



# TRIAL OF JOB

BY: ELDER SILAS H. DURAND

"BEHOLD, WE COUNT THEM HAPPY WHICH ENDURE. YE HAVE HEARD OF THE PATIENCE OF JOB, AND HAVE SEEN THE END OF THE LORD; THAT THE LORD IS VERY PITIFUL, AND OF TENDER MERCY (JAMES 5.2)."

PHILADELPHIA J. B. LIPPINCOTT & Co.  
ORIGINALLY PUBLISHED 1871

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Tom Adams

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# PREFACE

## PUBLISHER'S NOTE

“I was not in safety, neither had I rest, neither was I quiet; yet trouble came (Job 3.26).”

So it was with Job, and so it appears to be with all the elect family. Job repeated this familiar theme later with: “Man that is born of a woman is of few days, and full of trouble (Job 14.1).”

We know by personal experience these things are so, yet often struggle to find a suitable reason why. Jacob had lamented in his troubles, “...all these things are against me (Genesis 42.36).” This was a frequent complaint of Job, but not more so than many other sufferers. Much the same was expressed, too, regarding trouble by the psalmist. “They mount up to the heaven, they go down again to the depths: their soul is melted because of trouble. They reel to and fro, and stagger like a drunken man, and are at their wit’s end (Psalm 107.26, 27).”

The book of Job does not clear away all the fear and trepidation from the minds of those in trouble, nor can it be expected that full relief shall ever come in this life. Under the blessing of God, however, the book of Job, like no other book of the Bible, reveals to the poor afflicted children of God that He has a purpose in all their troubles. Moreover, Job’s experience illustrates how others may mistake inordinate troubles as nothing more than justly deserved punishment from the Lord; punishment for every imagined evil and vile cravings. The three friends of Job did not draw such stern conclusions about themselves. Their bitter vitriol was reserved for Job at a time when he most needed comfort. They did not see any but Job deserving of such calamities.

Elder Durand followed another, and far more satisfying, path in pursuit of the root causes of Job’s troubles.

Durand has given considerable thought to the case of Job. It shows in every chapter. He has written of Job and his associates in a manner far different from the general treatment dished up by those with shallow thought and hasty conclusions. He viewed Job as a type of the church in her afflictions, both collectively and individually. Durand has not carried the types to excess, as some in his day accused him. Rather, after suggesting the typology in the book of Job, he infrequently addressed the thought. His theme is the one we might expect from any commentator who has tasted the Lord is gracious. Durand explored with dignity and depth the sovereignty of God in the afflictions of Job as representative of the church.

Durand was somewhat severe – often harsh – with the three friends of Job, yet not nearly as severe or harsh as they were with Job. He labeled their speeches as just so much Arminianism, and took sufficient pains to fully establish this position. The publishers of this current edition of *The Trial of Job* agree without reservation.

We freely recommend this soul-searching work of Durand to the saints of God. It is one of the more spiritual books we have read.

It will be a mistake to draw any early conclusions of Durand’s depth until reading the latter chapters of *The Trial of Job*. Should the Spirit of God rest upon the hearts of the readers while they explore this work, we can safely say they will be richer for the reading.

The Publishers (Welsh Tract Publishing)  
September, 1997

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TO ALL WHO LOVE THE TRUTH  
THIS WORK IS AFFECTIONATELY INSCRIBED

ELDER SILAS H. DURAND

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REPUBLISHED IN THE INTEREST OF  
THE OLD ORDER OF BAPTISTS

BY: WELSH TRACT PUBLICATIONS  
P.O. BOX 1250  
SALISBURY, MARYLAND 21802-1250

*(not in business anymore)*

SEPTEMBER, 1997

# Chapter I.

## INTRODUCTION.

### *Job 1.*

There was a man in the land of Uz whose name was Job.

From among all the millions then inhabiting the earth whose names are never mentioned in the Scriptures, this one man is chosen by the divine historian for especial attention, and the events and sayings of a portion of his life are minutely recorded. Like all Scripture given by inspiration, this record is “profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, that the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works.”

It is my purpose to examine the experience of Job as expressed by himself while under his severe trial, and the controversy that arose between him and his three friends, keeping in view the divine assurance that he was perfect and upright, and that he spake of God the thing that is right, while his friends did not; to show how he truthfully expresses the condition of mind resulting from an experimental knowledge of the sinfulness of our nature; and to contemplate the doctrine of God our Saviour so clearly presented through his parable, and made to appear more distinct and luminous by contrast with the errors raised up against him. The more fully we examine, the more clearly shall we see the perfect harmony existing between the declarations of Job and the experience of the saints as described in other portions of the sacred Word, and as expressed by them in all ages to the present time; the more clearly also shall we see comprehended in the speeches of his three friends the elements of all false doctrine concerning salvation.

I trust I have evidence that the Lord has directed me by his Spirit to write upon this subject. If so, then I may feel an assurance that he will guide me into the truth, and that some of his dear children will receive instruction and comfort through my labor. It is for them only, wherever they may be, and whatever their name and connection in the world, that I can write; they only are able, by a like experience, to understand the trials and complaints of Job, to see the doctrine that pervades and harmonizes his apparently conflicting expressions, and, as “wise men,” to “judge what I say (I Corinthians 10:15).”

As we contemplate his character and condition, Job will appear as a type of the Church. It is undoubtedly as such that he is presented to our view, and so much only of his history is related as makes the figure complete. All that we are told of Melchisedec is but what is necessary to present in our view of him a type of the royal priesthood of Christ. So it is but a small portion of the life of Job as a man that is brought intimately to our view, but in that portion we have as perfect a type of the Church, entering and extending through her state of legal bondage into gospel liberty, as in the history and Psalms of David we have of Christ as the Captain of our salvation. It is, however, by his words that this theory is to be clearly justified, and it is here I design to dwell most particularly. Every type of the Church must have its counterpart, as it were, in miniature, in every member of the Church; and in manifesting by their light this individual likeness, the Scriptures through all their types give assurance of hope and comfort to the saints. If we are children of God, we shall find in Job’s declarations what we

have experienced, and what, by the concordant testimony of other Scriptures, we shall know to be the truth.

I will not attempt a particular discussion of what is related in the first and second chapters, but will briefly allude to the events that lead to the point at which I propose to begin a more particular examination of the text.

The brief introduction of Job is remarkable, containing only that which is necessary in the typical design. The name of Uz, the land where he dwelt, signifies counsel or word, and his own name signifies sorrowful, hated, fighting; and this may be the spiritual interpretation: that in the counsel and word of God he stands before us as a representative of that Church which in the world is in the furnace of affliction, full of sorrow, hated by the world, and fighting the good fight of faith against the enemies of the truth.

And that man was perfect and upright, and one that feared God, and eschewed evil. This could only be true of any of the fallen sons of Adam as connected with or figuratively representing the Church, which is perfect in Christ, and within every member of which God has placed his fear, that they shall not depart from him. (See Jeremiah 32:40.)

The number of his sons, seven, may signify the perfection of the number of Zion's children.

Now there was a day when the sons of God came to present themselves before the Lord, and Satan came also among them. We need not try to imagine a particular number of people gathering to a particular locality literally, with Satan in a bodily presence among them. Considering Job as representing the Church, these, in the spiritual significance of the subject, would represent the individual members. Though each is a component part of the Church, yet that Church is presented as a perfect body to the contemplation of each. If we have known how Satan is present with his temptations when we seek the presence of the Lord, we have an intimation of what is presented here. Though he is manifest to us only by doubts and evil thoughts, which we are inclined to regard as our own, and as evidences that we are not sons of God, yet he is manifest to the Lord, can be addressed by him, and can do but what he permits. The Lord calls him to consider the perfection and uprightness of his servant Job, that there is none like him in the earth; this last expression proving him to be a type of the Church. But Satan declares that it is because God has hedged him about with blessings that he fears and serves him, and that should these now be taken away he would curse God to his face. This declaration of Satan is the expression of a doubt that the saints sometimes recognize in themselves, fearing, while in spiritual and temporal prosperity, that their faith would not be strong enough to endure affliction.

The trial which this Satanic doubt suggests is permitted to be made, and suddenly Job becomes a poor, desolate mourner. But he holds fast his integrity. Then Job arose, and rent his mantle, and shaved his head, and fell down upon the ground, and worshipped, and said, Naked came I out of my mother's womb, and naked shall I return thither: the Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away; blessed be the name of the Lord!

The earth is our natural mother. Out of her bosom we came, and so shall we return, "for dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return;" and we can carry nothing of all the earthly riches or friends that God has bestowed upon us here with us when we go. The light of life which God has given to his people shows them this, and makes them submissive therefore to his will spiritually. The trial fails, so far as the design of Satan is concerned, but it accomplishes the end of the Lord, by displaying the endurance of his work.

In all this Job sinned not with his lips, nor charged God foolishly.

## **Job 2.**

Again there was a day when the sons of God came to present themselves before the Lord, and Satan came also among them to present himself before the Lord. The fact that it was only with the sons of God that Satan presented himself before the Lord, and nothing more is said concerning them, seems to sustain the idea that there is shown here his presence in their temptations to doubt and fear. He comes from going to and fro in the earth, and from walking up and down in it; for “as a roaring lion, he walketh about, seeking whom he may devour (I Peter 5:8).”

And the Lord said unto Satan, Hast thou considered my servant Job, that there is none like him in the earth, a perfect and an upright man, and one that feareth God, and escheweth evil? And still he holdeth fast his integrity, although thou movedst me against him, to destroy him without cause. But Satan still denies the simple power of the truth, declaring that the preservation of his physical comfort is the cause of his continued service to God. But put forth thy hand now, and touch his bone and his flesh, and he will curse thee to thy face. So we are still tempted to fear that other and greater trials than those we have had would destroy our hope, and cause us to turn away from our confidence in the truth of God.

And the Lord said unto Satan, Behold, he is in thy hand; but save his life. And now the Church is to be presented as in the furnace of affliction fully heated, to be tried as gold and refined as silver. (See Zechariah 13:9.)

The peculiar affliction chosen is appropriate to the object of the type. Job is smitten with sore boils, from the sole of his foot unto his crown, and represents the condition of the conscious sinner, the people of God in their fallen state, “full of wounds and bruises and putrefying sores,” “from the sole of the foot even unto the head (Isaiah 1:6).”

If Satan had chosen to inflict a wound by striking, or torturing with fire literally, it would not have suited the figure. He but brings out the corruptions of the flesh, hidden from the sight and feeling before, but now causing most bitter pain and anguish, and covering him with shame, so that he sits down among the ashes.

Then said his wife unto him, Dost thou still retain thine integrity? Curse God, and die. This is all the reference that is made to his wife in the history. We do not know her name, nor is it necessary. We are only to know her as bone of his bone, and flesh of his flesh, and therefore in her speech representing the rebellious opposition of our carnal nature to the ways of God. The triumphant power of that faith that is the subject of trial is asserted in the memorable reply of Job: Thou speakest as one of the foolish women speaketh. What! Shall we receive good at the hand of God, and shall we not receive evil? In all this did not Job sin with his lips.

Now Job’s three friends, having heard of the evil that had come upon him, came to comfort him. Concerning them we will speak particularly hereafter, when by their words they shall have begun to disclose their character; noting here, however, for careful remembrance, that they came every one from his own place.

So they sat down with him upon the ground seven days and seven nights, and none spoke a word unto him; for they saw that his grief was very great.

## Chapter II.

### FIRST ANSWER OF JOB.

#### *Job 3.*

After this opened Job his mouth, and cursed his day. And Job spoke and said, Let that day perish wherein I was born, and the night in which it was said, There is a man-child conceived.

We have been accustomed to regard this as very extravagant and indefensible in Job, and, although indicating extreme misery, yet not at all consistent with the perfection and patience that are attributed to him. The truth is that he, still holding fast his integrity, is now uttering words that truly and fully express the great grief and pain which are upon him. Let us consider his and our case. The curse of God because of transgression is upon all the race of Adam. Man, therefore, by nature is totally depraved and abominable in the sight of God. But being totally corrupt, he does not see himself so. Could he discern his own condition, it would prove that there was a principle of soundness in him, for that power or faculty by which evil is recognized and felt must itself be good: it is indeed by the spirit of holiness alone that sin can be detected. So man is represented as dead in trespasses and sins – insensible as the dead of his condition; well pleased therefore, with himself, and with no doubt of his ability to please God. Paul represents himself thus when he says, “I was alive without the law once (Romans 7:9).” He had not yet received that holy principle of eternal life which “is the gift of God through Jesus Christ our Lord,” and was, therefore, unconscious of his sinful state. “But when the commandment came,” when the quickening power of God was applied to his soul, then with a new spiritual sight, that discerns all sin and depravity, he could look upon himself as he appears in the sight of a holy God, and witness with loathing and dismay his own death in sin.

This is the case with all the elect or Church of God, who “are by nature children of wrath even as others (Ephesians 2:3).” They are unconscious of their vileness; satisfied with their own imagined beauty; and confident that God is well pleased with them. But when the quickening word of God, sharper than any two-edged sword, pierces them, then they first feel the power of that death spiritually, the terror of that awful curse, which they have all the time been lying under since the fall. Then, under the awful rebukes that fall upon them from Sinai, under the dreadful chastenings of the Almighty, their beauty consumes away like a moth (Psalm 39:2), and they find no soundness in their flesh (Psalm 38:7; Romans 7:18).

Here is the condition represented by Job as, covered with sore boils, after seven days and nights of silent grief, he opened his mouth and cursed his day. We might think there was an inconsistency here in the theory, since the previous state of the awakened sinner was that of guilt, while Job was before this perfect; but we must remember that it is the Church in her whole history of which we regard Job as the type, and not the individual, until he comes into manifestation as a member of that Church, which is not until he is quickened. We consistently now, therefore, behold him as representing the conscious sinner, in representing, as we shall hereafter show that he does, the condition of the Church under the legal dispensation. Let us remember, however, that we did not cease to be sinners as natural men, our corrupt natures did not cease to be corrupt when we obtained a hope in Christ; neither did we then cease to feel self-abhorrence. What follower of Christ has been without great and often inexpressible grief on account of sin since the time when he first found peace in believing? Trouble of that kind, more or less

heavy, must be with us till we put off this earthly tabernacle. Our Saviour declares it to be an essential mark of his disciples that they hate their own lives. (See Luke 14:26.)

We have never been able to express our pain and grief under the burden of sin, when experiencing the power of the curse, except by sighs and “groanings which cannot be uttered.” But Job, to represent the Church, was enabled to give it full expression. We sometimes have great heaviness of heart and deep gloom of mind; if called upon to picture in language the feeling that we so name, could we do it? We can say that we mourn or that we have sorrow, but can we give that mourning, or sorrow, or heaviness itself as appropriate language by which it shall be uttered, and tell definitely the desires of the burdened soul?

You who now walk wearily, with your head bowed as a bulrush and a look of gloom upon your face, the Scriptures alone can suit words of expression to your trouble. You may not as yet even know its cause. It is not loss of friends or worldly misfortune, nor are you conscious of having committed any crime in act, yet there is a sense as of guilt and condemnation so great that sometimes the greatest criminal, whose crime you abhor and never had a temptation to commit, appears more deserving than you. But only by a groan can you come near any adequate expression of your feeling or picture of your desires. You only know that heavy oppression is upon you and deep, leaden gloom around you. You look over your life and it is dark, dark. You try all you have ever thought or done, and all is dark, dark; nothing good; no light or cheer in the past or future or about your present.

It may not have occurred to you that the language of Job when he cursed his day would suit you well. Yet you have condemned your day, your life; have felt its less than worthlessness – its sinfulness and depravity; have hated and abhorred it; have acknowledged in your feelings the justice of God’s hatred, his curse pronounced upon it; and in all this have yourself cursed your day, the unholiness and darkness of which the light of truth has shown you. This darkness is not merely upon the present of your life, but it so reaches backward into the mist of obscurity that you have to say, “Behold, I was shapen in iniquity, and in sin did my mother conceive me (Psalm 51:5).”

Let that day be darkness; let not God regard it from above, neither let the light shine upon it. Let darkness and the shadow of death stain it; let a cloud dwell upon it; let the blackness of the day terrify it.

I understand Job in all this to have truly expressed the experience of the curse of God making his day darkness and terror, the self-abhorrence which a full sense of sin produces, and the extreme pain and bitterness of soul under it. Each one of the saints is not conscious of all this suffering, but some appear to have felt it most fully, so as to have made these utterances of pain and longing for the silence of death theirs; and considering Job as representing the full experience of the whole Church under the weight of its corruption in the Adamic head, giving full voice to the grief and terror which the sense of sin must produce in the whole body, we shall not find his words inappropriately strong.

Job is not alone among scriptural characters in cursing his day. Jeremiah gave similar utterance to the violence of his sorrow, saying, “Cursed be the day wherein I was born: let not the day wherein my mother bare me be blessed (Jeremiah 20:14-18).”

These are not the expressions of faith, as were Job’s words at the first, when as yet he had not sinned with his lips nor charged God foolishly, but of suffering occasioned by sin. Their character as obnoxious to God’s reproof will be considered hereafter, in connection with Elihu’s answer and the answer of the Lord out of the whirlwind. My object now is to show here the common experience of

God's people. If we are true followers of Christ, we have experienced that feeling concerning ourselves which our Saviour intended when he said, "Except a man hate his own life, he cannot be my disciple." In that sense we have hated our own life, and the feeling of hatred and extreme abhorrence, if fully expressed, would be in cursing. What we hate, we essentially curse.

While we may not have thought that our mind was ever in such a condition of violence and extremity of grief as is denoted by these words of cursing, how often have we followed Job in his longings for repose and quiet, and found a soothing influence falling upon our perturbed and weary spirits as we have repeated the pathetic words in which he describes the rest his soul desires! For now should I have lain still and been quiet. I should have slept: then should I have been at rest with kings and counselors of the earth who built desolate places for themselves. With what mournful interest the mind dwells upon the deep and abiding quiet which the imagination pictures as what might have been if he had not been born or as a hidden, untimely birth he had not been; as infants which never saw the light; the thought of such profound repose seems so sweet in contrast with the present trouble! How searchingly it looks abroad through the mysterious waste of darkness for the place of deepest silence and peace, lingering with longing desire upon particular descriptions of that uninterrupted solitude which it imagines others to have found in desolate places, and the comforts that belong to it, as though even the thought had power to soothe its weary aching! This is that time in the experience of the Christian referred to by Elihu (chapter 33), when the soul draweth near to the grave, and we look upon its quiet repose as most desirable. There the wicked cease from trembling, and there the weary be at rest. There the prisoners rest together; they hear not the voice of the oppressor. The small and great are there, and the servant is free from his master. The ills of life all quieted in the common place of rest. Can we tell why these words so often come with the effect of a hushing lullaby to our hearts? The Psalmist bears testimony that this is common to the saints – that it is Christian experience. When, under the terrors of death, fearfulness and trembling were come upon him, and horror had overwhelmed him, he exclaimed, "Oh that I had wings like a dove! For then would I fly away and be at rest. Lo, then would I wander far off and remain in the wilderness. Selah. I would hasten my escape from the windy storm and tempest (Psalm 56:6-8)."

Job returns from his momentary rest in the thought of oblivion to a renewed consciousness of his present miserable condition: Wherefore is light given to him that is in misery, and life unto the bitter in soul which long for death, but it cometh not, and dig for it more than for hid treasures; which rejoice exceedingly and are glad when they can find the grave? So our minds have often entertained, if we have not expressed, the question why there should have been sorrow and misery at all; thus opposing our short-sighted weakness to the ordaining wisdom of God, for which in a peculiar manner his rebukes are given out of the whirlwind.

Self-destruction does not suggest to the mind of Job the peace he desires. Though there is a longing of spirit for that mysterious change that might remove him from himself, and so ease him of his terrible burden, yet it must be at the hand of God.

Why is light given to a man whose way is hid and whom God hath hedged in? Jeremiah also in his Lamentations says, "He hath hedged me about that I cannot get out; he hath made my chain heavy (Lamentations 3:7)."

While we are left with some degree of confidence in ourselves and a complacent feeling in regard to our own faithfulness and firmness of purpose, our way appears comparatively clear. So Peter thought his way clear when he said, "Though all men forsake thee, yet will not I." But when and whenever God

makes us fully to know and feel our entire lack of any spiritual goodness or strength, then our way is hid – we are hedged in – have no power to do what we see to be holy – see no way to escape from our miserable weakness and vileness; desiring to do good, “but how to perform that which is good,” we have to say with Paul, we “find not;” miserably obliged to see with self-abasement that “with the flesh we serve the law of sin (Romans 7:18,25).”

