's affliction from the view which accounts it the evil-doer's punishment (*vid.* 32:3). On the other hand, however, he nevertheless takes up a position apart from the rest of the book by making Job's sin the cause of his affliction; while in the idea of the rest of the book Job's affliction has nothing whatever to do with Job's sin except insofar as he allows himself to be drawn

into sinful language concerning God by the conflict of temptation into which the affliction plunges him. For after Yahweh has brought Job over this his sin, He acknowledges His servant to be in the right, against the three friends (42:7). His affliction is really not a merited affliction; it is not a result of retributive justice. It also had not chastisement as its design. It was an enigma under which Job should have bowed humbly without striking against it--a decree in the purpose of which the prologue permits us an insight, which however remains unexplained to Job, or is only explained to him so far as the issue teaches him that it should be to him the way to a so much the more glorious testimony on the part of God Himself.

With that criticism of Job, which the speeches of Yahweh consummate, the criticism which lies before us in the speeches of Elihu is irreconcilable. The older poet, in contrast with the false doctrine of retribution, entirely separates sin and punishment or chastisement in the affliction of Job, and teaches that there is an affliction of the righteous which is solely designed to prove and test them. His thema, not Elihu's, is *the mystery of the Cross*. For the Cross according to its proper notion is suffering *ενεκεν δικαιοσυνης* (or what in New Testament language is the same, *ενεκεν Χριστου*). Elihu, however, leaves sin and suffering together as inseparable, and opposes the false doctrine of retribution by the distinction between disciplinary chastisement and judicial retribution. The Elihu section, as I have shown elsewhere, has sprung from the endeavor to moderate the bewildering boldness with which the older poet puts forth his idea.

The writer has felt in connection with the book of Job what every Christian must feel. Such a maintaining of his own righteousness in the face of friendly exhortations to penitence, as we perceive it in Job's speeches, is certainly not possible where "the dust of the room has flown about." The friends have only failed in this--that they made Job more and more an evil-doer deservedly undergoing punishment. Elihu points him to vain-glorying, to carnal security, and in the main to those defects from which the most godly cannot and dare not claim exemption. It is not contrary to the spirit of the drama that Job holds his peace at these exhortations to penitence. The similarly expressed admonition to penitence with which Eliphaz (ch. 4 sq.,) begins has not effected it. In the meanwhile, however, Job is become more softened and composed; and in remembrance of his unbecoming language concerning God, he must feel that he has forfeited the right of defending himself. Nevertheless this silent Job is not altogether the same as the Job who, in chapters 40 and 42, forces himself to keep silence; whose former testimony concerning himself and whose former refusal of a theodicy which links sin and calamity together, Yahweh finally sets His seal to.

On the other hand, however, it must be acknowledged that what the introduction to Elihu's speeches sets before us (32:1-5) is consistent with the idea of the whole, and that [what] such a section as the introduction leads one to expect may be easily understood really as a member of the whole, which carries forward the dramatic development of this idea. For this very reason one feels urged to constantly new endeavors; if possible, to understand these speeches as a part of the original form. But they are without result; and, moreover, many other considerations stand in our way to the desired goal, especially that Elihu is not mentioned in the epilogue and that his speeches are far behind the

artistic perfection of the rest of the book.

We now call to mind that in the last (according to our view) strophe of Job's last speech (31:35-37), Job desires, yea challenges, the divine decision between himself and his opponents. His opponents have explained his affliction as the punishment of the just God. He, however, is himself so certain of his innocence and of his victory over divine and human accusation that he will bind the indictment of his opponents as a crown upon his brow; and to God, whose hand of punishment supposedly rests upon him, will he render an account of all his steps and go forth as a prince to meet Him. That he considers himself a צדיק [righteous man] is in itself not censurable, for he is such. But that he is מאלהים מצדק נפשו מאלהים [righteous himself rather than God] *i.e.* considers himself to be righteous in opposition to God, who is now angry with him and punishes him, that he maintains his own righteousness to the prejudice of the Divine, and that by maintaining his own right places the Divine in the shade--all this is explainable as the result of the false idea which he entertains of his affliction, and in which he is strengthened by the friends. But there is need of censure and penitence. For since by His nature God can never do wrong, all human wrangling before God is a sinful advance against the mystery of divine guidance, under which he should rather humbly bow.

But we have seen that Job's false idea of God as his enemy, whose conduct he cannot acknowledge as just, does not fill his whole soul. The night of temptation in which he is enshrouded is broken in upon by gleams of faith, in connection with which God appears to him as his Vindicator and Redeemer. Flesh and spirit, nature and grace, delusion and faith are at war within him. These two elements are constantly more definitely separated in the course of the controversy. But it is not yet come to the victory of faith over delusion; the two lines of conception go unreconciled side by side in Job's soul. The last monologues issue on the one side in the humble confession that God's wisdom is unsearchable, and the fear of God is the share of wisdom appointed to man; on the other side in the defiant demand that God may answer for his defense of himself, and the vaunting offer to give Him an account of all his steps, and also then to enter His presence with the high feeling of a prince.

If now the issue of the drama is to be this--that God really reveals Himself as Job's Vindicator and Redeemer, [then] Job's defiance and boldness must be previously punished in order that lowliness and submission may attain the victory over them. God cannot acknowledge Job as His servant before he penitently acknowledges as such the sinful weakness under which he has proved himself to be God's servant, and so exhibits himself anew in his true character which cherishes no known sin. This takes place when Yahweh appears. And in language not of wrath but of loving condescension, and yet earnest reproof, He makes the Titan quite puny in his own eyes in order then to exalt him who is outwardly and inwardly humbled.