Whose way God hath hedged in. What a forcible expression, and how well suited to our case! But there are times when we feel more especially its strong significance. It is only under the present experience of pain that we can really know what pain is, and appreciate an adequate description of it or its full expression. When the agony is past we may think the exclamations it has forced from us too violent, though while it was upon us our words seemed weak and we felt that our stroke was heavier than our groaning. Hedged in. We walk about as usual, talk with the friends we meet, eat and drink and attend to business, so that outwardly we appear as before. Yet all the time we are intent upon our trouble; our thoughts are wandering back and forth like birds in a cage or prisoners in a cell, searching for some place to escape, and going over and over again the same ground even when hope has gone. “He hath enclosed our way with hewn stone (Lamentations 3:9).” There is nothing for us but to die. By that way only can we get away from this “bondage of corruption,” this wearing, wearying consciousness of sinfulness and depravity. Here is what we feel under the full experience of the suffering which the malady of sin produces. By showing us our worthlessness and making us feel it, God hedges us in and hides our way.

Did we fully realize our condition all the time, how could we endure it? We are graciously permitted to forget it in the contemplation of the hope of deliverance when Christ in glorious beauty is presented to our faith as the Way, through whom we are removed by faith from the prison and “set in a broad place.”

How much of our time also is our condition forgotten or but faintly realized through the engrossment of worldly cares or the deceitfulness of the heart! I am speaking to the daily experience of the Christian. You have seasons of quiet when your way runs along evenly. Again, you have great and exulting joy in contemplating the salvation of God. There are other times when a sense of the depravity of your heart and your utter destitution of all holiness in yourself so weighs upon you that your life becomes very heavy to you, and you “groan, being burdened (II Corinthians 5:4).”

But recall your state of mind in your most favored hours, when for days and months you have walked comfortably in the Christian journey with no special weight upon you. Can you not remember from time to time a consciousness that your transgressions, your ingratitude, your worldly-mindedness – in a word, your sinfulness of nature – deserved heavy chastisement at the hand of God, and that it must be because of wonderful long-suffering on his part that it was withheld? And through your days of peace have you not feared that what you deserved would come? If it were only to feel the full weight and sense of your corruption, that would be terrible. But should God’s tender forbearance cease, and the just deserts of your wanderings be visited upon you, how could you bear it? I do not speak of eternal death. It is not that you feared, but what may be received in this state. Sometimes you have tried to picture to yourself the punishments that would be adequate, but before you could satisfy even your own faint view of justice the afflictions you decreed overwhelmed you. How merciful is our God, and how wonderful the salvation wrought by him that we are so tenderly spared!

But Job, to fully represent the Church, could not be spared; and through what we have experienced, we can understand him when he says, For the thing which I greatly feared is come upon me, and that which I was afraid of is come unto me. How this expression opens to our view his afflicted heart and

reveals the terrors that have made him sit silent for seven days and nights! While he only feared he could go tremblingly, hopefully forward; but now, at once, it is all upon him – all he could possibly fear, and he stands still in amazement of grief. It is not the literal loss of property, or children, or health that can account for this heaviness. It is not the physical pain that makes him “cry out of trouble.” These, literally, he could not have feared, for they came unexpectedly upon him. He does not refer to them, nor would all that kind of affliction be a sufficient ground for his peculiar language. But, viewed in his typical character, his utterances are suitable to his condition, which well represents our afflicted state under the burden of corruption. And this expression will suit the case of any of the saints under the like state of mind, however the circumstances may vary. A more definite description cannot be given. Each heart knows its own bitterness. It is not necessary that there should be outward misfortune or trouble in order for these words to be ours. When our thoughts seem endued with a more than human power of scrutiny, and we have tried every act and motive of our lives by the light of holiness, and find all without good, we know then a deep but inexpressible meaning in the words, That which I greatly feared is come unto me. We will notice here that as a type it is not necessary that he should have done evil formerly in order to present the case of those who are under a sense of condemnation for sin, whether they have been guilty of outbreaking sins or not. It is his present condition, physically, that typifies their state, and his words we can understand as suited to their case more particularly than to his own temporal circumstances.

If he had been carelessly at rest, idly content with his state, sleeping the sluggard’s sleep, taking his ease and filling his heart with the pleasures of this life, it would not have been so surprising that terror should overtake him as a thief and want come upon him as an armed man. But this was not the case. He was watchful, walking softly before the Lord, feeling that he had no safety in himself. He was careful, offering up sacrifices and prayer; not quieting himself, as the foolish man does in his own way, but seeking the way of God.

I was not in safety, neither had I rest, neither was I quiet; yet trouble came.

## Chapter III.

### ANSWER OF ELIPHAZ.

#### *Job 4.*

Job has paused in his outburst of grief. His three friends have seen his outward trouble, and that “his grief was very great;” and they have manifested their natural sympathy by sitting silently with him for seven days and nights. They have also listened while he complained in the bitterness of his soul. But here is something they do not seem to understand. They can see no reason for the peculiar manner of his speech; there is even something offensive to them in its tone.

We shall see that these three friends represent the religion of the world; the understanding of the natural mind concerning God; its ignorance of man’s real state as a depraved being, and of the manner and effect of God’s dealings with him. They had come every one from his own place, as worldly teachers do, and not from the place where Christ prepares his messengers. Eliphaz was the name of one of the sons of Esau. (See Genesis 36:2.) The name signifies The endeavor of God, and is well adapted to one who teaches that the work of salvation is an endeavor on the part of God, which may or may not be accomplished, according as the sinner gives or withholds his help.

Concerning Bildad the Shuhite and Zophar the Naamathite we have no account elsewhere in the Scriptures, except that Shuah was the name of one of Abraham’s sons by Keturah, from whom Bildad may have sprung. They were all children of the flesh and not of promise. The name of Bildad, signifying old friendship, old motion, and that of Zophar, signifying rising early, or crown, are also suited to their character as teachers of that religion that holds fast the old friendship of the world and demands motion or labor from those who are without strength, as a ground of acceptance with God, calling upon its votaries to “rise early” to their work – to “be up and doing.” But it will be by their words we shall judge them and see their character defined.

Eliphaz takes the lead, and at once attacks the suffering man he professes to have come to comfort: If we assay to commune with thee, wilt thou be grieved? But who can withhold himself from speaking? Not the really zealous Pharisee, of course, when even by sighs and groans the poor, heavy-laden sinner is forced to acknowledge the truth concerning man’s depravity.

Behold, thou hast instructed many, and thou hast strengthened the weak hands. Thy words have upholden him that was falling, and thou hast strengthened the feeble knees. But now it is come upon thee, and thou faintest; it toucheth thee, and thou art troubled.

He has only seen the outward appearance of Job’s trouble, his worldly losses and personal affliction, and this is all he understands of his case; and, really, it seems as though one who has encouraged and sustained others under like afflictions ought to bear them with more fortitude when they come upon himself. And why does he not? The natural observer inquires. He does not lack courage, for he has given evidence of that. Why, then, is he now so overwhelmed? A wounded and stinging conscience seems to suggest itself to Eliphaz as the only explanation. Ignorant of the burden imposed by a consciousness of depravity upon the quickened soul, he can only think of some acts of injustice and wickedness committed by Job while falsely professing to fear and serve God, as the cause of his present mental distress. He therefore applies himself where he imagines the evil to be, and, like all

worldly teachers, “Physicians of no value,” first attacks Job’s religion, against which he thinks he finds a conclusive argument in his present pitiable condition, and then presents his own system as a remedy for all his maladies.

We shall have occasion frequently to notice the similarity of the pretended friends, but really enemies, of David to these friends of Job. As David describes them, we see them to be of the same character, and their false speeches the same. And we shall hereafter notice that the same terms are used by both of these saints in speaking of these persecutors. For the present, we will allude to what is said in the forty-first Psalm. David acknowledges, as Job does, that he has sinned, but declares, as Job continually does, that his enemy misjudges and speaks evil of him. “And if he come to see me he speaketh vanity. His heart gathered iniquity to itself; when he goeth abroad he telleth it.” “An evil disease, say they, cleaveth fast unto him; and now that he lieth he shall rise up no more (Psalm 41:6,8).”

Is not this thy fear, thy confidence, thy hope and the uprightness of thy ways? As though he had said, You have professed to fear God, to confide and hope in him, while you have been doing nothing to atone for your sins, but rather have indulged secretly in acts of iniquity; and now the hypocrisy and fallacy of your fear and hope, and the lack of uprightness in your ways, are all made clear by this affliction, which is but a just judgment of God upon you for your crimes. Remember, I pray thee, who ever perished, being innocent? Or where were the righteous cut off? Even as I have seen, they that plough iniquity and sow wickedness reap the same. Here, as we shall see, is the whole essence of their objections against Job, hereafter reiterated and enlarged upon. We shall have occasion to notice more particularly in another place wherein the falsity of these remarks consists as applied to Job naturally.

Eliphaz is evidently intent upon causing Job to confess his hypocrisy, discard his own former doctrine and become a convert to his. So, as is usual in such efforts, he tells of a scaring vision. He would give supernatural weight and authority to what he is going to say by attributing his knowledge of it to the mysterious teachings of a spirit. Now all the saints are taught of the Spirit of God, “as it is written, And they shall all be taught of God;” and John says, “The anointing ye have received teacheth you of all things (I John 2:27).” And this anointing is the Spirit of the Lord. But this Spirit does not come in some terrifying form to their natural vision, nor is the communication to the natural mind. The teachings of this Spirit will correspond in all the saints, and will be attested by the Scriptures. We are therefore commanded to try the spirits, because “many false spirits are gone out into the world;” and we will endeavor to obey by trying Eliphaz’s spirit, or the spirit he professed to have heard.

Now a thing was secretly brought to me, and mine ear received a little thereof In thoughts from the visions of the night, when deep sleep falleth upon men, fear came upon me and trembling, which made all my bones to shake. Then a spirit passed before my face; the hair of my flesh stood up; it stood still, but I could not discern the form thereof; an image was before mine eyes, there was silence and I heard a voice saying. Surely Job will not have the temerity to dispute or disregard anything that has been communicated in so startling, mysterious and impressive a manner. But what is it that is thus spoken? Shall mortal man be more just than God? Shall a man be more pure than his Maker? Truly a strange question to be asked with such force and terror of circumstance. If we really regarded it as true that such a question was asked of Eliphaz in such a manner, we should look upon it as intended to rebuke his own self-exaltation, and not to be carried by him as a reproof to Job. But this was merely the manner chosen by Eliphaz and characteristic of his class, in which to falsely charge Job with having regarded himself as purer and more just than God; and to give his false charges, of which false religion is always full against the saints, an air of great solemnity. But this is not all the spirit said: Behold, he

put no trust in his servants, and his angels he charged with folly. Here we learn clearly that this was a “lying spirit,” for this is not the truth. We have the assurance of God that these men did not speak of him the thing that is right; and the Scriptures show us the error of this assertion of Eliphaz. God does put trust in his servants, not as men, but as his servants, qualified by his own Spirit to do his will: “Behold my servant whom I uphold; mine elect in whom my soul delighteth: I have put my Spirit upon him (Isaiah 42:1).” God thus prepares his servant for his service and upholds him in it, and in trusting him he trusts his own power; for in Christ only, who is alluded to in the above Scripture, are any of the servants of God. But where is the account of his having charged his angels with folly? “Are they not all ministering spirits sent forth to minister to them that shall be heirs of salvation (Hebrews 1:14)?” It cannot be said that Eliphaz only intended those who are popularly supposed to have fallen from a holy state in heaven, for the very point and force of this assertion, that God charges them with folly, is in supposing them still to retain all their original excellence.

Here is the reason of this remark of Eliphaz: He and his friends, hearing Job declaring the doctrine of man’s inability, and knowing that he pretends to hope in God, conclude he must have been looking for heavenly favor on the ground of some native excellence and purity in himself which entitles him to it. For, since he does not believe in works as a ground of salvation, and they know nothing of the way of salvation by grace through faith in a Mediator, this is all the conclusion they can come to. Here is part of the great opposition of the world to the Church and doctrine of God. Now he is afflicted in their sight, and their time is come to show him how vain his former hope and confidence are. For this purpose they declare that even God’s servants and angels are worthy of nothing – making the declaration in such form as makes it false in their mouth; and if there is nothing deserving in them, how much less in them that dwell in houses of clay, whose foundation is in the dust, which are crushed before the moth! So he would impress upon Job the necessity of changing his system of doctrine for that which he will hereafter present, and work for what he desires, making himself worthy of it by his labor.

Here we observe how impossible it is for one to speak correctly concerning God by the exercise merely of natural wisdom. In the wisdom of God the world by wisdom knows not God. (See I Corinthians 1:21.) When the false teacher deems it necessary to speak of God’s greatness and power in order to sustain his cause, or to give an appearance of truth to his objections against the people who hold the truth, his expressions bear evidence of his ignorance and hypocrisy, and do not convey the truth of God’s character, as the poor, helpless sinner has learned it and as the Scriptures teach it.

What Eliphaz says here about the wicked is clearly to bear against Job, whom he now looks upon as a good example of God’s dealings with them. He shows no correct view of man’s depravity and of God’s just abhorrence of sin; nor shall we find in all that he or his friends have said an intimation that they know anything of the way of salvation through a Mediator. All the wickedness they speak of is such as men see in outward acts, and in charging such upon Job they charge falsely.

## **Job 5.**

Call now, if there be any that will answer thee; and to which of the saints wilt thou turn? Job can call no witness that Eliphaz would receive to sustain by his testimony his own doctrine and refute the position of Eliphaz. The saints that have gone home cannot be recalled, and their testimony, when left on record as it is in the Scriptures, is perverted and denied by those whom Eliphaz and his friends represent; and the living witnesses are rejected by them, not acknowledged to be saints. Those who have died in affliction, in poverty and all manner of distress, and whose manner of death would therefore contradict

all this false theory, are regarded as having died as the foolish and silly by the just judgment of God; and so by the assertion that wrath killeth the foolish man, and envy slayeth the silly one, they are put aside as witnesses. There is no sign to be given, our Saviour said, but the sign of the prophet Jonas. Only by experience can the truth be known. Those who are of God will hear Moses and the prophets; and if they hear not them, “neither will they be persuaded though one rose from the dead (Luke 16:31).”

How covertly he continues his insinuations against the poor, afflicted man he speaks to, persecuting and speaking to the grief of him whom God has smitten! (See Psalm 69:26.) I have seen the foolish – that is, Job – taking root; but suddenly I cursed his habitation – saw it as an object to be despised and abhorred, because God’s wrath had fallen upon it. His children are far from safety, and they are crushed in the gate, neither is there any to deliver them – referring to his loss of children as an evidence of his iniquity.

Now, although affliction cometh not forth of the dust, neither doth trouble spring out of the ground, but are to be regarded as judgments of God, accurately meted out and apportioned to our amount of wickedness, so that (if the doctrine of Eliphaz were true) we might know how much wickedness a man had committed by the amount of suffering God inflicts upon him; yet, for the consolation of Job, as showing that he is not alone altogether, only in regard to the degree of his wickedness, he will acknowledge that man is born unto trouble, as the sparks fly upward. He is no doubt free to include himself in this general condition of man, for it will but add to his merit that he was born unto trouble, since by his wise and righteous course of conduct he has avoided it, while upon the foolish and unworthy, such as Job, its full weight falls.

I would seek unto God, and unto God would I commit my cause. Here is his system and the remedy he proposes. It sounds well to the natural ear, and has a show of likeness to some of the words addressed by the Lord to his people, – by our Saviour to his disciples. But there is false doctrine here, as well as a false charge implied against the people of God, that they are not seeking unto him. By this advice he asserts that the work begins with man, and either that the knowledge of God, as a Saviour, is not by revelation, or that those to whom he is so revealed are not necessarily saved; all of which is contrary to the truth. His speaking so to Job is as though one in the darkness of midnight, who is looking at a rush light which he thinks the sun, should call to one who stands in midday, with the sun hidden by a cloud (if we may imagine two, in such different conditions naturally, able to speak together), and advise him to seek the sun. As though Job had not his mind continually turned toward the Lord. But Eliphaz does not know that it is because the fear of God is in his heart that he is so troubled and perplexed and sorrowful on account of the unholiness of his nature. It is a worldly seeking unto God that he has proposed – a formal and legal method of attempting to conciliate him; which is seen in the remaining part of this chapter, where the worldly rewards of the worldly religion are described.

He proceeds to speak of the great things and unsearchable, marvelous things without number, which God does, who giveth rain upon the earth and sendeth waters upon the fields, to set up on high those that be low, and exalt the mourner to safety: tells how he disappoints the devices of the crafty, taking the wise in their own craftiness, and saving the poor from them; still keeping his speech pointed against Job, by whom in his abased condition he would represent the wise and rich and crafty who have been disappointed in their proud and oppressive schemes. There is a sound as of truthful teaching here when we read without careful attention. But the very style shows that temporal things are spoken of – that the poor in worldly things, who will do as the worldly teacher advises, will be enriched literally by the

blessings of God upon his fields. Is it true? And is it true that the crafty fail literally in their wicked designs? This will be brought to our notice again for more particular mention.

The expression, “He taketh the wise in their own craftiness,” is quoted by the Apostle Paul in I Corinthians 3:19. This would be sufficient evidence that Eliphaz was inspired to speak of God the thing that was right, did we not have the direct declaration of God to the contrary, as well as continual scriptural proofs that he did not speak the true doctrine of God. As Paul does not define the place where it is written, we may suppose that he has quoted from some other inspired record not preserved to us, as Jude evidently did in telling what Enoch prophesied (Jude 14); or that he has taken this spiritual truth from some other Scripture, slightly varying the form. The Apostle applies it spiritually in opposition to the very doctrine Eliphaz and his friends teach. Eliphaz may have taken it from the same inspired record that Paul did, as both the Pharisees and the disciples referred to the same Scriptures and pretended to rely upon the truth of God’s written word; but he, like the Pharisees, wrested the word, handled it deceitfully, and, instead of seeing the true spiritual doctrine in it, falsely applied it to temporal things, to the affliction of the sorrowing servant of God.

Behold, happy is the man whom God correcteth; therefore despise not thou the chastening of the Almighty. For he maketh sore and bindeth up; he woundeth and his hands make whole.

A chastening by temporal afflictions, such as he can see, has happened to Job’s possessions and person, which, if Job does not despise it, will be a blessing, by bringing down his pride, making him adopt their doctrine of works; and then he is promised that God will bind up and make whole his afflicting wounds, by giving back health and property.

They have undoubtedly envied him, and represent the envy of the enemies of the truth against the people of God, not for worldly exaltation, but for the spiritual exaltation given them in God’s word and counsel, and the spiritual peace and prosperity often enjoyed by them. This envy the Psalmist often speaks of, and that which calls it forth is represented by the former condition of Job; for he was the greatest of all the men of the East.

God will truly protect his people who put their trust in him, so that not one hair of their head shall fall to the ground, and he will grant them peace and prosperity. The ninety-first Psalm contains a description of the blessings of protection and prosperity that shall rest upon him who dwells in the secret place of the Most High. But all this is spiritual, and not concerning worldly things, as Eliphaz teaches. Although we know that he marks all our way, so that nothing can befall us without his will, and we may therefore rest in him, yet we are not warranted in looking for an exemption from temporal dangers and misfortunes and from the devices of worldly enemies, nor for worldly prosperity religiously, such as the religion of the world enjoys. Our Saviour told his disciples that in the world they should have tribulation, and they have found it true. Particular mention is made of the various afflictions of the saints, “of whom the world was not worthy,” by the apostle (Hebrews 3:36-38), and those, too, especially in the old times, that included the age of Job’s affliction literally. But with all these distresses temporally, they were spiritually abiding “under the shadow of the Almighty,” and enjoying his wise and merciful care. Of this spiritual prosperity in worldly discomfort, however, these vain teachers knew and know nothing. Eliphaz would have talked the same to Lazarus at the rich man’s gate, to Stephen in the midst of his enemies, to Peter or Paul in prison, as he did to Job; would have assured them that God was but punishing them for their transgressions; would have advised them with self-complacent zeal to seek unto God; and would have presented for their emulation the comfortable and prosperous state of the good man.

He shall deliver thee in six troubles: yea, in seven there shall no evil touch thee. This, like many other passages we have noticed and shall yet notice in the speeches of these men, has passed into very common use even among Christians being often quoted by them as bearing the authority of inspired Scripture. But this ought not to be. It certainly is not right to receive and use as the word of God, or as truth, that upon which he has put the express seal of his disapproval, as he has upon the sayings of these men. Why should this last saying of Eliphaz ever have been thought comforting? If the saints were only to expect deliverance from seven troubles, they would be sadly off indeed, for in any one day all the extent of the promise would be exhausted. The promise of God is more like himself than this. He gives in no limited measure. He has engaged to deliver them from all their troubles, and never leave nor forsake them; for his faithfulness reacheth unto the clouds and his mercy endureth forever.

Having been delivered in six troubles and kept from the touch of evil in seven; having been redeemed from death in famine and from the power of the sword in war; having been hid from the scourge of the tongue and kept from fear at the coming of destruction; having been in league and at peace with the stones and beasts of the field; having seen his seed great and his off-spring as the grass of the earth – to which, however, the wicked are compared, who “spring as the grass (Psalm 92:7)” – this good man of Eliphaz’s imagination has a corresponding close, appropriately represented by a bountiful autumnal figure: Thou shalt come to thy grave in a full age, like as a shock of corn cometh in his season. Evidently all the blessings of his religion end at the grave. No word of suffering here or of the comforts of a bright prospect beyond enters into any of his descriptions of religious prosperity. What will he do with the case of those who do not come to the grave in a full age and in the enjoyment of temporal abundance? He does not know of the New Earth, or spiritual kingdom, where “the child shall die a hundred years old;” where the beggar here is rich abundantly in faith, and where the sick and the mourning souls of this world are in spiritual health and unspeakable joy.

Lo this, we have searched it, so it is; hear it and know thou it for thy good. So, after all, they have not brought us instruction which they have received of the Lord as his messengers, but which they have themselves searched out. This is a distinguishing and certain mark of the worldly teacher. The messengers or ministers sent of God are abundantly furnished by his word “unto every good work.” He bids them preach the word he gives them, and they can add nothing to it by their own study. But those of whom these three are a type prepare themselves, every one in his own place, for the work by studying and searching out; and they boast of the labor by which they have acquired the knowledge they are now prepared to teach, not knowing, in the blindness of their vanity, that they thus prove to the people of God that they are not his servants, and are entitled to no credit.

## Chapter IV.

### SECOND ANSWER OF JOB.

#### *Job 6.*

But Job answered and said, Oh that my grief were thoroughly weighed, and my calamity laid in the balances together!

Ever since the fall, sorrow has been talked about, griefs have been told, afflictions recounted, and bitter complaints forced from men because of pain. But who has ever been able to weigh his grief or tell the measure of it? It cannot be taken up and examined, and the extent and burden of it described. Under affliction one sinks down weak and faint, while another closes the pain away from human observation and goes about his accustomed work; but we cannot compare their suffering, strictly estimate the amount each bears, and say which is the heavier burden.

What a strange, unaccountable thing is sorrow! So common to all, so easily recognized when it comes, so hard to endure, and yet impossible to comprehend! The philosopher may sit down to the task of investigating its nature, take deep interest in the study, and rejoice to believe that he has explained all the mystery connected with it, when suddenly it comes like a swelling wave upon his own soul, and his philosophy is all swept away, his pen drops from his nerveless fingers, and the old, old groan – the language of grief common among all men in all ages – escapes him; while the words he has written appear to him as empty sounds, conveying hardly an intimation of what is now upon him.

Far greater than all other afflictions, deeper than all other sorrow, heavier than all other grief, is that which comes with the consciousness of our sins and depravity in the sight of a holy God. Loss of worldly possessions, friends and health, all these are nothing to this affliction. Temporal misfortunes and suffering are counted light in comparison with this heavy and painful burden that now weighs us down to the dust. What anguish is in that self-abhorrence we must feel while ever conscious of being ourself the very corrupt thing we loathe! What sorrow in feeling that we are daily offending against the holiness of that God we have come to adore, and the sense of whose displeasure is now our greatest oppression! No words can express it. Oh could we but be pure in his sight! Could the stains upon us but be washed away! But we are all one stain in his sight – no soundness or purity in us. How we sink under the oppression while our heart bursts with its fullness of grief, and becomes weak and tender as we think of that purity we so long for, but which, alas! can never be ours. Is it a wonder that the poor heart leaps for joy and bursts forth in glad and triumphant songs of praise when the wonderful and blessed way of salvation is made known to us, and that holiness from which we had thought ourselves for ever debarred becomes ours through a glorious Redeemer, “who was made sin for us, that we might be made the righteousness of God in him (II Corinthians 5:21)?” But this is the joy of hope. “We wait for the hope of righteousness by faith (Galatians 5:5).” We are yet left with “the body of this death” and all its heaviness, waiting for deliverance, and comforted during our sojourn here by that blessed and sure hope. When we contemplate the glory to which it points us with steadfast certainty, the cause of sorrow is gone, forgotten; but when we look upon ourselves, it returns with full force. Through death only shall full deliverance come; and it is not strange, therefore, that when heavily burdened and dark, death should appear desirable to us.

Job has tried to speak his grief, but in vain, as it appears to him now, for they who heard have not understood it. He is despised as one who lacks strength and who complains beyond reason. But he knows his calamity is real, and expresses the wish that it might be weighed. For now it would be heavier than the sand of the sea: therefore my words are swallowed up. For the arrows of the Almighty are within me, the poison whereof drinketh up my spirit: the terrors of God do set themselves in array against me.

The mere temporal troubles, it is true, would not seem to find expression in such language, but the state of afflicted Zion, which he typifies, does. The Lord, and not Satan, is recognized as the one from whom the affliction comes. His arrows have brought down the spirit of men, and they are afraid. The friends do not understand this, but he assures them there is adequate cause for his complaint. Doth the wild ass bray when he hath grass, or loweth the ox over his fodder? Would he make such complaint if such comforts as they profess to offer were really within his reach? It is the most unsavory and tasteless food that he now has. The things that my soul refused to touch are as my sorrowful meat. While in health and comfort the thought of death was distasteful and distress was not dwelt upon. But especially the thought of evil and depravity was obnoxious to the soul. But here we find our being full of it, and it stares upon us so that we cannot put it out of our sight. The words of lamentation we had no use for before are now a sorrowful relief, and there is a mournful comfort in the thought of death, so that he earnestly desires that God would destroy him. This is the voice or request of extreme pain, and not of faith, but its reproof cannot come from the world, whose wisdom has no understanding of the case. "My tears have been my meat day and night," the Psalmist says; and such was Job's sorrowful meat. Let him not spare, for I have not concealed the words of the Holy One. The word of God has entered his soul, and has made him feel all his vileness and nothingness before God; and he has not concealed that word, but has fully and plainly shown all the grief, the longings, the anxious questionings, the struggles of soul that it produces – not hiding the truth concerning his depravity, and professing himself able, as his friends would have him, to make himself more acceptable to God, nor keeping back his self-abhorrence from the ears of others, as worldly pride would prompt. To fully represent as a type the case of God's people in all the extreme suffering under the law and its threatenings, he was given the inclination and the power to open his troubled, worn and grieving heart fully to view through these complaining words, though thus exposed, as are all of the same afflicted family, to the scorn of those who know nothing of the power of God's word or of the suffering of the sin sick soul.

What is my strength that I should hope, and what is mine end that I should prolong my life? Have I strength in which I can hope to free myself from this bondage of corruption while I remain here? We have been taught that our strength is weakness, and we can have no confidence in the flesh. And what earthly end or aim is there that is worth living for? All earthly things are vanity. Moses, in the ninetieth Psalm, has shown what our strength is under the law. Though by reason of strength our days be fourscore years, "Yet is their strength labor and sorrow." They speak falsely who tell us we have strength to free ourself from trouble.

But it is the present affliction Job would be free from, and not any dread of the hereafter that weighs upon him. And here we discern that faith that still points the saint to a rest in the Saviour, even from the darkest night of grief and the most tempestuous ocean of adversity. We feel a confidence that our sorrow will end with death, and that "to depart and be with Christ is far better" for us. We have "seen an end of all perfection," and see no reason why we should remain, since we have not the strength of stones nor flesh of brass, that we can bear heavy strokes without feeling. So Job would say, Let me depart and be at rest, for the world is no longer a place of hope or desire or comfort. But in this we

show the unreconciliation of our poor fallen nature to God's will. We should be sure that for a wise purpose he causes us to remain and suffer, and should submit unquestioningly.

Is not my help in me? and is wisdom driven quite from me? Have not I wisdom enough left to see that my help is not in worldly wisdom or power, but that the word of God within me is my help? And that points through death.

Job now, for the first time, turns his attention directly to his friends, most plaintively noticing their deceitful dealing with him: To him that is afflicted pity should be showed from his friend; but he forsaketh the fear of the Almighty. My brethren have dealt deceitfully as a brook, and as the stream of brooks they pass away. Worldly friendship, and more especially the friendship of worldly religion, fails in all its proffers of comfort or help to the child of God in his affliction. But Job does not seem to be noticing his friends personally as three men, nor replying literally to the words of Eliphaz. He looks away beyond them, and sees the great throng of false teachers represented by them that gather against he company of the redeemed of all ages. The troops of Tema (south country or perfection) looked, the companies of Sheba (captivity, surrounding, conversion, repose, old age) waited for them.

They made an appointment together and waited for each other. They came in their own strength and perfection to display their power. They had heard of Job's affliction, and here was their opportunity. They would surround, captivate and convert him from his miserable state to a state of perfection, so that he might have worldly repose and come to his grave "as a shock of corn cometh in his season." But here is a different case from what they had expected. They cannot stop his complaints, and yet he evidently holds himself in some sense above them, and repels all their efforts to teach him their way. They were confounded because they had hoped; they came thither and were ashamed – ashamed because his case so confounds them and sets at naught all their arts, so that they have failed to accomplish what they had confidently hoped and promised themselves they were able to do. they cannot make a convert of Job. For now ye are nothing; ye see my casting-down and are afraid. Their power to comfort vanishes away like a shallow brook in the presence of his (to them) unaccountable sorrow; their very proffers of comfort and professions of sympathy are proven to be insincere, for they turn upon him in anger, and discover that enmity against him in his character as a child of God was secretly in their hearts.

But he challenges them to show that he has called for them or asked anything at their hands: Did I say, Bring unto me? or, Give a reward for me of your substance? or, Deliver me from the enemy's hand? or, Redeem me from the hand of the mighty? He has not required their help, neither have they proven themselves helpers. They have not shown him wherein he has erred. His errors are beyond their view. How forcible are right words! but what doth your arguing reprove? Do ye imagine to reprove words, and the speeches of one that is desperate, which are as wind? Can the cry of one that is hurt be reproved by such arguments as theirs? It is a truthful expression – no falsehood or craftiness in a cry from real pain – and yet it is as the wind, having no set object or aim, as one has in an argument he sets about making. It is the mere voice of pain, the echo of the stroke that has fallen. Job has been enabled to send forth his cries and groans of anguish interpreted; and all the longings and desires that are latent in them, not perceptible even to the sufferer, he has expressed in words. But still the words and speeches are as the wind. Yet his friends, without even attempting to soothe or heal the wound, reprove the cry, and by arguments and doctrine which only increase the bitterness. Instead of curing his malady, they, by their false, vain speeches, are only tending to bury him completely in despair. Yea, ye overwhelm the fatherless, and ye dig a pit for your friend. David complains of the same treacherous dealing in Psalm

57:6. But more especially is the cruel effect of this doctrine, that salvation depends upon works, declared by the Lord through the prophecy of Isaiah. There it is declared that by these errors they “make empty the soul of the hungry,” “cause the drink of the thirsty to fail,” and “destroy the poor with lying words, even when the needy speaketh right (Isaiah 32:6,7).” The doctrine taught to the poor and helpless, that the bread and water of life must be merited by labor and riches of righteousness of their own before it will be given to them, must cause them to despair in proportion as they believe it and feel their own destitution.

Now, therefore, be content; look upon me; for it is evident unto you if I lie.

They might see that he does not simulate pain. His condition corresponds with and proves his words of complaint to be from cause.

Return, I pray you; let it not be iniquity. Let them examine carefully both his case and all he has complained, and not pronounce it iniquity. Yea, return again; my righteousness is in it. This is a wonderful intimation of the way in which God brings us to a knowledge of the Lord as our righteousness, by bringing us first to know and groan under our own utter lack of righteousness. If we of ourselves were righteous and happy, what need of a Saviour? And, not being so, yet if we remained ignorant of our lost state, how could we know and appreciate the blessings of salvation? But in the painful sense of our own corruption we learn the glory of that righteousness which he has given to us. Kept humbly conscious of our own entire destitution by fiery trials, we learn to lean upon Him “who of God is made unto us righteousness.” Even while the flesh complains faith beholds the truth that God chastiseth every son whom he loveth, and that it is for their good – their righteousness is in it. He has grieved and complained, yet, he asks, Is there iniquity in my tongue? Has he denied the truth and so cursed God, as his wife and they would have him? He can still discern and still hate false doctrine. Cannot my taste discern perverse things?

### ***Job 7.***

Is there not an appointed time to man upon the earth? are not his days also like the days of a hireling?

We need not dwell upon the mournfully familiar expressions found in this chapter. How many have read here their own experience, and have repeated these plaintive words in seasons of great trial and weariness, soothed and comforted by the thought that another, and a saint, has, through his sorrow, given them language they could not have found to express their own! We are taught in the Scriptures that all the goodliness of man is as the flower of grass. Here are the thoughts and emotions of one who has fully experienced it. He has clearly realized the end of all earthly good, yet remains to suffer out his appointed day; for he acknowledges the truth that God has appointed our bounds that we cannot pass, and makes the affirmation of it questioningly, not as expressing doubt, but as something that none should deny. The days of a man during this appointed time are compared to the days of a hireling, who, wearied with labor, longs for night to come, and earnestly desires the shadow of evening to announce the end of his work, that he may rest from it. As the servant earnestly desireth the shadow, and as a hireling looketh for a reward of his work, so am I made to possess months of vanity, and wearisome nights are appointed unto me. Here again is appointed evidence that we are to regard him in his speech as a type. Had he been referring merely to what had literally taken place, he could hardly have spoken of months of vanity, for he seems to have been under this last affliction but seven days before he began speaking, and all that has been said, so far, could have occupied for a short time. His language is that of the people of God groaning under the captivity into which Satan brings them when God for a wise

purpose, delivers them into his power. The voice of the people of God while under a sense of this captivity is given by Moses: “For all our days are passed away in thy wrath: we spend our years as a tale that is told (Psalm 90:9).” None but those who have experienced this aching unrest, this disconsolate state of the soul from day to day can appreciate the power of the language used here: When I lie down I say, When shall I arise, and the night be gone? and I am full of tossings to and fro unto the dawning of the day. Literally, he is imagined still to be sitting in the ashes; but in the figure you are speaking, whoever you may be, who see your case described here; whose nights are full of sighs and restlessness, and to whom the light of morning brings no relief. How can he rest in comfort who has to say, My flesh is clothed with worms and clods of dust; my skin is broken and become loathsome? Yet this language describes what we feel to be our state, after we have the knowledge of the exceeding sinfulness of sin, and that which causes us to wander and toss restlessly, except when we have a sweet view of Christ and can rest in him. All the saints, with the Psalmist, can testify that Job does not allude merely to the condition of his flesh literally, but to his inward condition: “For my life is spent with grief, and my years with sighing my strength faileth because of mine iniquity, and my bones are consumed (Psalm 31:10).” “There is no soundness in my flesh because of thine anger; neither is there any rest in my bones because of my sin.” “My wounds stink and are corrupt because of my foolishness (Psalm 38:3,5).” Here is the same complaint, with the cause fully expressed by him who was the man after God’s own heart. When the children of God feel the same now, shall they despairingly say their hope is gone? We hear no such language of self-abasement from the friends of Job, nor from any of their class now.

My days are swifter than a weaver’s shuttle, and are spent without hope – without hope in this life, hope of getting better, worthier, sounder in flesh. And here is an appealing cry to God, humbly acknowledging his nothingness, yet deprecating God’s wrath: Oh remember that my life is wind; mine eye shall no more see good. The eye of him that hath seen me shall see me no more: thine eyes are upon me and I am not. The eye of the Lord turned upon us has brought to light all this hidden depravity, and caused our beauty to consume away; for he searches the hearts and tries the reins of men, and “all things are naked and open” to his eye. (See Hebrews 4:13.) We can endure the gaze of men, but not the eye of the Lord.

Should we continually feel in its fullness what the few following verses express, we should indeed be fit for no more temporal work. But we know something of the vain hope here referred to, of finding relief and comfort in sleep, when our vileness and sins, that the day with its cares seems sometimes to partially hide from our view, have been set with fearful distinctness before us through scaring dreams and terrifying visions: Am I a sea or a whale that thou settest a watch over me? When I say, My bed shall comfort me, my couch shall ease my complaint; then thou scarest me with dreams, and terrifiest me through visions; so that soul chooseth strangling and death rather than life. I loathe it; I would not live always; let me alone, for my days are vanity. This is a complaint to God, spoken in the anguish of his spirit and bitterness of his soul. The sea is wonderfully great in extent and depth, and might seem to claim the watch of the Almighty, whose power alone is sufficient to control its proud waves and restrain them in their wild desire to leap over their boundaries. The whale is the largest of animals, the strongest and perhaps the most fearful. We might think him to be worthy of God’s attention to set a watch over him. But what is man that thou shouldst magnify him? and that thou shouldst set thy heart upon him? and that thou shouldst visit him every morning, and try him every moment? So little and poor is man! so infinitely great is God! The Psalmist notices the disparity: “Lord, what is man, that thou takest knowledge of him? or the son of man, that thou visitest him?” Man is like to vanity: his days are as a shadow that, away. (See Psalm 144:3,4.) Why not, then take away a little of the sharpness

of his rebuke, and leave the poor soul that is as nothing in his sight to a little respite? So the blind anguish of grief inquires. And so David cries, "Remove thy stroke away from me!"

I have sinned; what shall I do unto thee, O thou Preserver of men? There is enough here to refute the idea that Job was not conscious of being a sinner, or that he had not a right view of God. His confession is full, and the name by which he designates God shows a knowledge of his mercy. But the burden of sorrow and bitterness of anguish have a voice in appealing questions. His friends would readily undertake to tell him what to do, but they are ignorant of both man and God. Job can only look for relief through the pardoning mercy of the great Preserver of men: And why dost thou not pardon my transgression and take away mine iniquity? for now should I sleep in the dust; and thou shalt seek me in the morning, but I shall not be.

## Chapter V.

### FIRST ANSWER OF BILDAD.

#### *Job 8.*

Then answered Bildad the Shuhite, and said, How long wilt thou speak these things? and how long shall the words of thy mouth be like a strong wind?

This man follows in the same track with Eliphaz, in whose school he has evidently learned his system of theology. He begins with the same accusing insinuations against Job, whose (to him) incomprehensible language of complaint, bitter cries of anguish and deprecatory appeals to God have stirred up his indignation. Hardly noticing, or but the more indignant if he does notice, the humble confessions of sin and self-adherence that are an element in all the sayings of Job, Bildad takes him as replying against God and against the justice of his dealings with him, and asks, Doth God pervert judgment, or doth the Almighty pervert justice? Most certainly not; but of that judgment in Job's case Bildad has no understanding. Acts of wrong and injustice on the part of Job and his children he regards as the cause of their death and of his other afflictions. If thy children have sinned against him, and he have cast them away for their transgression. According to this rule, we should judge those to be most sinful who die earliest, and those who are longest spared to be the best, and that to be afflicted by the death of children or relatives is sure evidence of guilt. In this sense, however, not only has Job said there was no cause, saying, He multiplieth my wounds without cause, but the Lord declares the same to Satan (Job 2:3). The almost insupportable burden of a corrupt nature, the pain of which is itself a righteous judgment of God, is unknown to the teacher of worldly doctrine.

Bildad now presents his own system, with an intimation of the wickedness it implies on the part of Job: If thou wouldst seek unto God betimes, and make thy supplication to the Almighty; if thou wert pure and upright, surely now he would awake for thee and make the habitation of thy righteousness prosperous. Here is a text well suited for those who proclaim a conditional system of salvation. They have no texts in the prophecies or writings of inspired men; but these three men have furnished them with abundance of declarations that salvation depends upon men's works, with as much talk about the greatness of God as is necessary to give an air of solemnity and humiliation to their teachings who know nothing in reality about the power of God. The inspired men have not only clearly described the false doctrine for our warning, but here we have the false teachers themselves speaking, as they do at the present time, with all boldness and vain confidence in the face of the servant of God, and raising up against him the ways of their destruction (30:12). They were not inspired, but the record of their words is given by inspiration, and is therefore a true record of false doctrine.

In these few words of Bildad their system is well set forth. The pupil in their school is first to become pure and upright, by which they mean to strictly observe the precepts of the law. This is what the strictly sincere legalist requires, the false doctrine of the requirement consisting in the assertion that it is possible for man to perform this, and therefore to be justified by the works of the law. But few now are as rigid in their demands of their converts, or in their own observance of the law, as the ancient Pharisees were. They allow far more latitude, and look to the general opinions and customs of men, rather than to the letter of the law, as the criterion of judgment. How little do any of them know about that perfect purity and uprightness which any must possess before they can find favor in the sight of

God! The first glimpse of that infinite holiness which the law of God demands kills any man to any hope in his own works and shows the necessity of a and “the blessedness of the man unto whom God imputeth righteousness without works (Romans 4:6).”

Now Job was pure and upright even in their limited view of the matter, but this outward uprightness was but a manifestation of holy desires in the heart, of which they do not speak. The work of God in the heart implants these holy desires, which are but in the faintest manner expressed even in the most perfect abstinence from evil and performance of good deeds that any man was ever able to attain to; so far beyond all human performance do these desires reach in their aspirations. To eschew evil and follow that which is right with all men is the endeavor of the Christian – not to entitle him to heaven, but because of the love of holiness within him. When he has done all, he feels himself but an unprofitable servant. Heaven is not earned in this way. As Elihu asked Job, so we may well ask, what favor we have done God by our good deeds: “If thou be righteous, what givest thou him (Chapter 35:7).” It is for our own comfort that we are commanded and exhorted to do that which is according to holiness. There is a reward, but it is in keeping the commandments, and not for keeping them. (See Psalm 19:2.) If we go into the sunshine, the sun is not benefited by our act so as to owe us a reward, but we are rewarded in doing it. And it is so when we walk in the light of truth.

But this legal or worldly system deals entirely in favors and rewards for goodness of action, appealing always to the corrupt, selfish principle of the heart, and ignorant of that desire for God’s honor and glory which he makes uppermost in the hearts of his people. Having, according to their system, become pure, Job may now make supplications to God, and Bildad feels very sure that he will be heard on account of his fair standing and be prospered. Though thy beginning was small, yet thy latter end shall greatly increase. A false view. If Christ is our righteousness, we shall never increase in righteousness from the first moment of his revelation to our souls, although we may grow in grace and in the knowledge of him. We shall always be as poor in ourselves and no richer in him, because infinitely rich from the first. God does not awake for us and answer our supplication, as this false teacher declares, because we are pure and upright in ourselves, for that no man is. He hears and answers us only because our supplications are presented in the name and through the merits of a glorious Mediator.

For inquire, I pray thee, of the former age, and prepare thyself to the search of their fathers (for we are but of yesterday, and know nothing, because our days upon earth are a shadow): shall not they teach thee and tell thee, and utter words out of their heart?

There seems to be here a clear intimation of the system of schools for theological study and instruction, like that of Gamaliel, where Saul of Tarsus studied, which have been brought to great perfection in the present age. His doctrine is to be learned and the truth of it to be proven by recourse to a former age, and a search of what the ancient fathers have left in tradition or on record. It is to them and to their words he commends Job’s attention, instead of to God’s word. He hastens, however, in parenthesis, to appear very humble as a reason for this advice, saying that we know nothing, because our days on earth are a shadow. He does not say this, however, from such an experience as has caused the saints to speak of the vanity of life, but to sustain his theory that it is necessary to study religion and receive aid from the accumulated knowledge of ages, since man’s life is too short to attain the knowledge by his own investigation that he ought to have. Concerning earthly science, both secular and religious, all this is true. But the religion of our Lord is different, and of that it is not true. This, with its divine doctrine, can never be added to or improved. It cannot be learned of a former age, nor can fathers teach it to their children according to the flesh. No man can give a knowledge of it to another, neither can any acquire

an understanding of it by the exercise of all his natural powers. It is known only by revelation. This revelation is not made to one man for another, but to each for himself, as the Apostle John teaches when he says, “I have not written these things unto you because ye know not the truth, but because ye know it.” “For the anointing ye have received teacheth you of all things (I John 2:20-27).” “It is written in the prophets, And they shall be all taught of God (John 6:45; Isaiah 54:13).”

It is not, therefore, the truth of God that is to be learned in the manner proposed by Bildad. I have no doubt these things are recorded of him and his friends that they may fully represent all false teachers, with all their humanly-devised plans to work for the Lord, including the schools where religion professes to be taught and where preachers are prepared, for which they have no authority in the Scriptures, no warrant in “the pattern shown in the Mount.” “They profess that they know God, but in their works they deny him (Titus 1:16).”

Can the rush grow up without mire? By this question, with which he would show the necessity of his theory, he exhibits the nature of their foundation, that it is earthly. The remaining portion of the chapter enforces his teaching after the manner of Eliphaz, by dwelling upon the sad state of the hypocrite and the prosperity of the good man. We will have occasion hereafter to notice the hypocrite which Bildad has in view, and to contrast him with the real hypocrite before God.

## Chapter VI.

### THIRD ANSWER OF JOB.

#### *Job 9.*

Then Job answered and said, I know it is so of a truth; but how should man be just with God?

The assertion that God will not cast away a perfect man, Job acknowledges to be true; but where can that perfect man be found among all the sinful sons of Adam? It is clear that Bildad only looks at the outward appearance, and concludes that a man is justified by his works, and that he who keeps the letter of the law, so far as it refers to words and acts, is a perfect man and acceptable in the sight of God. This is the feeling of the natural heart, full of vanity – that we must do something meritorious before we can expect to be happy hereafter; and while in an unquickened state we do not question our ability to do all that is necessary, and even more than is barely necessary, to secure salvation; by which superabundance of good works we expect to procure a higher place and more stars in our crown.

But when we have learned that man is a depraved being, from the corrupt fountain of whose heart nothing good can flow, while God requires perfect holiness, we shall then ask with Job, in anxious wonder, How shall man be just with God?

Here I will briefly suggest the doctrine concerning justification in answer to this question – the doctrine taught in the Bible, and written in the hearts of God’s people, and by the experimental knowledge of which they try and judge every speech and doctrine, whether it be true or false. And should any reader of this page have opposed heretofore the doctrine of salvation by sovereign, free and discriminating grace, may the Lord grant him now to see it as the only way, and as what he has indeed experienced, though not until now understood, and to rejoice in seeing all apparent contradictions vanish and beautiful harmony appear through all the Scriptures!

Since man has broken God’s holy law, justice demands that he should die. Being guilty, nothing that he himself can do can atone for the crime, and so he cannot be pronounced just. So the convicted soul correctly reasons. He cannot see how a clean thing can be brought out of an unclean, or a work so good and perfect as to satisfy a holy law come from a corrupt heart. He cannot see how an infinitely holy God can receive an unholy, polluted being into his presence and favor. In all this the poor sinner reasons in harmony with the teachings of the Scripture: “Be ye holy, for I am holy,” saith the Lord in I Peter 1:15. “Without holiness no man shall see the Lord (Hebrews 12:14).” “The Lord looked down from heaven upon the children of men, to see if there were any that did understand and seek God. They are all gone aside; they are altogether become filthy; there is none that doeth good – no, not one (Psalm 14:2,3).” “There is none righteous – no, not one (Romans 3:10).” “In my sight shall no flesh living be justified (Psalm 143:2).” “Knowing that a man is not justified by the works of the law (Galatians 2:16).”

Christ came to do for his people and to be unto them all that was needed. He saved them from their sins by bearing them himself. “His name shall be called Jesus, for he shall save his people from their sins (Matthew 1:21).” To them he gives spiritual life, and faith to see and know him as their Saviour; and by this faith they receive him as their righteousness, holiness, perfection. Those who profess to regard him as their Saviour, and yet hold that anything whatever on the part of the creature is necessary as a

condition of justification and spiritual life, are as far from receiving him as the Pharisees were, resting not upon him, but upon the performance of that condition. He is believed and trusted by his people as their complete Saviour, who has not only freed them from the law, but will bring them to rest in him and be eternally blessed.

With this blessed hope they remain in the body, and have still to mourn. Here is what appears so contradictory to the world, that they speak of being perfect as those must be who shall inherit glory, and yet complain of indwelling sin. But their perfection is in Christ, “who has given them the earnest of the Spirit,” and in themselves they see more and more of that need which makes him more precious to them.

As Job asks, How should man be just with God? his mind seems to be dwelling upon the essential and absolute sovereignty and power of the Almighty, and his supreme right to do what he will. He refers to the great things past finding out, yea, and wonders without number, which manifest his wisdom and mighty strength, who is yet invisible himself to mortal sight. Lo, he goeth by me and I see him not; he passeth on also, but I perceive him not. Now here is a being absolutely independent, inhabiting his own eternity and dwelling in unapproachable glory. Who can question him as to what he has chosen to do? Who can stay his hand, or say unto him, What doest thou? If God will not withdraw his anger, the proud helpers do stoop under him. How much less shall I answer him and choose out my words to reason with him? whom, though I were righteous, yet would I not answer, but I would make supplication to my Judge. By proud helpers may be understood mighty potentates of the earth, or those who boast proudly of their power to help God. Such a view does Job have of his nothingness as a man in the sight of God that even if he were conscious of no sin, if he were as Adam before the fall, righteous as a natural man, yet he feels that he could not boast himself before God, nor answer as an equal in any sense, but that it would still be his to make supplication. How very different his tone here from that of those who deem God indebted to them for their goodness and who question his right to punish men, saying that he would be unrighteous to take vengeance (Romans 3:5), since none can overthrow his counsel; and ask, “Why doth he yet find fault, for who hath resisted his will (Romans 9:19)?” This spirit of humble submission to the mighty God characterizes the child of grace, but it is not his carnal nature that feels it, and so we have trouble and warfare.

If I had called and he had answered me, yet would I not believe that he had hearkened unto my voice. For he breaketh me with a tempest, and multiplieth my wounds without cause. While this may seem like an extravagant expression of his own insignificance in the sight of God, there is a truth presented that all have experienced in regard to the way in which God answers our prayers. We pray for peace, comfort, protection: he answers, but it is often

“In such a way  
As almost drives us to despair;”

and we cannot realize that he has harkened to our voice, even while faith assures us that his severe dealing with us is really but to bring us to the enjoyment of what we have spiritually desired. He sends affliction and sorrow upon us, and brings us through that great tribulation which lies between us and the kingdom (Acts 14:22). He multiplieth my wounds without cause – without such cause as the world could see, and as his friends imagine. Why should the nation of Israel have been selected for great sufferings above other nations? Why should the people of God have so much greater affliction in this world than others? so that “if in this life only we have hope, we are of all men most miserable?” Men cannot answer these questions. God’s ways are not their ways.

If I justify myself, mine own mouth shall condemn me: if I say I am perfect, it shall also prove me perverse. To follow the counsel and doctrine of his friends would be to justify himself. But man cannot open his mouth without manifesting the depravity of his nature. How blind are those who profess to have attained a state of sanctification, as they call it, or perfection in the flesh! Their own mouth condemns them.

Though I were perfect – without any act of transgression, having thoroughly kept himself from any sinful thought even, as the saints ardently long to do – yet would I not know my soul; I would despise my life. This repeats what we have already shown, that his trouble lies deeper than can appear to the outward eye, or even to the natural understanding – at the very fountain of life.

In all this he has been presenting the true estimation of both God and man which we receive in our experience, and which contradicts what Bildad has said. Now he expressly contradicts his principal theory, which is asserted in all their speeches, that the perfect man receives a worldly protection and prosperity, while those who do wickedly are destroyed: This is one thing, therefore I said it. He destroyed the perfect and the wicked. If the scourge slay suddenly, he will laugh at the trial of the innocent. Is not this witnessed continually? Do the good and estimable escape the ravages of war and famine and pestilence? Are only those whom all men regard as wicked destroyed? Yet we hear a good deal about temporal afflictions as judgments for sin. Job has no doubt of God's predestinating decree, and so speaks of all the destruction as coming from him. Instead of the innocent being spared, as they have insisted in referring to the loss of his children, he declares that the earth is given into the hand of the wicked; he covereth the faces of the judges thereof; if not, where and who is he! And this seems from Scripture to be true.

Again he refers to his trouble and to the swift hopelessness of his days, and continues: If I say, I will forget my complaint, I will leave off my heaviness and comfort myself I am afraid of all my sorrows; I know that thou wilt not hold me innocent. How is it possible for one to leave off heaviness that is upon him? Those who do not feel any trouble may chide the afflicted for grieving, and advise him to be comforted; but is it not to be supposed that he would be comforted if he could? But suppose he should say he would forget and leave off complaining, would that remove the sorrow? He would speak falsely in pretending to comfort while all his sorrows stare him in the face. He knows, too, that in the greatness of his knowledge God has sent them, and not without reason, for they are but the just desert of so vile and feeble a worm as he. Though in the sight of men he is not guilty, having committed no wrongful act, yet in the sight of God he is not innocent. But the sense of this is, that God would not hold him innocent should he deny that he had sorrow.

Only he whose sorrows are on account of a deceitful and depraved nature, and who, vainly striving to think he is not so entirely corrupt, and hoping from day to day that he will be able to prove his self-distrust and his fears of being utterly vile, groundless, sees his sorrows continually revived, and starts up from troubled sleep and harassing dreams with all the lurking but all pervading evil of his heart and life looking boldly and with cold triumph upon him; only he can know the full force of this expression: I am afraid of all my sorrows.

If I be wicked, why then labor I in vain? A brief but conclusive answer to the doctrine of his three friends, for how can a wicked man do that which will make him innocent? Not that he acknowledges their charge of wickedness, but if it were true, then their counsel would be proved vain. If I wash myself with snow-water, and make my hands never so clean; yet shalt thou plunge me in the ditch, and mine own clothes shall abhor me. God does not suffer his people to become pure in their own esteem

by their good works, as the hypocrites can, washing themselves clean of all their iniquity, and presenting themselves boldly before him in their own righteousness, and saying, “Open unto us; have we not in thy name done many wonderful works?” His people shall be kept reminded of their depravity. If they become vainly confident and pleased with themselves, he will so leave them to manifest the corruptions of the heart, as he did Peter, that they shall more than ever abhor themselves.

For he is not a man, as I am, that I should answer him, and that we should come together to judgment. Neither is there any daysman betwixt us, that might lay his hand upon us both.

Here, in this chapter, is an experimental view of our state when afflicted for sin, while as yet our Daysman, or Mediator, has not appeared to reconcile us to God by taking away sin. Here is the state and condition of Zion under the law. The people of God saw the necessity of a Redeemer, and their faith laid hold on the promise of one, but he had not yet come. When he should come they would no longer be under the law, for “he is the end of the law.” When he appears to each of the saints, he brings freedom from the bondage of the law and of sin. Now, when the bondage of sin and of the law is upon us, though we may be assured by faith that our Redeemer lives, yet he is not experimentally with us. We cannot feel his reconciling presence laying his hand upon both God and us and making peace; and it is then that we are left to contemplate the infinite disparity between God and us of which Job has spoken throughout this chapter, and to have great distress. While this is especially to be regarded as the expression of the Church under the law, before our Daysman appeared, it thus also speaks the experience of all under that darkness which comes upon them when he withdraws his face.

Let him take his rod away from me, and let not his fear terrify me. Then would I speak, and not fear him; but it is not so with me.

Like Jeremiah, he is the man who has seen affliction by the rod of his wrath (Lamentations 3:1). Under this affliction how many questioning thoughts arise in the heart concerning God’s ways which we are afraid to even harbor, much less to utter, although we hear many who profess to be godly, boldly avowing the whole principle from which such thoughts arise as a part of their doctrine! Here is the difference, however; we acknowledge that he has done and was right in doing what we feebly wonder at while we suffer. They deny that he has done it, and say that he would not be just in doing so. What it is that is referred to will partially appear in the next chapter.

### **Job 10.**

My soul is weary of life; I will leave my complaint upon myself, I will speak in the bitterness of my soul.

Although the fear of God prevented him from speaking the feelings of his heart before, yet now increased suffering has seemed to force them into voice. The questioning thoughts concerning God’s ways toward men, who are the work of his hand, are in our finite and carnal minds, and Job gives them utterance that we shall see them. They are rebuked in God’s people by his voice out of the whirlwind, and subdued by the spirit of grace. I will say unto God, Do not condemn me; show me wherefore thou contendest with me. Do his friends regard this as a reply against God? as an implication of wrong and injustice on his part? They little know what a cry of bitterness is – a complaint of a soul weary of life. This is the appealing cry of a worm that is crushed. Helpless and broken, shall it not turn and writhe? Does he not in his very cry acknowledge his nothingness? Yea he makes his very insignificance in the sight of God the ground of his appeal.

He looks back to the beginning; he beholds God in awful and sublime majesty reigning in his unknown eternity, in unfathomable power and greatness; and while he acknowledges his right and wisdom and justice in whatever he has done, yet under this heavy weight of oppression which comes from that very view of God he wonders, and would know something of the hidden reasons that are with him; why he has made man as he has, and fashioned him together round about but to destroy him. For what inscrutable purpose does he contend thus with a feeble worm of the dust? Have any of the afflicted family represented by Job been without the consciousness of such wondering thoughts as these? It is not from a rebellious spirit against the truth of God that they arise – not, at least, such rebelliousness as the world could recognize, as Job’s friends charge him with. But they arise from our tried human weakness, and God alone, and not man, is able to reprove them.

Is it good unto thee that thou shouldst oppress, that thou shouldst despise the work of thy hands, and shine upon the counsel of the wicked? The Church, the people of God, are in a peculiar sense the work of his hands. He has formed them for himself (Isaiah 43:7,21); and it is they who feel oppression and suffer in the world, while the wicked “spring as the grass” and prosper in the world; and in his vain struggles, Job inquires what benefit our suffering can be to God, and wonders for the reason. So David questioned, and was envious at the foolish when he saw the prosperity of the wicked, while the people of God had waters of a full cup wrung out to them. But he afterward confessed his foolishness and ignorance, as Job also did, and despised himself for it. (See Psalm 73:3-22.)

Hast thou eyes of flesh, or seest thou as man seeth? Are thy days as the days of man? Are thy years as man’s days, that thou inquirest after mine iniquity and searchest after my sin? Through such bitter questionings, such struggles of soul, such trials of mind, are we finally brought up out of our wickedness and corruption to the full knowledge of the glory of God. And I will here repeat that while this is from the weakness and ignorance of our tried and suffering nature, and is part of that which we abhor, yet it is what only God’s people feel. Other saints, of whose experience we have an inspired record, have felt and expressed the same, and it is recognized in the sons of Jacob by the Lord in many of his reproofs to them through the prophets. Did Job conceal these thoughts and profess himself without them, then would he prove himself the hypocrite his friends have falsely pronounced him. They only say and do those things which they think will have an appearance of goodness and piety, and are therefore the real hypocrites. The convicted sinner speaks what he feels, and yet trusts in God whom he fears, and is not a hypocrite.

Thou knowest that I am not wicked. In the Scripture the word wicked seems to be mainly applied to those who hate God: “Then shall that wicked be revealed whom the Lord shall consume, etc. (II Thessalonians 2:8).” David prays in spirit for the destruction of the wicked, the enemies of God, and he often declares with the same confidence as Job that he is not wicked, while at the same time confessing his sins and vileness. Job continues his appeals and supplications: Remember, I beseech thee, that thou hast made me as the clay; and wilt thou bring me into dust again? Yet, while contemplating the wonder that God should have granted him life and favor, and by his visitations have preserved his spirit and still afflict him so sorely, he acknowledges, And these things hast thou hid in thine heart; I know that this is with thee. Faith still assures us that He who has all power and wisdom does nothing without an infinitely good and wise purpose, though that purpose be hidden from our view.

But oh what trials are these! How can we endure them? Thou renewest thy witnesses against me and increasest thine indignation upon me. As the Psalmist says, “Thou hast set our iniquities before thee, our secret sins in the light of thy countenance.” “Thy wrath lieth hard upon me, and thou hast afflicted

me with all thy waves.” “Lord, why castest thou off my soul? why hidest thou thy face from me?” “Thy fierce wrath goeth over me (Psalm 88:7,14,16).” Wherefore, then, hast thou brought me forth out of the womb? Oh that I had given up the ghost, and no eye had seen me! Whether wicked or righteous, still Job will not lift up his head in the presence of so mighty a God. He is full of confusion. What an unequal war would this seem – the Mighty One against a poor worm, against a broken leaf! Are not my days few? Cease, then, and let me alone, that I may take comfort a little before I go whence I shall not return, even to the land of darkness and the shadow of death – a land of darkness as darkness itself and the shadow of death without any order, and where the light is as darkness. Only under that extremity of sorrow that makes one weary of life could the imagination picture such vague but deep gloom as the end of this mortality of ours, which, with all its troubles and fears and anguish, shall be swallowed up. David cries, as Job does here, “Oh spare me, that I may recover strength before I go hence and be no more (Psalm 39:13).”

In this extreme grief we see only the darkness that closes about the mortal part of us. When the light of immortality appears our sorrow flies away.

## Chapter VII.

### FIRST ANSWER OF ZOPHAR.

#### *Job 11.*

Zophar the Naamathite now takes his turn to speak in this war of the many with one. He enters the contest even more hotly than either of his companions, fiercely charges Job with lying, and seems confident that he shall succeed in answering the multitude of words and make him ashamed: Should not the multitude of words be answered? and should a man full of talk be justified? Should thy lies make men hold their peace? and when thou mockest shall no man make thee ashamed?

Here, then, we should expect to find the man who will bring forth something new, and by forcible arguments, which his friends have failed to produce, clearly demonstrate the error of Job and justify the bitter denunciations they have uttered against him. How are we disappointed, then, after this bold and confident beginning, to follow him over the same Arminian ground which they have taken, closing up with a similar description of the same worldly security and comfort of the same worldly good man, who has prepared his own heart and freed himself from iniquity!

For thou hast said, My doctrine is pure, and I am clean in thine eyes. Here he has in part understood Job rightly, in part misunderstood and in part misrepresented him. He has understood him to say that his doctrine is pure, and this is true, for it is the doctrine of God. It declares the holiness and justice of God, the sinfulness of man and the only way of salvation through a Mediator. Through this doctrine the Church, and each member thereof, are presented perfect; but this purity and perfection are not in himself, but in and through the Redeemer. Here is where Zophar and all the world misunderstand the confidence of those who hold and rejoice in the truth. When the Christian asserts his assurance that his doctrine is pure, they understand him to be boasting of the correctness of what his own wisdom has attained; and when he tells of his hope that he is of that Church which is “holy and without blame before God in love,” they will still declare that he is boasting of his natural or self-acquired perfection. All the preparation of man for heaven they regard as to be made by himself; and it seems impossible to get into their minds an idea of any other kind of preparation. So, notwithstanding the clearness of Job’s speech upon this point, they will still insist that he is boasting before God. The idea of that absolute perfection which God requires, and which is found only in Christ, does not enter into their theory of religion. Their view and doctrine is, that God will accept those who do well and give them such a place as their merits deserve, but which, of course, will be far below his own holiness and greatness. They are therefore greatly indignant to hear the Christian speak of that absolute perfection and heavenly purity in which he expects to enter the presence of the Holy One, and for the present possession of which, by faith in Christ, he hopes and believes that God looks with loving favor upon him. This is the great difficulty which natural men find in the speech of Job, that he should confess his vileness in terms which they are far too proud and vain to use in reference to themselves, and yet should loftily assert his purity and excellence. This seems like a contradiction, and angers them. Yet it is found throughout the psalms of David and the words of the prophets, and is the truth.

The people of God are holy as he is holy, else they could never enter his presence. This holiness has been wrought for them by the Redeemer, whose salvation is complete, and is made known to them and given to them freely, unconditionally, and without any regard to their standing and works in the sight of

men. For the apostle declares that God hath saved us and called us with a holy calling, not according to our works, but according to his own purpose and grace, which was given us in Christ before the world began (II Timothy 1:9). They are stripped of all their own merits; their wisdom becomes foolishness in their view, their righteousness filthy rags, and all their beauty consumes away like a moth; and, standing thus naked and destitute, they are clothed with the garments of salvation and covered with the robe of righteousness.

Elihu hereafter in his reproofs to Job charges him with saying, "I am clean without transgression," and not "I am clean in thine eyes," as Zophar has charged. This more correctly states the truth of his declaration. He has not transgressed by committing those deeds which the law of God prohibits. And Elihu does not dispute him in his reproof. But of this more particularly hereafter. Yet we will note here that as the perfect and upright man, as the Church under the law, Job may be understood to have kept the law perfectly in the strictness of the letter of it, so that he could say, "I am clean without transgression;" and yet he would be the same corrupt being by nature, for the law cannot give life, nor by its works can any be justified, but rather "by the law is the knowledge of sin."

But oh that God would show thee the secrets of wisdom, that they are double to that which is! Know therefore that God exacteth of thee less than thine iniquity deserveth. Still dwelling upon the natural idea that God makes us atone for our sins in part by suffering, and then pardons the rest and takes us to heaven – that all of Job's affliction is in part punishment, but is less than his iniquity deserves. Now the servant of God acknowledges his great forbearance, saying, "He hath not dealt with us after our sins, nor rewarded us according to our iniquities (Psalm 103:10)." This would seem to confirm Zophar's expression as truth, yet the difference is clear. Zophar is speaking of what the sins of another man deserve: David speaks of his own. Under a sense of the greatness of his iniquities the poor sinner witnesses the tender compassion of God in withholding the punishment due, not to another's, but to his own, transgression. But this forbearance is not shown at the expense of justice. Zophar manifests no recognition of true justice on the part of God in intimating that he exacts of Job only part of what is due, and will pardon the rest if he will prepare his heart. Our God "is a just God and a Saviour." His justice demands every jot and tittle, and has received all at the hands of our Surety. The demands of justice, therefore, being satisfied, mercy can be extended to those for whom Christ stood as Surety; as he has said by the prophet, "Therefore will he be exalted that he may have mercy (Isaiah 30:18)," referring to the exaltation of the Saviour. This mercy is realized and acknowledged as expressed in the language of David. Concerning the dealing of God with them as children when they err from his ways, we shall speak in connection with Elihu's answer.

Canst thou by searching find out God? Canst thou find out the Almighty to perfection? This is one of those sentences sometimes quoted as inspired Scripture; but nothing that they have said is to be received as Scripture, for God says they have not spoken of him the thing that is right, like his servant Job. In asking this question, Zophar implies that men can search and find out something – all that they are to know – though it will be so little in comparison with all the secrets of wisdom that it will be as nothing. Now man in his natural state does not even seek after God (Psalm 14:2). He reveals himself to whom he will, and says, "I am found of them that sought me not; I am made manifest to them that asked not after me (Romans 10:20; Isaiah 65:1)." The things of God are taught by the Spirit, who "searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God (I Corinthians 2:10)." "For God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ (II Corinthians 4:6)." "And no man knoweth who the Father is but the Son, and he to whom the Son will reveal him (Luke 10:22)." Those unto whom this revelation is

made do see the brightness of the Father's glory, are filled with all the fullness of God, and presented perfect in Christ (Ephesians 3:19; Colossians 1:28). But of this Zophar makes no mention. Well might Job exclaim, How then comfort ye me in vain, seeing in your answers there remaineth falsehood?

If thou prepare thy heart and stretch out thy hand toward him; if iniquity be in thy hand, put it far away, and let not wickedness dwell in thy tabernacles. For then shalt thou lift up thy face without spot; yea, thou shalt be steadfast and shall not fear. Here is Zophar's system, just like that of his friends. But "The preparation of the heart in man and the answer of the tongue is from the Lord (Proverbs 16:1)." All these things that Job is exhorted to do, with far more, God has promised in the new covenant to perform for his people unconditionally. (See Jeremiah 31:31-34; 32:40; Ezekiel 34:25-30; 37:26.)

We have now heard each of these three pretended friends of Job, and shall hear nothing new from them in all they say hereafter. It is the same false doctrine repeated from that day to this. The world is full of it. But it has no comfort for the poor sinner. On the contrary, he is greatly oppressed by it, and the preaching of it to him makes his hungry soul empty, as the prodigal's was when he tried to feed upon the husks which the swine did eat.

## Chapter VIII.

### FOURTH ANSWER OF JOB.

#### *Job 12.*

No doubt but ye are the people, and wisdom shall die with you. An expression of strong irony, in which Job conveys his sense of their foolishness in speaking so confidently upon a subject of which they are ignorant, and the vexation of soul that their false doctrine causes him. But I have understanding, as well as you; I am not inferior to you; yea, who knoweth not such things as these? He is their equal in natural understanding, and needs no instruction from them in regard to such literal truths as they speak. Of what profit is it to tell the poor sinner that God is great and wise, and that it would be a great benefit to him to be good? He already knows it better than his self-appointed teacher, for God has taught him the knowledge of his holiness and wisdom, so as no words of man can teach any one, and his own want of holiness. Well might Job exclaim, "How hast thou helped him that is without strength?" The true preaching is to show how God has saved those who have no goodness of their own and no heart to seek his face till he gives it. "Can the Ethiopian change his skin or the leopard his spots? Then may ye also do good that are accustomed to do evil (Jeremiah 13:23)."

I am as one mocked of his neighbor, who calleth upon God and he answereth him; the just, upright man is laughed to scorn. In this and the two following verses, Job utters a truth which he afterwards dwells more fully upon, and which the Psalmist and prophets have often spoken of concerning the appearance of greater prosperity and favor with God which the enemies of truth have as compared with the people of God. According to the explanation of our Saviour, the neighbor is one who comforts and helps another, having brotherly affection and kindness. (Luke 10:33.) False teachers profess to be helpers or neighbors to the poor and distressed, but they only mock or disappoint the longing desires of their poverty and distress by giving vain words in which there is no comfort. Yet these false professors call upon God in form with great apparent zeal in sight of men, in whose sight also God appears to answer them. They ask for worldly goods, worldly satisfaction in their religion, worldly glory; and they have it. Their prosperity is compared to the spreading of a green bay tree. (See Psalm 37:35.) "They are not in trouble as other men." "Their eyes stand out with fatness; they have more than heart can wish." "Behold, these are the ungodly who prosper in the world; they increase in riches (Psalm 73:5,7,12)." This difference is spoken concerning their religion. The prosperity of the Church of God is not of a worldly kind, nor to be recognized by men. But it is only in the world and after a worldly fashion that Anti-christ does prosper, and they that teach worldly doctrine are enlarged in the sight of men. "They are of the world, therefore speak they of the world, and the world heareth them (I John 4:5)." Job was experiencing and representing the affliction which is the lot of the righteous in the world, and at the same time witnessing the wealthy state and self-complacent content of those who hate the truth.

He that is ready to slip with his feet is as a lamp despised in the thought of him that is at ease. The saint is the one who is ready to slip with his feet. He has been so thoroughly taught his own weakness that he has no confidence in himself, but must appeal to God for help, as the Psalmist did: "Thou hast delivered my soul from death; wilt thou not also deliver my feet from falling, that I may walk before God in the light of the living (Psalm 56:13)?" For this they are despised by those who, having had no trouble on account of their sins, are at ease, confiding in their own strength and pleased with their

comeliness. “When my foot slippeth they magnify themselves against me. For I am ready to halt, and my sorrow is continually before me (Psalm 38:16,17).” Acknowledging his liability to err, and yet professing to be of those who are called lights in the world, he is held in contempt by the proud and is as a lamp despised. They see no reason why one should look for acceptance with God except on the ground of goodness in himself, and should one of the saints slip with his feet, they take occasion to blaspheme the name of God and his doctrine. (II Samuel 12:14.) The saints are exhorted to watch, therefore, and take heed to their way, continuing instant in prayer.

The tabernacles of robbers prosper, and they that provoke God are secure, into whose hand God bringeth abundantly. The teachers of false doctrine rob God of his glory (in word) and his children of comfort. It would seem hard to men now to call them robbers, for they appear eminently pious; but a careful survey of their tabernacles, their doctrine and their secret works will show the name to be well applied. They appear secure in their way, and it appears, as we have shown, that God brings into their hands abundantly. Job seems, like David, to have been envious of the foolish when he saw the prosperity of the wicked. (Psalm 73:2.) But both were reprov'd for this envy by the Lord – David when he went into the sanctuary and saw the end of the wicked, and Job when the Lord showed him his own great wisdom in his answer out of the whirlwind.

But Job’s faith in God is not shaken. He knows God is not disappointed or deceived. Even if we appealed to the beasts, or the birds of the air, or to the earth, or the fishes of the sea, who knoweth not in all these that the hand of the Lord hath wrought this? And throughout the remainder of this chapter he dwells upon the evidences of God’s wisdom and strength, upon his wonderful works, expressing his assurance that nothing transpires contrary to his will, in whose hand is the soul of every living thing and the breath of all mankind; that the deceived and the deceiver are his, and he does what he will with mighty princes as well as with all men. He discovereth deep things out of darkness, and bringeth out to light the shadow of death. The nations are enlarged and straitened again by him. He taketh away the heart of the chief of the people of the earth, and causeth them to wander in a wilderness where there is no way. They grope in the dark without light, and he maketh them to stagger like a drunken man. The words of Job are continually confirmed by other inspired Scriptures as the truth of God. (See Psalm 107:27,40.)

Though Job’s friends have appeared to exalt God so highly and with such ostentation of speech, this doctrine of God’s sovereign decree and supreme direction in all things, so plainly and decisively declared by Job, is the very doctrine they cannot abide.

### **Job 13.**

Lo, mine eye hath seen all this, mine ear hath heard and understood it. What ye know, the same do I know also; I am not inferior to you. All the truth that the natural man can speak, which is merely within the scope of the natural understanding, is as well understood by the people of God as by them; for all alike have the discernment and wisdom that is natural. But the saints have an understanding that God has given to them alone (John 5:20), and it is this spiritual understanding, with all the experiences of sorrow and joy that it creates, which the worldly teachers cannot minister to. It is above the reach of their wisdom, which is of the world; it finds no interest in their religion, which has only to do with their outward man. It can only be satisfied by communion with God, to whom the desires of the renewed soul rise. Surely I would speak to the Almighty, and I desire to reason with God. This desire his friends do not possess. They would study and philosophize about him, and endeavor to search him out with their own minds, and expect to go on studying for ever. But the desire to reason with God, to hear the

word from him, is not in their heart. It is only to his people God has given this desire, by saying to them, “Come now and let us reason together (Isaiah 1:18).” They know that from him alone can they learn how their sins, “though they be as scarlet, shall be white as snow, and though they be red like crimson, shall be as wool.”

But the natural man only looks to appear good in the eyes of men and in his own esteem, which is very easy until he is quickened, requiring only some outward restrictions. And this vain show, this fig-leaf righteousness, they commend to the poor soul who has seen God and who stands naked before him; and he says to them, But ye are forgers of lies, ye are all physicians of no value. Oh that ye would altogether hold your peace! And it should be your wisdom. But there is no hope that they will hold their peace until God rebukes them terribly, for they are too proud of what they have searched out and learned; and they continue to hand out their poison for medicine (for the poison of asps is under their lips, Romans 3:13), willfully blind to its aggravating effects.

Hear now my reasoning, and hearken to the pleading of my lips. Will ye speak wickedly for God? And talk deceitfully for him? Will ye accept his person? Will ye contend for God? Instead of simply speaking God’s word, which his servants do, the false teacher speaks from his own imagination about God, and makes propositions in his name which he has never authorized, and attempts to explain away his too plain declarations, handling the word of God deceitfully. They teach that God has offered himself, and it is for us to accept him and his terms; and they would contend for him, as though he needed help and his doctrine needed apology, and they were able to render the service. They are wicked and deceitful in all their speech concerning him, speaking what they do not know, and talking of what they do not understand. Is it good that he should search you out? Or as one man mocketh another, do ye so mock him? He will surely reprove you, if ye do secretly accept persons. Let but the light of truth, or of God’s face, shine down and expose all the feelings that underlie their false words, and what vanity and deceit would be seen!

God is no respecter of persons. The high and the low, the rich and the poor, the Jew and Gentile, the prince and the beggar, all stand on the same level in his sight. Yes, and the most excellent, naturally, with the most degraded, as they appear in the eyes of men. God looks deeper than men, and sees all the race of Adam alike lost in sin and depravity. He accepts no man’s person. None can be acceptable in his sight. In Christ only are his chosen regarded with love and favor. But all who hold to the doctrine of the world must accept persons for God. Job in his present state was not good enough to be accepted in their sight. However they may try to hide it, this secret acceptance of persons appears in all they say. And God reproves it. He has sent no one out to win souls to him. How dare any vain mortal presume to engage in such a work? Shall not his excellency make you afraid? And his dread fall upon you? When God appears in his excellent majesty to shake terribly the earth, these hypocritical teachers and professed helpers of God shall be terrified at the presence of Him whose person they seem to think they have done him a favor by accepting.

But now Job turns from them, whose remembrances, or the remembrance of whose words, are like unto ashes, saying, Hold your peace, let me alone, that I may speak, and let come on me what will. Wherefore do I take my flesh in my teeth and put my life in my hand?

Do they suppose that it is in vain self-confidence that he thus makes his appeal to God? That he has ceased to regard the Almighty with reverential fear and as just and holy, and that he expects to prove to him in argument that he has dealt unjustly with him? How little do they know the fearful perplexity of trouble and anguish which those feel who stand consciously in the great and dreadful presence of the

all-wise and eternal God, while at the same time filled with a holy truth and confidence in him! His faith is sorely tried, but it fails not. His trust in God is stronger than all agony, stronger than death. For this purpose was Satan allowed to afflict him, that God's power to keep him in his own fear and confidence should be manifest. Though he slay me, yet will I trust in him.

The trust of the saints in God is not a mere effort of the human will, liable to fluctuations and failure, but is wrought by him, and never can fail or be destroyed. We know we are unworthy of his favor, yet we trust in his mercy. We realize our nothingness, yet we can but trust in his loving-kindness. Darkness closes around us and we are in trouble, yet we still trust in him who created the darkness and has power to turn it to light. The gates of death appear just before us, and we see no reason why he should not cut us off; but what else is there for us? We must still trust, even though he slay us, and we fall down in humble submission to his will. This is "the faith of the Son of God."

But I will maintain mine own ways before him – not hiding his troubles, and pretending to have none; nor concealing his sense of sin; nor keeping out of sight his wondering thoughts concerning God's strange dealing with him; nor stifling his complaints and gaining credit for making none when they are festering within him; nor acknowledging that these afflictions are judgments for transgressions which he has not committed. All this would be hypocrisy.

Job is looking, not for a reward for goodness, but for salvation from sin and affliction, and this salvation cannot be received from men. He also shall be my salvation, for a hypocrite shall not come before him. He will maintain his own ways, and not adopt those of his friends. His own ways were before, and are now, the ways of truth and sound doctrine.

Hear diligently my speech and my declaration with your ears. Behold, now, I have ordered my cause; I know that I shall be justified. He seems to call their special attention to this particular declaration, which will astound them more than his former words. With all the apparent evidences of God's disapproval upon his very person, he yet is confident of being justified. And it was so. In the end God justified him.

As once before, so now, he appeals to God to withdraw his heavy and afflicting hand, and keep his dread from making him afraid: Then call thou and I will answer, or let me speak, and answer thou me. It is such expressions of his soul as these which are the subject of God's reproof through Elihu, but not for such cause as his friends can see. They would deny what Job says and what he makes the subject of question. But God's reproof is to bring him into perfect submission to his own holy will without question or complaint. How many are mine iniquities and sins? Make me to know my transgression and my sin.

Not as though he had none, for with the Psalmist he would say, "They are more than the hairs of my head; therefore my heart faileth me (Psalm 40:12)." But he would see them as God estimates them, and know the exceeding sinfulness of sin, and inquire for the secret reasons of God's so heavily afflicting him. Wherefore hidest thou thy face and holdest me for thine enemy? So David frequently inquires, "Lord, why castest thou off my soul? Why hidest thou thy face from me? While I suffer thy terrors I am distracted (Psalm 88:14; 13:1; 44:24)."

Wilt thou break a leaf driven to and fro? Wilt thou pursue the dry stubble? What an acknowledgment of his weakness and nothingness in the presence of so great a God! How different his tone when speaking to the Almighty from that with which he addresses the opposers of the truth! These are not expressions of a proud and rebellious spirit, but of humility. The rebellion of the wicked or the unquickened springs

from self-esteem. They regard themselves as good, and so oppose the doctrine that shows man depraved. But Job acknowledges and deeply feels his unworthiness; yet he wonders and questions concerning the dealing of God with so feeble a being, and in this shows the rebellion that arises from the carnal mind of the Christian. For thou writest bitter things against me, and makest me to possess the iniquities of my youth. All that we have done and said, all our sins and foolishness of former years, are brought vividly before us when God would show us what manner of beings we are; and we must look upon them as he sees them, so that we can never rest for any length of time in a thought that we are entitled to commendation for goodness. Such vain repose is always broken up, and only in the merit of a Mediator can we ever find peace. Thou puttest my feet also in the stocks, and lookest narrowly into all my paths; thou settest a print upon the heels of my feet. We could seem to hide the vanity of our heart from our own eyes and from the eyes of men, and by diligently watching over our course become very good in our own esteem, running away from our former selves, and covering up our former traces. But God will not allow us to remain in self-deceit. Our feet are held fast while the light of truth shows all the iniquity of our steps, and our way is so marked that we cannot hide it. In these words Job has most vividly told what the child of God has felt in his experience, while his sins have been from time to time brought to his view, and while he has felt the eye of that God upon him who searches the hearts and tries the reins of men. The same is expressed by the Psalmist: "Thou hast set our iniquities before thee, our secret sins in the light of thy countenance (Psalm 90:8)." We are thus taught that nothing can be hidden from him. He knows man altogether, and makes him know himself in the way so forcibly depicted here: And he, as a rotten thing, consumeth as a garment that is moth-eaten.

#### **Job 14.**

Man that is born of a woman is of few days, and full of trouble. He cometh forth like a flower, and is cut down; he fleeth also as a shadow, and continueth not.

With what a mournful sound these words fall upon our ears, like the sad voice of the wind as it sighs among the branches of the pine! How many thousands have repeated them after the old patriarch, unaccountably soothed by their touching pathos!

Oh what a mystery is this mortal existence of ours, with all that belongs to it! How unfathomable! We see men daily passing from our sight, one after another, and who knoweth concerning them any more? But when we look in upon ourselves the depth of the mystery is more clearly seen. We behold there those sorrows of which we hear all men complain, and also those deeper and more delicate shades of grief and gloom which cannot be pictured in words, and that heaviness on account of sin which caused the Psalmist to exclaim, "My soul is full of troubles (Psalm 88:3)." And what are these sorrows? Can we define and bound them? And our transient joys – what are they? Can we explain their origin and nature? Look back along the pathway of life, and can we see the beginning? Sorrows close in, faint at first, then deeper and deeper, till memory is lost, as the eye is lost in the gathering mist of distance, yet with only distance to bar its view. How are we connected in our consciousness of sin with him who first walked the earth in the morning of time, and by whose fall sin and sorrow and death fell upon all his race? What can we tell of ourselves but that we live and mourn? What a mystery, even to the saint, is that change that is to come upon us! We wonder and are startled and grieved when we witness the death of another, but it is only when we are able to contemplate our own death that the shadows of the mystery are clearly presented. "He bringeth to light the shadows of death." What will that change be? How will our deep grief for sin all be carried away for ever by it? What part of our present being will vanish and be lost? Nothing that we would wish to preserve, yet we are lost in wonder. Faith points to

our blessed Saviour, who is “unto us a place of broad rivers and streams,” and we rest in him, and know that we shall be satisfied when we awake with his likeness. But there is the mystery still. “Behold!” says the apostle, “I show you a mystery.” Nor can we turn our minds away from that mystery, though it is infinitely beyond the reach of our mortal powers.

While Job thus contemplates man in his narrowly-bounded state, with his limited knowledge and powers, surrounded by shadows of mystery, full of sin and trouble and fleeting as a shadow, and then looks at the greatness and power of the eternal God, he asks in wonder, And dost thou open thine eyes upon such an one, and bringest me into judgment with thee? God requires truth in the inward parts, and we cannot but feel the force of that requirement and that we ought to be holy, although we know there is no element of goodness in our fallen nature. Who can bring a clean thing out of an unclean? Not one. Why, then, should we feel so forcibly the judgment of God against us, and have nothing to answer, since man is but the creature of God’s power? Though we know that God is above all, and numbers all our steps, yet we cannot turn from feeling, as he brings us into judgment with him, deeply burdened with a sense of our frailty and vileness. And what a wonder does this appear to our feeble understanding! Seeing his days are determined, the number of his months are with thee, thou hast appointed his bounds that he cannot pass, Job appealingly cries, Turn from him that he may rest, till he accomplish, as an hireling, his day. This is an utterance of ignorance, and shows the short-sightedness of our nature in reference to the ways of God. It says, Since God has appointed all our way, why should he still oppress us with this sense of condemnation? But this is, however, the expression of none but such as have been quickened with spiritual life and are children of God. All others would use such arguments to prove that man is not worthless and unclean, and that God has not absolutely determined his days and appointed his bounds that he cannot pass; and if such were the case, they will say, and yet God should hold man worthy of punishment, they would have no love or reverence for him. But Job here truly represents the feeling of God’s people under his chastising hand. They are not considering whether they will love and fear and reverence him, for already he has put his love and fear and a reverence for him in their heart. They are not deciding whether they will be humble before him, for already they are “feeble and sore broken,” and cannot choose but shrink appealingly while he looks upon them, till the Mediator and Shield is presented to their faith. It is under the oppression of that all seeing Eye which searches the hearts that Job cries, Turn from him! And the same state of mind is expressed by the Psalmist when he says, “Oh spare me, that I may recover strength before I go hence and be no more. Remove thy stroke away from me; I am consumed by the blow of thine hand (Psalm 39:10,13).”

Again and again our minds turn to the mystery. When we go hence we shall be no more, as we have been. We are ever looking for some solution of the mystery to our natural minds, but it comes not. We look upon the sun and stars; we look abroad upon the earth, beholding the forests, the mountains and streams and all familiar objects; we turn to our friends and look upon the loved faces; and shall it be that all these objects will for ever pass from our view? That after the short period in which we have known them we shall pass away from them and from our own present state of existence for ever? So our questioning thoughts run on.

For there is hope of a tree, if it be cut down, that it will sprout again, and that the tender branch thereof will not cease. Though the root thereof wax old in the earth, and the stock thereof die in the ground, yet through the scent of water it will bud and bring forth boughs like a plant. But man dieth and wasteth away; yea, man giveth up the ghost, and where is he? It is as the waters fail from the sea, and the flood decayeth and drieth up. The waters were there – they have failed and vanished, and no eye can follow

them. So man lieth down and riseth not; till the heavens be no more, they shall not awake, nor be raised out of their sleep. So by the urging of language and the forcing of visible things to a figurative use, Job strives to give some expression to the greatness and depth of the mystery that everywhere surrounds this mortal existence of ours, and closes about the doors of the way in which we pass out from it to the unknown realms beyond.

In “the words of the preacher, the son of David, king of Jerusalem,” we find this same mystery much dwelt upon: “Who knoweth the spirit of man that goeth upward, and the spirit of the beast that goeth downward to the earth (Ecclesiastes 3:21)?”

But the faith of the saint is not disturbed by these questionings nor by the multitude of sorrows. While he longs for rest, and would be hidden in the grave till God’s wrath be past (for all our days are passed away in his wrath, Psalm 90:9), yet he is confident that God sees all, and appoints his times and seasons in infinite wisdom. And here is presented that patience for which Job is celebrated, and which is common to all the saints – not a patience that belongs to their natural being, but that which tribulation worketh (Romans 5:3). If a man die, shall he live again? All the days of my appointed time will I wait till my change come. Job has asked that God would appoint him a set time, while he shall be hidden in the secret of the grave, and remember him; and he will wait in the silence of death all that appointed time. No man can understand how a man can die and live again, and so the grave is a place of horror to him who contemplates it without the instruction of the Spirit, as a prison to close him in for ever. But the faith of the saint is not staggered by its darkness, nor by the apparent impossibility of the dead living again. He knows a change will come, and for that change he is prepared to wait, notwithstanding his natural haste and impatience.

Thou shalt call, and I will answer thee. What sublime confidence in the Holy One! This is reversing the doctrine of men. They say we must call and God will answer us. But, from the first, the child of God is taught to “stand still, and see the salvation of God.” We wait for him. “It is good that a man should both hope and quietly wait for the salvation of the Lord (Lamentations 3:26).” When he called us from the darkness and ignorance of nature, we answered and came forth. “When thou saidst, Seek ye my face; my heart said unto thee, Thy face, Lord, will I seek (Psalm 27:8).” In all our pilgrimage it has been only at his call that we have come near to his throne of grace; and we know that at his call we shall come forth from the deep slumber of death to eternal light and blessedness. Then shall we say, as we have always said when in the light of his presence, “Lo, this is our God; we have waited for him: we will rejoice and be glad in his salvation (Isaiah 25:9).” The glorious resurrection, that change that faith looks for, shall surely come; but how different will the sublime realization be from anything which our natural minds have been able to picture! It will be, not as we have fancied that we understood it, but in a way becoming an infinite and unsearchable God, “whose ways are past finding out.” Let darkness cover us and troubles compass us about, yet who shall make us cast off our confidence in God? He will “bring us forth to the light, and our eyes shall behold his righteousness (Micah 7:9).” Thou wilt have a desire to the work of thy hands.

For now thou numberest my steps; dost thou not watch over my sin? Thus David remembers how thoroughly God has searched and known him, beholding his down sitting and his uprising, and understanding his thoughts afar off; compassing his path and his lying down; knowing each word in his tongue; besetting him behind and before; being with and before him on the wings of the morning to the uttermost part of the sea; discerning him in darkness as well as in light; being present with him if he rise up in joy to heaven, or if, in deep affliction or in transgression, he make his bed in hell; and in

amazement he exclaims, “Such knowledge is too wonderful for me; it is high, I cannot attain unto it (Psalm 139:6).” So by intimating to us the greatness of his knowledge, visiting us every morning with revelations of himself, and trying us every moment with the fire of his anger against sin, he purifies us of that which grows out of the dust of our earthly nature and destroys our own vain hopes: The waters wear the stones; thou wastest away the things which grow out of the dust of the earth, and thou destroyest the hope of man. Thou prevailest for ever against him, and he passeth; thou changest his countenance and sendest him away. The same truth so touchingly expressed here by him who is experiencing it is also presented by Moses in describing the condition of the people of God under the law: “Thou carriest them away as with a flood; they are as a sleep; in the morning they are like grass which groweth up. In the morning it flourisheth and groweth up; in the evening it is cut down and withereth (Psalm 90:5,6).” The prophet also testifies to the same in Isaiah 40:6,7.

Worldly affairs and affections lose their power to claim the interest and attention of one with whom God is thus dealing and separating from the world for himself. His mind is engrossed in his trouble, or lost in contemplation of eternal things, where his desires are placed. His affections become loosed from earth. His sons come to honor, and he knoweth it not; and they are brought low, but he perceiveth it not of them. But, while he waits his appointed time, his flesh upon him shall have pain, and his soul within him shall mourn.

## Chapter IX.

### SECOND ANSWER OF ELIPHAZ.

#### *Job 15.*

And must we submit again to listen to the vain speech of the self-appointed teacher? After having heard the words of Job, that have so powerfully appealed to our hearts with their thrilling pathos, and commended themselves to our understanding as manifesting the work of God in him and as embracing true doctrine, how void of interest and profit does the worldly reasoning to which we must now give attention appear!

Eliphaz the Temanite now speaks again in his turn. He appears cooler and more calculating than the others, as becomes a leader. But he brings forward nothing new, except in varying somewhat and adding to his charges against Job: Should a wise man utter vain knowledge and fill his belly with the east wind? Should he reason with unprofitable talk, or with speeches wherewith he can do no good?

Here is one of the principal objections which worldly religionists bring against the doctrine of the Bible – that it is unprofitable and can do no good. They vainly suppose themselves able to quicken dead sinners (which they call converting them), and that this is their principal work; and all preaching or conversation upon religious subjects they regard as having this work for its main object, and what is not calculated to produce such effect is, in their estimation, unprofitable talk, and can do no good. In order to gather men into their organizations, which is their success in converting, they must speak what is consistent with the wisdom of man and what suits his carnal understanding. So the doctrine of God's sovereignty, as displayed in the election of his people, and in predestinating them unto good works and unto eternal glory, is regarded by them as unprofitable, even if they are forced to acknowledge it as in the Bible. Men do not like it, and will not receive it, even as the Saviour has told us; therefore these teachers assure us that we can do no good by talking about it. And to complain under a sense of total depravity, as Job has been doing, only angers men, who, in their natural state do not believe themselves totally depraved, and will repel instead of attracting them, and therefore can do no good.

In all this these false teachers manifest their real character, as ignorant of the way of salvation, opposers and haters of God's truth, and proudly exalting themselves against him. He has left it with no man to quicken any: "It is the Spirit that quickeneth; the flesh profiteth nothing." He has not left it with his people to choose out of their experience what the worldly mind may suppose will do good and leave the rest unexpressed; nor to decide what part of his truth, as recorded in the Scriptures, is profitable and what unprofitable. The preachers preach what he bids them, and the object of their preaching is to instruct and comfort his people, who are already quickened or brought to life. That which they are bidden to preach is not suited to the pride and vanity of man. It is very much what Job in the preceding chapter speaks of having experienced. "The voice said, Cry. And he said, What shall I cry? All flesh is grass, and all the goodness thereof is as the flower of the field. The grass withereth, the flower fadeth, because the Spirit of the Lord bloweth upon it; surely the people is grass. The grass withereth, the flower fadeth; but the word of our God shall stand for ever (Isaiah 40:6-8)." All conversation of the people of God upon religion is concerning what they truly feel and hope in – upon the power and goodness of God and the glory of his kingdom – and is for their mutual comfort and edification. They have no such vain ambition as the false teachers. It has been slain. If they can tell a little of their own

poverty and vileness, and speak a little of the greatness and mercy of God, it is all they care to do. It is enough. The Psalmist declares, “They shall talk of the glory of thy kingdom, and speak of thy power (Psalm 145:11).” But while they do this, those who are “hypocritical mockers at feasts,” as David denominates the teachers of Armiian doctrine, will chide and scorn them, as Eliphaz did Job, for reasoning with unprofitable talk, and with speeches wherewith they can do no good.

Yea, thou castest off fear and restrainest prayer before God. This is a very common accusation against the people of God by those who know nothing of the nature of true prayer. Supposing it to be an audible speech, and its power to depend upon the posture or form of utterance, they charge those with restraining prayer who do not “pray to be seen of men, as the hypocrites do.” Of that voiceless prayer which arises from the broken and contrite heart they know nothing; nor do they seem to think that God can look into the heart and that he requires no form of words to convey to him a knowledge of our needs or our longing desires. The deep and fervent desire of the heart toward God is prayer; and he hears it though it be not breathed forth in words, and though the poor sinner is even unconscious that he is praying. He hears the groaning of the prisoner (Psalm 103:20), the sigh of the captive, the unspoken lamentation of the afflicted who sighs for help. He hears the poor and needy, whose tongue faileth for thirst so that he cannot speak (Isaiah 41:17).

“Prayer is the burden of a sigh,  
The falling of a tear;”

and Job answers this charge of Eliphaz by saying, Mine eye poureth out tears unto God.

For thy mouth uttereth thine iniquity, and thou choosest the tongue of the crafty. Thine own mouth condemneth thee, and not I; yea, thine own lips testify against thee. This is probably in reference to Job’s confession of his sinfulness before God, which Eliphaz construes into an acknowledgment of criminal acts committed, thus trampling these pearls of experience under his feet, and turning again to rend him who has cast them before him. He also thus utters his condemnation of the doctrine that proceeds out of Job’s mouth.

He now indignantly repels the confident assertion of Job that his doctrine is true and theirs false, by sarcastically asking, Art thou the first man that was born? or wast thou made before the hills? Hast thou heard the secret of God? and dost thou restrain wisdom to thyself? What knowest thou that we know not? What understandest thou which is not with us? With us are both the gray-headed and very aged men, much older than thy father. Are the consolations of God small with thee? Is there any secret thing with thee? Thus they who suppose that men by wisdom do know God, and that knowledge of divine things is to be acquired by study, treat with contempt the revelations of God to his people. The doctrine his people speak foolishness to the Greeks. If it was anything of importance, they have no doubt their wisdom would have searched it out. But this question, which was intended to express bitter contempt, could be answered in the affirmative. Job had heard the secret of God, as all true Christians have. “The secret of the Lord is with them that fear him” (Psalm 25:14), and Job feared God.

Understanding Job to be denying the justice of God’s dealing with him, and asserting his own righteousness, Eliphaz says, What is man, that he should be clean? and he which is born of woman, that he should be righteous? We have before had occasion to notice this particular point of their ignorance concerning the way of salvation. They have no idea of a perfect purity and righteousness as necessary to prepare man for heaven. According to their view, a man who does what he can is rewarded for what he has done by a place in heaven, which will be higher or lower according to the amount and value of

his works; but still he is not, in their theory, made clean, as though he had never done wrong or sinned, but is rather like a criminal, who, having won the favor of his judge, is pardoned and sent out at liberty again, not pure and innocent, but freed from the punishment he deserves. If this were the principle upon which the saints are made meet for heaven, then most certainly the next declaration of Eliphaz would be true: Behold, he putteth no trust in his saints; yea, the heavens are not clean in his sight. If the saints were only pardoned criminals, truly they could not be trusted, and the heavens where they dwell would not be clean in the sight of Him who is infinitely holy. But the saints are perfectly pure and holy through Christ, and the heavens, whether the gospel Church or the heaven of eternal glory, are clean in his sight, without spot or blemish (Ephesians 5:27). God and the Lamb are the light thereof. “Thus saith the Lord, The heaven is my throne (Isaiah 66:1).” Is not his throne clean in his sight?

But only those who are taught of God can know how he can be clean who is born of a woman. Eliphaz, like all his brethren in every age, is speaking what he has learned of human wisdom, which wise men have told from their fathers, and have not hid it; and he continues throughout this chapter to speak falsely concerning the state of the wicked in this life.

## Chapter X.

### FIFTH ANSWER OF JOB.

#### *Job 16.*

Then Job answered and said, I have heard many such things; miserable comforters are ye all. Very miserable comfort indeed is the doctrine of the world to the poor sinner. We have seen how devoid of all consolation their vain words are. They have only heaped up words against him and shaken the head at him; and he tells them that if their soul were in his soul's stead, he could talk as they do. But I would strengthen you with my mouth, and the moving of my lips should assuage your grief. When the saint speaks, even in telling his troubles, the soul of the quickened sinner is encouraged and comforted. There is mutual comfort in speaking together, for each tells what the other has experienced, and so love is brought into exercise and assurance of hope is gamed. But one's complaints are no comfort to himself. Though I speak, my grief is not assuaged; and though I forbear, what am I eased? One cannot give himself ease and consolation. They must come to him.

There is a striking similarity to this in the thirty-fifth Psalm, where David tells how differently he felt and acted toward his enemies in their trouble from what they did toward him. When they were sick, he sorrowed and fasted; but when he was in adversity, they rejoiced (Psalm 35:11-15).

But now he hath made me weary; thou hast made desolate all my company. And thou hast filled me with wrinkles, which is a witness against me, and my leanness rising up in me beareth witness to my face. This is evidently spoken to the Lord, from whom this sorrowful and desolating experience of his corruption comes. But in the next verse he alludes to the miserable comforters.

He teareth me in his wrath who hateth me; he gnasheth upon me with his teeth; mine enemy sharpeneth his eyes upon me. They have gaped upon me with their mouth; they have smitten me upon the cheek reproachfully; they have gathered themselves together against me. Thus, in the greatness of his grief and weariness, his soul is made to speak in a parable, to represent the hideous deformity of false doctrine, and the terrors to which the soul of the righteous is subjected when the errors and delusions of Satan are allowed to be raised up against him. These pretended friends are only a great aggravation of his woe. Indeed, they are the sorest of Satan's temptations, the severest of his trials; not only because of their false charges, but much more because of their false doctrine. His depravity is heavy upon him, but he has a good hope of deliverance finally through his Redeemer. Their doctrine would take away that hope, and leave him to the refuge only of his own merits. Instead of speaking of the redeeming mercy of God and the glorious work of a Mediator, whereby the Lord's people are cleansed from their sins and sinfulness, they cast angry contempt upon him for declaring his vileness and yet trusting in God, and call upon him to make himself good if he would hope. They are miserable comforters indeed. In them he recognizes the great enemy, "the prince of the power of the air," the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience, who speaks through all those that teach false doctrine, being the spirit that moves them, however good we may think them as men. He speaks of him in his friends: He teareth me in his wrath. So he represents the Church against whom Satan rages, when her fierce enemies are about her, marshaled by him.

In many of the Psalms, as the twenty-second, the sixty-ninth and others, we find a striking similarity of language. Here we know that David speaks by the Spirit of Christ. He speaks from the midst of strong and implacable enemies, and we hear his cries of grief and terror under all his dreadful suffering as “a man of sorrows,” when the waves of trouble rolled in upon his soul; when the terrors of death and the pains of hell gat hold upon him; when floods of ungodly men compassed him about, fearful in their rage and powerful to inspire terror, so that in the midst of them he is as a child compassed about with strong bulls of Bashan, that gape and stare upon him, beset with angry dogs, and roared against by the ravenous and terrible lions. In these expressions of Job, as well as in the Lamentations of Jeremiah and other portions of the Scripture, we have the language of Christ’s people under the “fellowship of his sufferings,” and hear their cries as anguish and terror as they are passing through the valley of the shadow of death to the land of deliverance he has secured for them by his resurrection.

It is of these same enemies of Job that the Psalmist speaks when he says in similar language, “They shoot out the lip, they shake the head (Psalm 22:13).” “In mine adversity they rejoiced, and gathered themselves together.” “With hypocritical mockers in feasts they gnashed upon me with their teeth (Psalm 35:15,16).”

But Job recognizes in all this the overruling hand of God, by whose permission alone Satan is allowed to do anything: God hath delivered me to the ungodly and turned me over into the hands of the wicked, whom he speaks of as God’s archers that compass him about. So David recognizes the wicked and men of the world, from whom he prays to be delivered, as God’s hand and sword. It is necessary that the enemies should be about God’s children while here and persecute their souls (Psalm 143:3). “The Lord hath commanded concerning Jacob that his adversaries shall be round about him (Lamentations 1:17).” “He turned their hearts to hate his people, to deal subtly with his servants (Psalm 105:25).”

Job therefore looks beyond these enemies and sees God’s power directing in all that he suffers. What he speaks is all true, but he does not seem to speak of it with that resignation that God will finally bring him and all his people to feel, and for this we shall hereafter hear him reproved. But he speaks what the Christian will understand by his own experience.

I was at ease, but he hath broken me asunder; he hath also taken me by the neck, and shaken me to pieces, and set me up for his mark. And he continues to describe thus figuratively his present distress into which God has brought him: Not for any injustice in my hands; also my prayer is pure. Not because his hands have been turned to wickedness, nor because he has been speaking hypocritically with his lips. His prayer is pure, as was that of the Publican: “God be merciful to me, a sinner.” It is pure because not offered in his own name, but is a prayer to a merciful God by faith in a Redeemer.

I was at ease, but he hath broken me asunder. Could we rest always in the sweet enjoyment of the privileges of the Church, and in a complacent feeling that we were walking worthy of them, and feel every day and all the time that Christ’s love was ours, and that since we hoped we had not proved unworthy of it, how pleasant it would be! But how full of vanity we should soon become. How can we know the heart, which is deceitful above all things? We are broken asunder, shaken to pieces and filled with arrows from God’s archers. We find ourselves doing, to our surprise, what is very sinful, and all at once our whole being appears to us nothing but vileness. We are pierced through with many sorrows. What now? Are we any worse than we were before? Are we any less worthy of God’s love? If he had loved us for our own merits, we would be; but the love of God for any of the sons of man is only through Christ. This we were beginning to forget when we were so full of comfort, and so God has left

us to know what manner of creatures we are, that we may be kept in humility and may remember that in the Lord only have we righteousness and strength.

We think ourselves more worthy of his love when we regard ourselves as faithful than when we are cringing under a sense of our corruptions. But he will teach us that this is not so that his love is everlasting, and because of that love we shall “be holy and without blame before him in love.” These words of Job show him as a type, and he speaks for those who have transgressed, although he as a man had not transgressed.

We are to remember continually, however, that these afflictions of the saints are not for any injustice in their hands, but for the trial of their faith, and for their instruction in regard to God’s way of salvation. They are brought to know the full weight of their corruptions in this life and to be afflicted under it, while the wicked go on in their wickedness undisturbed by a sense of God’s indignation, and do not travail with pain all their days, as Eliphaz declares in the preceding chapter, but take their ease. The transgression of the saint does not itself, abstractly considered, cause him so much pain as the manifestation it makes to him of his corruption and vileness in the sight of God. So David says to the Lord, “Against thee and thee only have I sinned and done this evil in thy sight (Psalm 51).”

O earth, cover not thou my blood, and let my cry have no place! This must evidently be understood as a highly figurative expression, and may have reference to the same truth declared in Isaiah 26:21: “The earth also shall disclose her blood, and shall no more cover her slain.” Whatever is declared concerning the Lord’s work for Zion, her children are made to desire and ask for. The earth represents all earthly religion, all earthly wisdom and understanding. Blood is frequently used in the Scriptures to represent life, and the shedding of it death. Job is experiencing the pains of that death which comes upon all the saints in this mortal state – a death to the world, to all worldly hopes and to all comfort or confidence in himself. He is experiencing the conformity to our Saviour’s death (Philippians 3:10). All this bitter experience, and the doctrine that explains it, the wisdom of the world denies, and heaps ridicule upon the sufferer. Their earthly religion would cover up any such death, denying that through death we must come to spiritual life and enjoyment; denying essentially all the doctrine that shows how we must first be dead with Christ before we can live with him (II Corinthians 4:11; II Timothy 2:11). These earthly teachers also profess to understand the cry of the righteous, or of God’s people, when thus afflicted – profess that it finds place among them, and that there is nothing in it but what their wisdom can easily understand. But they answer it, or profess to do so, by denying their experience as being the experience of the saints, and by teaching such false doctrine as Job’s friends have spoken to him. The effect of all such worldly doctrine, which declares that man can do anything to win God’s favor, is thus to cover the blood, or death, or suffering of the righteous, and therefore Job speaks thus, if I have rightly understood this expression, to show his desire to be separated entirely from them, and not be endangered or shackled by their false doctrine. And it is declared that the earth shall not hide or cover from the sight of God the experience of his people, nor cover her slain.

Also now, behold, my witness is in heaven, and my record is on high. He does not look to men for testimony in his favor, nor for the comfortable evidences that he shall be eternally blessed. But his faith looks to the “faithful and true Witness (Revelation 1:5; 3:14),” who is his Redeemer. That Witness is in heaven, at the right hand of the Father; and his Spirit witnesses with our spirits that we are born of God. There, also, the record is upon which Job, by faith, relies for justification; not a record of good deeds performed by him, but of a glorious Lamb slain, in whose book of life the names of all his chosen ones

are written. There is no fear that this record of God's eternal purpose shall be changed. "For ever, O Lord, thy word is settled in heaven (Psalm 119:89)."

My friends scorn me; but mine eye poureth out tears unto God. This seems to be in direct reply to the charge of Eliphaz that he restrains prayer before God. They that are at ease, feeling very comfortable in the contemplation of their own fancied goodness, look with contempt upon him who is really poor in spirit, who honestly tells his complaints and acknowledges his vileness. They scorn him because of his afflictions on account of his corrupt nature, regarding themselves as very much better than he; and they haughtily advise him to go about the work of making himself acceptable, and to pray and supplicate forgiveness at the hands of God. And because he does not look for acceptance before God through any such means, nor regard the formality of prayer as that which is to make him any more meritorious, they scorn him the more; for they suppose their prayers affect the mind of God. But the saint prays and supplicates in secret. His soul is bowed before God. How forcible is this expression to reveal the secret feeling of that renewed soul! Mine eye poureth out tears unto God. He is in the closet, in the secret place of the Most High, where only true prayer is ever made. The door is closed, so that, although in the midst of thousands, he is alone spiritually, and prays to God who is in secret from the view of the world, pouring out tears in the secret of his soul. What if his friends do not see his tears nor hear his prayer! They are not his judges, nor is his commendation to come from them. He does not seem to address this remark to his friends, as though he desired even to let them know that his eye poured out tears. The Pharisee would seem to regard that prayer or service vain which he could not let men know of. But only the quickened soul can hear the true prayer or judge of the saint's real desires; and to such these words of Job are directed for their comfort.

Oh that one might plead for a man with God, as a man pleadeth for his neighbor! Here he seems to see the necessity of the glorious office of Advocate which our Saviour fills; but with a lively sense of his own inability to fill it, for he is but for a short time to remain: When a few years are come, then I shall go the way whence I shall not return.

### **Job 17.**

My breath is corrupt, my days are extinct, the graves are ready for me. They are undoubtedly wearied with this continual complaint of corruption on the part of Job. And so some theological student who should chance to look at this book would undoubtedly find his nice taste disturbed by the frequent recurrence to this subject of depravity. Should he be one who holds the doctrine of total depravity as a part of his system, yet he would think once stating that doctrine enough for one book. But he who is not merely studying or expounding doctrine, but experiencing it, as Job was, and as all God's people are, will not be apt to talk or write in strict accordance with the fastidious taste of the polite theologian. Merely to state once that he regards himself as a sinner, and as corrupt with all of Adam's race, will not satisfy him. One who is hurt does not merely utter one cry and let that suffice, but will very likely repeat the cry as the pain returns again and again. So those who truly feel the burden of their corruption will speak from that feeling quite differently from those who only accept it as a theory.

My breath is corrupt. Job has said his prayer is pure, but what would it be if the virtues of prayer consisted in the form or words? The voice, the breath, literally, has no part to do in the essential prayer, else it would be corrupt. The nearer we try to come to God the more clearly is our deep depravity felt and seen by us. Even that which we looked upon as service to God, even what we thought was prayer, we find to be based in the vanity and corruption of our nature; and we are left silent and destitute, hardly daring to raise a breath or even a thought toward God's holy throne, so polluted do we find

every motion of our minds. But there is left the pure prayer, the cry for mercy, that manifests us as finally brought to lean alone upon Christ. That prayer that truly ascends through him, the prayer for mercy, is pure.

My days are extinct. When the light is all gone the day is gone. So when the light of natural reason, or of worldly wisdom, fails us, and we can see no goodness or strength in our natural life, nor any hope of getting better in ourselves, then our days are extinct, gone out in darkness, and we only wait for release. “The writing of Hezekiah when he had been sick, and was recovered of his sickness,” telling how he felt and what he said during his sickness, is very similar to this: “I said, in the cutting off of my days, I shall go to the gates of the grave.” “Mine age is departed (Isaiah 38:9-22).” It was not merely the expression of suffering from natural sickness; as the speech of Jonah while in the whale’s belly was more than the mere expression of temporal trouble. Hezekiah spoke from the same “pit of corruption” from which Job is now speaking and where Jonah was (Jonah 2:6). David and Hezekiah and Jonah speak of deliverance from that pit, while they relate their feelings before their release; and so shall the deliverance of Job be hereafter presented (Psalm 40:2).

He now speaks again of his friends as mockers – mocking his sorrow and necessity with their vain, false doctrine and scorn. He knows the Lord has hid their heart from understanding, and he will not flatter them with any approval or commendation of their words. Thou hast hid their heart from understanding. While the saint must still contend against the errors of false teachers, it is not for the purpose of changing their hearts, for this he knows he has no power to do, nor can he cause them to understand the truth. He knows that God has hid their hearts from understanding. He refers to his suffering condition, aggravated by their mockery, and says, Upright men shall be astonished at this, and the innocent shall stir himself up against the hypocrite.

The real hypocrite before God is one who is confiding in his own merits, who pretends to a holiness which man cannot possess in himself nor attain to by his own works, who professes to have the Spirit of God and to be approved in his sight, while he speaks false doctrine. He may be sincere in his belief, but it is a vain and ignorant sincerity, and he is deceived as well as deceiving (II Timothy 3:13). He may be clear from evil deeds in the sight of men, may be as zealous, abstemious and outwardly pure as were the Pharisees, but he is a hypocrite in heart as they were, and in the sight of God is like a whited sepulchre, full of corruption. This is the hypocrite of whom Job speaks. He whom his friends call a hypocrite is one who acknowledges himself a sinner while yet looking for salvation and professing to love God. His mourning on account of a sinful nature they regard as the stings of conscience for evil deeds, which he strives to keep concealed from men and from God, lest the falsity of his profession should be discovered. And so they tell him falsely that the wicked is in pain and fear all his days, and warn him that God can see his heart. Not being able to understand the doctrine of God, that shows a hope for a poor sinner through a Mediator, nor able to conceive how one can get to heaven on any other ground than as a reward for goodness, they suppose every one’s professed hope must rest upon that ground. So when they read of the fall of Peter and David, they declare that had those saints died then they would have been lost, but that they lived long enough to repent and do good, and so probably were saved.

He whom the world thus regards as a hypocrite, so far as it can know his complaints and his doctrine, is the one whom Job terms the innocent. He is innocent because washed from sin in the precious blood of a Redeemer, and preserved in him “holy and without blame before God in love.” He is upright, because he holds the head, from whom all the body is nourished and built up, walking in the truth (Colossians

2:19). He keeps the faith and does not depart from the law of the Lord, for that law is written in his heart. These are the “pure in heart,” speaking the truth in their heart (Psalm 15:2). Job seems to know that he represented the Church, and that in this interview and in his disconsolate condition is an example for all time of how the poor in spirit are afflicted by the false speech of worldly teachers, and that the people of God shall see with astonishment how this false doctrine is brought forward to trouble him who must depend alone upon the mercy of God, and shall stir themselves up against the hypocritical teacher, and boldly fight against him with “the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God.”

The righteous also shall hold on his way, and he that hath clean hands shall be stronger and stronger. The people of God are righteous and have clean hands, even according to a worldly test, above their opposers. It is from a deep desire to be free from committing sin in thought or word or deed in the sight of a heart-searching God, and not from a fear of the judgment of men, that they refrain from evil. Job was upright in this outward or worldly sense, and free from the sins they charged upon him. Nevertheless, it is not in this sense that they are called righteous and have clean hands. In themselves - that is, in their flesh - they are taught by a painful experience that there dwells no good thing (Romans 7:18). The Scriptures also declare this to be so, and that gives them comfort; for when our own experience agrees with the written Word it is as evidence that we have been taught of the Spirit. They have to confess themselves as vile and unworthy, and are often led into captivity by the law of sin which is in their members (Romans 7:23). But all for whom Christ died are freed from condemnation. His name is, to them, “The Lord our Righteousness.” He brings them into his house, into his glorious truth, into the beauty of his works. They stretch forth their hands toward him (Psalm 143:6), and turn with abhorrence from the vanities of the world and from the false doctrines of men, which are based on bribes and vanity and deceit, teaching according “to the rudiments of the world,” calling for a “voluntary humility,” and subjecting to ordinances which are all to perish with the using; “which things” - that is, the ordinances and forms and sacrifices by which these worldly doctrines say that salvation is to be obtained - “have indeed a show of wisdom in will-worship and humility and neglecting of the body; not in any honor to the satisfying of the flesh (Colossians 2:18-23).” Those who have clean hands in the meaning of the text are such as “touch not, taste not, handle not” any of these things as means of salvation - who lift not up their soul unto vanity nor swear deceitfully. These ascend into the hill of the Lord and stand in his holy place (Psalm 24:3,4). They stand fast in his holy doctrine, rely only upon him for salvation, and rejoice in the honor and glory of his name. These shall hold on their way. They are members of one body, of which Christ is the Head. Satan cannot prevail against them, as this trial of Job is to prove abundantly. Though he cause them to fall by his temptations, yet they shall rise again, and show that in all these things they are more than conquerors through Him that hath loved them (Romans 8:37). Their faith shouts, “Rejoice not against me, O mine enemy; when I fall, I shall arise (Micah 7:8).” These shall be stronger and stronger, not in themselves, but in the Lord, who is their strength. As their own strength fails from day to day, they see more clearly their need of him, and more understandingly “rejoice in the Lord and in the power of his might.” It is through such experiences as are presented in Job’s case that they truly become stronger and stronger - the vain strength consumed away that the true strength may appear, that they may say, “My flesh and my heart fails, but God is the strength of my heart and my portion for ever.” Thus, “they go from strength to strength; every one of them in Zion appeareth before God (Psalm 84:7).” “He giveth power to the faint, and to them that have no might he increaseth strength. Even the youths shall faint and be weary, and the young men shall utterly fall; but they that wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength; they shall

mount up with wings as eagles; they shall run and not be weary; and they shall walk and not faint (Isaiah 40:29-31).”

So does the faith of Job lay hold upon the glorious doctrine of sovereign and triumphant grace, and he confidently asserts it while yet his grief is upon him. But as for you all, do ye return and come now; or look over your arguments and conclusions again, and try my position with more carefulness, and see if you cannot know the error of your doctrine; for your words heretofore have been entirely destitute of true wisdom, and I cannot find one wise man among you.

He is now experiencing that very weakness in himself which his doctrine tells us is necessary in order that the true strength shall be manifested. My days are past, my purposes are broken off, even the thoughts of my heart. They change the night into day; the light is short because of darkness. All this, as Elihu afterward tells him, is but the effect of God’s work in his heart (33:17). But how desolate the feeling when our purposes in this world are all destroyed, until the light of God’s purpose fully shines upon us! Our own thoughts are so broken and confused that they can see only darkness and the grave. God makes the day dark with night (Amos 5:8).

I have said to corruption, Thou art my father; to the worm, Thou art my mother and my sister. Let us remember for our comfort, who have so deeply felt the same that our hope seemed ready to forsake us, that a saint of God says this while still contending for the doctrine that we love.

And where is now my hope? As for my hope, who shall see it? It cannot be seen by mortal sight nor understood by even our own natural minds; but it is “a good hope through grace,” and they who oppose the doctrine which presents and sustains that hope, and who continue in their opposition to it, shall go down to the bars of the pit, when our rest together is in the grave.

## Chapter XI.

### SIXTH ANSWER OF JOB.

#### *Job 19.*

As the second answer of Bildad contained in the eighteenth chapter is but a repetition of what he and his friends have before continually made the burden of their speech against Job, I pass it over and come again to the words of the saint who is being tried. How long will ye vex my soul and break me in pieces with words? It is a peculiarly bitter vexation which is caused by these unjust accusations and insinuations, made more bitter by the false doctrine in which they are based, and which is continually presented with them, as well as by the fact that these accusers are professed brethren. These ten times have ye reproached me; ye are not ashamed that ye make yourselves strange unto me. To the soul of the tried saint these things come like a heavy blow upon a painful sore. Though only words that they utter, yet they would break him in pieces, for words are fearfully and crushingly heavy sometimes.

Job cannot aver that he has not erred, for he is keenly sensible of his miserable weakness; and he has before compared the words of complaint, which he utters in the bitterness of his soul, to the wind. But his error is not such as they charge upon him. He has caused no injury to any other, either by doing personal violence, withholding what justice or mercy demanded, or speaking false doctrine to lead astray. And be it indeed that I have erred, mine error remaineth with myself. The error which lies in his cries and complaints has heretofore been spoken of, and will be more particularly noticed hereafter; but it is to be suffered for by him alone; it harms only himself.

If indeed ye will magnify yourselves against me, and plead against me my reproach, know now that God hath overthrown me, and hath compassed me with his net. The burden of their arguments against him has been his calamities that have happened to him, and his present loathsome condition, which, they have contended, are proof that he is wicked. Job now boldly declares to their face his assurance that all this is the work of God, while he yet is not afraid of their conclusion, knowing it to be false. Though Satan has bereaved and sorely afflicted him, yet he sees only the sovereign counsel of God in it all. He knows well that God controls and directs all things, and that nothing can possibly transpire but in accordance with his sovereign will; neither does he try to hide or avoid the mention of this on account of their falsely and ignorantly asserting that these evils are judgments sent upon him for his wicked actions, but the more positively declares his assurance that God has sent this evil upon him, though he cannot yet see the purpose of God in it. So it is the privilege of the saints in all ages to know that all which happens to them is in accordance with the wise decree of a most merciful God, though they cannot yet see the everlasting purpose of love or mercy in their troubles.

From the seventh to the twenty-first verses he describes the miserable and lonely condition into which God has brought him; and as he mentions the particulars of his sorrowful state we are reminded of like expressions made by others of the saints, who were inspired to give the true experience of the people of Zion as they pass through the furnace of affliction. He cries out of wrong, out of the violence of his suffering, but God does not seem to hear; his way is fenced up, and darkness is set in his paths; his glory is stripped off, and the crown taken from his head; he is destroyed on every side, and his hope is removed like a tree. Thus are we cut off from all confidence and enjoyment in the flesh. Then is pathetically described that experience through which one becomes a “stranger on the earth,”

surrounded by the enemies of God and truth, who are recognized as God's troops, and who seem to him as an evidence of God's wrath against him, as they are permitted to raise up their way against him. He hath put my brethren far from me, and mine acquaintances are verily estranged from me. His kinsfolk and familiar friends, his maids and the servants of his house, and even his wife and young children are turned from him and hold him in contempt. All my inward friends abhorred me, and they whom I loved are turned against me. What a mournful picture of desolation is here! The saints are called out from the world and are said to be strangers in it. In this place we see an expression that figuratively represents the sorrowful experience of soul while we are being separated from the world, and are taught to hate our own lives for our corruption.

Here is a clear representation of the desolation of Zion under the law: "How doth the city sit solitary that was full of people!" "Among all her lovers she hath none to comfort her; all her friends have dealt treacherously with her, they are become her enemies." "The ways of Zion do mourn, because none come to her solemn feasts (Lamentations 1:1,2,4)." Our Saviour says by the Psalmist, "I am become a stranger unto my brethren, and am alien unto my mother's children (Psalm 69:8)."

Job turns to his friends, who have not been able to understand or sympathize with him in his sore troubles, and says, Have pity upon me, have pity upon me, O ye my friends, for the hand of God hath touched me. Why do ye persecute me as God, and are not satisfied with my flesh? This passage not only clearly connects Job with the Psalmist as one of like character and condition, but also connects his friends with those enemies spoken of in the sixty-ninth Psalm: "Thou hast known my reproach, and my shame, and my dishonor; mine adversaries are all before thee. Reproach hath broken my heart, and I am full of heaviness, and I looked for some to take pity, but there was none, and for comforters, but I found none. They gave me also gall for my meat, and in my thirst they gave me vinegar to drink. Let their table become a snare unto them, for they persecute him whom thou hast smitten; they speak to the grief of those whom thou hast wounded (Psalm 69:19-26)." In this passage Christ speaks of his sufferings and of his enemies. It is clear that Job speaks for those who follow him in his sufferings, finding the same lack of any to take pity, and failure of comforters. These who profess to be comforters are "hypocritical mockers (Psalm 35:16)," and in both cases they are charged with persecuting as God, or those smitten of God. Job may call in vain for pity from them; for Satan is their mover, and the heart of the enemy is "hard as the nether millstone."

How is it that any can regard Job's friends as good men or children of God? Is it not clear that their doctrine is false? Was Job ever reproved for his strong language against them? Those who would apologize for their little errors, and who say that in the main they were right, as many writers do, have to be almost as severe against Job as they were, and pay more respect to them than to what the Lord has said of both them and Job. But as they are among the earliest human teachers of that doctrine now known as Arminian whose teachers are recorded, Arminians find it necessary to sustain them.

Oh that my words were now written! Oh that they were printed in a book! That they were graven with an iron pen and lead in the rock for ever! This seems to be a strong expression of confidence in the truth he is about to utter, and of its transcendent greatness and importance.

For I know that my Redeemer liveth. Here is that faith which distinguishes the saints from the world and sustains them through every possible trial and temptation, and by which they live the life that they now live in the flesh (Galatians 2:20). Job has described his suffering condition as the most pitiable that we can imagine a poor soul to be in; not only forsaken of all earthly friends, deprived of all earthly comfort, suffering the most excruciating anguish of body and mind, and full of corruption, but with the

great and holy God, whom he feared and delighted to serve, apparently turned to be his enemy, and justly bearing him down with his great anger into the awful chasm of nothingness. Yet, in the midst of all this accumulation of horrors, in the midst of this great darkness and desolation of soul, he gives utterance to these words of strong confidence, that rise from the darkness like a great gleam of unfading light – words that can spring only from “the faith of the Son of God,” of Him who went without fear into the awful darkness and great deeps of death, knowing that he should be brought up again by the glory of the Father and be raised up on high. That faith is in all the saints, but is not known by the natural mind. It looks to things far beyond the reach of mortal sight, enters into that within the veil, lays hold upon the unfading inheritance, and dwells in the glorious light that falls from the throne of God. By that faith Abel saw the glorious work of redemption all complete, saw the word of God for ever settled in heaven, and received the joys of salvation, as all this shall be presented to the faith of the last saint that shall be gathered in.

Job in this place speaks for every child of God in all ages, for it is the same faith that is in them all. He may be regarded as representing in an especial manner the Church under the legal dispensation – not the Jewish Church or nation of Israel, but the true Israelites among that people who stood by faith. This faith is the same, and grasps the same perfection in Christ, whether in those who lived before he came in the flesh or in those who are on the earth now; and so, while we regard Job as especially representing those under the legal dispensation who truly hoped in the Redeemer, and who looked forward to the time when, according to promise, he should stand in the latter day upon the earth, yet we who live in the latter day can answer to all his struggles and to the triumphs of his faith.

How well his condition represents that of those who have been thoroughly measured by the law and found wanting, which is the case with all the people of God experimentally! No righteousness that can answer its just demands; no strength to work its holy requirements; no wisdom to direct according to its perfect rule; no offering to make as an atonement for the violence we have done its infinitely holy and just and good provisions; but feeble, helpless, foolish, vile, and full of corruption, we lie under its curse, with all earthly comfort and satisfaction taken from us, all the sweetness even of earth’s pleasures turned to bitterness in our taste – our glory gone like a dream, our hope removed like a tree. Yet from this lowest place of darkness, when all earthly confidence has failed, and when all human wisdom would fail to see any possible ground for hope in that desperate condition, faith rises in sublime confidence and strength and lifts up her glorious words on high - I know that my Redeemer liveth.

From whom was this glorious knowledge received? For it is not within the grasp of mortal powers, and therefore could not be taught by man. Flesh and blood hath not revealed this, but the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which is in heaven (Matthew 16:17). Now, as fully as before our Redeemer came in the flesh, is this heavenly knowledge hidden from the natural mind, but God hath revealed it unto us by his Spirit (I Corinthians 2:10). That faith which is the gift of God beheld the Redeemer of his people before he came in the flesh. How that redemption should be effected, and what the great joys were it should bring, were not for the saints yet to know. Should the full joys of salvation be now bestowed upon us in this mortal state, what should we have to look forward to? “What a man seeth, why doth he yet hope for? But if we hope for that we see not, then do we with patience wait for it (Romans 8:25).” Here is the patience of Job. “Here is the patience and the faith of the saints,” that in the midst of all their sorrows, notwithstanding all their vileness, with all appearances against them, they will still hope; they must still hope; earth and hell cannot prevent their hopefully looking up and saying by faith, even in the midst of most painful doubts and fears with which the world, the flesh and the devil harass them “I

know that my Redeemer liveth.” They must mourn yet, and suffer and complain under a sense of sins and errors, and have their frequent wanderings opposed by Satan to their hope; but they shall be preserved through all, and in their patience shall possess their souls, and finally rise triumphant over all, to the shame and everlasting contempt of their enemy, and to the glory of Him “who giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.”

It was not the works of the law to which the spiritual people of God among the Israelites looked for salvation, as the fleshly people did and yet do, but to a Mediator, to the Lord their Redeemer, the Holy One of Israel, their Saviour, who was to appear upon the earth. To this coming of our Saviour into the world in human form I understand Job to have alluded by the inspiration of the Spirit when he so confidently says, and that he shall stand in the latter day upon the earth.

This is sometimes understood to refer especially to the final termination of all things. But I cannot understand from the Scriptures that our Saviour is to come again to stand in a bodily or fleshly form upon the earth. Paul declares that we are to know him no more after the flesh (II Corinthians 5:16), neither is any man to be known after the flesh in the kingdom of God. Flesh and blood cannot inherit that kingdom. In the resurrection the body is not raised a natural, but a spiritual body (I Corinthians 15:44,50). This question, however, it will not be necessary to argue particularly here, for I think it will appear that this passage refers to the coming of our Saviour in the flesh “in the end of the world,” or worldly, Jewish dispensation, as was promised, to redeem his people. To this coming the saints under the legal dispensation looked forward as their hope. The latter day is the gospel dispensation, which is frequently called the “last day,” “the last time,” “the end of the world” (Isaiah 2:2; Micah 4:1; Acts 2:17; Hebrews 1:2; I Peter 1:20; I John 2:18; Jude 18). In the dawning of this last day, whose light is the Sun of Righteousness arising with healing in his wings, the Redeemer, “whose goings forth have been from of old, from everlasting,” stood upon the earth.

And though after my skin worms destroy this body, yet in my flesh shall I see God.

The skin, representing the beauty and comeliness, is first destroyed by the loathsome disease of sin. “When thou with rebukes dost chasten man for iniquity, thou makest his beauty to consume away like a moth (Psalm 39:11).” We see how the glory and beauty of Israel faded away under the just rebukes of God. In the descriptions of this that are given in the prophets we see the state of the sinner, when the holiness of the law finds him out, fully set forth. But though this is Job’s present miserable condition, and though he knows that after the beauty has gone the body must also be destroyed in the grave, which is ready for him, yet faith, ever bold and triumphant in its assertions, declares, to the astonishment of his worldly friends at his wonderful presumption, that yet in his flesh he shall see God. This is far beyond human reason, and appears so clearly to contradict it that his friends scorn him. But the faith of the Church, the seed of Abraham, beholds Christ taking upon him the seed of Abraham (Hebrews 2:16), and clothed in the same flesh of which his people were partakers, that in that fleshly body prepared for him he might redeem them. “Inasmuch as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, he also himself likewise took part of the same (Hebrews 2:14).” Job, as a type of the Church, could then say, In my flesh shall I see God; for so the Church saw him – God manifest in the flesh – in the dawning of her gospel state, which the latter end of Job so beautifully and clearly represents; and could declare, as Job for her did declare, Now mine eye seeth thee; or as Simeon declared when he, as a type of the Church ready to depart in the legal or fleshly form, ready to rise and shine in her gospel organization, held the infant Saviour in his arms – “Mine eyes have seen thy salvation.”

But as the end and object of all types and illustrations are the instruction and comfort of the members of the Church, we shall find individual experience in them all. We may understand Job as saying for himself as a saint, In my flesh shall I see God. Though my skin is already consumed, my comeliness gone, and though this body shall also be destroyed, yet I am assured that before this destruction comes I shall have a view of God, “whom no man can approach unto,” while I am yet in the flesh – whom I shall see for myself and mine eyes shall behold, and not another. And this he did, saying, Now mine eye seeth thee. So with every saint. Though he has no merits, and his body cannot endure the presence of that God who is a consuming fire, yet the glory of God in his salvation shall be revealed to him while yet in the flesh; and it shall be for and to himself, and not left to be imparted to him by another who may see it.

Though my reins be consumed within me.

The reins, or human affections, delights and strength, are consumed by the appearance to our view of the great God our Saviour. By that glorious revelation our own weakness and vileness are fully made known to us. When Job saw him he said, Wherefore I abhor myself Moses and Manoah and Gideon and others were forced to acknowledge their nothingness when he appeared especially to them. When Isaiah had a vision of “the Lord sitting upon a throne high and lifted up,” he said, “Woe is me! For I am undone; because I am a man of unclean lips, and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips; for mine eyes have seen the King, the Lord of hosts (Isaiah 6:5).” When Daniel saw the Holy One, he says, “There remained no strength in me; for my comeliness was turned in me into corruption, and I retained no strength (Daniel 10:8).” When Peter first saw the Lord in an exhibition of his power, “he fell down at Jesus’ knees, saying, Depart from me, for I am a sinful man, O Lord (Luke 5:8).” So when the Lord reveals himself to any of his children, their reins are consumed within them, their strength and comeliness disappear; but they rise up in the infinitely greater and more glorious strength and beauty and joy in the Lord, who becomes their portion for ever.

But ye should say, Why persecute we him, seeing the root of the matter is found in me. Here is the only thing we have yet found that would seem to indicate that Job regarded his friends as children of grace. He appears here to acknowledge that they were able to discern in him the root of the matter, or that holy principle by which the children of God are known, but which is evident only to anointed eyes. Yet he is only declaring what they ought to say if they are true teachers or comforters. If they find the root of the matter in him, they ought to withdraw from persecuting or fighting him, though they see what they disapprove. There is a woe pronounced upon any who offend one of the “little ones.” So Job says: Be ye afraid of the sword; for wrath bringeth the punishments of the sword, that ye may know there is a judgment. Like this is the warning in the second Psalm, 12: All the workers of iniquity and opposers of the children of God shall perish as by the sword.

## Chapter XII.

### SECOND ANSWER OF ZOPHAR.

#### *Job 20.*

In this chapter is recorded the second and last speech of Zophar. Therefore do my thoughts cause me to answer, and for this I make haste. I have heard the check of my reproach, and the spirit of my understanding causeth me to answer. He has, no doubt, been waiting very impatiently for his turn again to speak, since Job so boldly and completely met and checked his former reproach. He feels very confident in his own understanding, as all worldly teachers do, and acknowledges that it is the spirit of his understanding that prompts him to answer. Had he that understanding which the Son of God gives (I John 5:20), he would not be in such eager haste to answer.

Knowest thou not this of old, since man was placed upon the earth, that the triumphing of the wicked is short and the joy of the hypocrite but for a moment?

Throughout this discourse he argues this proposition as a natural fact, or rather makes arbitrary statements of particular punishments that shall happen to the wicked. This seems to be his theory, that all the race of mankind is divided into two classes – viz; those whose conduct is just and fair, and those whose course is unjust, cruel, oppressive and disgraceful. Such a distinction the natural mind can easily understand. He takes up the case of one of the latter class, whom he supposes to have been trying to conceal his wicked practices under the cloak of religion, and declares how he will be punished. The kind of troubles he speaks of and his style of bringing them to view show that he speaks of temporal judgments. We observe that the line is sharply and distinctly drawn in his theory between these two classes, all upon the one side being wholly good and all upon the other being wholly evil. But a glance at the world of mankind as it is and as it has always been, simply in the natural view, will prove this theory to be all wrong.

We see, it is true, a great difference in the dispositions and conduct of men. Some by nature are kind and some cruel; some are honest and some dishonest; some appear brave and frank and honorable, and some cowardly and deceitful and vile. But was there ever a time when a line could be drawn with certainty, so that we should see all upon the one side good and all upon the other side evil? Are there not such gradations of good and evil, in this natural view of the subject, as would prevent the possibility of a just separation by any man? The most cruel and dishonest appear to show some better traits at times, while the best and most lovely in men's view are not without visible faults; and between these two extremes there seem to be all degrees of good and evil mixed together in an infinite variety of proportions. What wisdom of man would be able to distribute punishments and rewards with an equal and exact measurement of justice to all? And how would the greatest wisdom that should undertake the task shrink back confounded when it should find the vilest and most cruel of tyrants, as Manasseh, manifesting tenderness, and the best of men, as David, committing the most heinous crime!

Why, then, does Zophar draw so definite a distinction, and describe the wicked and the hypocrite with such confident certainty, and measure so exactly his punishments? It is through enmity to Job and his doctrine, and is but a form of railing, and a most artful form, devised by the enemy of truth; for in describing the hypocrite it is clear that he has only Job in view, and intends the sting of his reproach for

him. He discovers in all that he has said not the least recognition of the truth that all men are sinners, made so by the disobedience of one man; that by nature there is no difference between them, all being, by nature, children of wrath (Ephesians 2:3); that depravity is in the heart of all, and, only as restrained by the grace of God, it manifests itself in the acts of those we call good as well as in those we regard as wicked. Neither does this professed teacher of holy things intimate the necessity of any Redeemer.

But then it is not true, as Zophar has said, that the unjust and wicked, even as he distinguishes them, are made to suffer more in this life, and are cut off sooner and in a more terrible way, than those who are good. On the contrary, they seem to be most prosperous. The wickedest kings have been most powerful, and have had the longest reigns, and the most unscrupulous men have lived to old age in worldly prosperity. But this will appear in the next chapter.

## Chapter XIII.

### SEVENTH ANSWER OF JOB.

#### *Job 21.*

Hear diligently my speech, and let this be your consolations. They have failed to afford him consolation by speaking themselves, and all the consolation he looks for from them, or that they are capable of giving him, is to hear with attention while he reproves their errors and tells them the truth. Suffer me that I may speak; and after that I have spoken, mock on. As for me, is my complaint to man? And if it were so, why should not my spirit be troubled? He has before called them to take notice that he is not complaining to men or asking anything at their hands. His is the cry of a distressed soul before God. But if his complaints were such as they have understood them to be, yet they have not truthfully replied to them nor shown why he should not be troubled, being a just and upright man. He is going to show them that the reasoning of Zophar is all false, and that the righteous, instead of the wicked, suffer here; and he tells them to listen silently and be astonished; and says of himself, in view of the wonderful and inscrutable dealings of God with men, Even when I remember I am afraid, and trembling taketh hold on my flesh.

Now follows the statement of Job which stands in direct contradiction to the assertions of Zophar: Wherefore do the wicked live, become old, yea are mighty in power? This is the strongest form of assertion, taking the fact as something that all who have eyes to look abroad must have seen, and expressing only the wonder why it should be so. It is so unaccountable to the natural mind that God should suffer his enemies to prosper and be happy in the world, while those who love him suffer such great afflictions. Their seed is established in their sight with them, and their offspring before their eyes. Their houses are safe from fear, neither is the rod of God upon them. Their bull gendereth, and faileth not; their cow calveth, and casteth not her calf. They send forth their little ones like a flock, and their children dance. They take the timbrel and harp, and rejoice at the sound of the organ. They spend their days in wealth, and in a moment go down to the grave. In this particular description of their prosperity and personal comfort and joy we see a full and specific contradiction of the particular assertions of Zophar, following the wicked in their enjoyment till the grave receives them.

It is evident from considerations already fully set forth that Job speaks of those who have “spiritual wickedness.” The distinction which he makes between the righteous and the wicked is not, like Zophar’s, of a worldly character, but is the true spiritual distinction. The righteous are those who hope in God and love his word, and the wicked are those who hate his truth and love their own ways, and exalt their own wisdom. He has thus figuratively described the worldly prosperity of false religion, and those who hold it. They have their good things in this life; and since they prosper so well in their worldly religion and are free from terrors even in death – for “there are no bonds in their death,” to be a sign to those who remain – therefore they say unto God – unto that God who reveals himself in the doctrine they hate – Depart from us; for we desire not the knowledge of thy ways. What is the Almighty, that we should serve him? And what profit should we have if we pray unto him? So, even to this time, when the God of election and predestination, the absolutely sovereign God of the Bible, is presented, the same characters say, Why should we serve such a God? What profit would it be to us to pray? If everything is predestinated, and if none are to be saved but the elect, then we can change

nothing by praying, nor advance our interests or affect our future state by serving him. For they know nothing of true prayer or praise to a God they love and adore, but only care to do what they suppose will help them to heaven; and if all is fixed in God's decree, then, they say, they might as well go on in sin; thus proving that they still love it better than holiness.

And now Job speaks of their punishment, for they shall not escape. He has already said that they in a moment go down to the grave; and the peculiar form of this expression concerning their end, after so much prosperity, reminds us of the similar expressions of David when in the light of the sanctuary he was able to see the end of those whose prosperity he had envied: "How are they brought into desolation as in a moment! They are utterly consumed with terrors (Psalm 73:19)."

Lo, their good is not in their hand; the counsel of the wicked is far from me. Of this will we speak in considering a similar expression in the next chapter. How oft is the candle of the wicked put out? And how oft cometh their destruction upon them? These are questions for those to consider who so confidently speak of how the wicked are punished in the world. Look abroad now and consider the cases of all we know, and see if sorrows and afflictions are distributed to those we condemn as we think they ought to be. God distributeth sorrows in his anger. They are as stubble before the wind, and as chaff that the storm carrieth away. God layeth up his iniquity for his children. His goods and enjoyments, in which he had lived in iniquity, are left to his children, who follow on in his ways, undisturbed by any sign from him. He rewardeth him, and he shall know it, but the knowledge is not in this life, so that he can tell those that come after, who shall be left to the iniquitous ways they love. The rich man in the parable appeared to be greatly troubled about his brethren, and would have sent them a warning, but was not allowed. They must be left to manifest what was in them by the simple test of Moses and the prophets. If they heard not them, if they loved not God's word, it would not create a love for it to send them a warning from the dead, although it might frighten them into feigning such a love (Luke 16:31). His eyes shall see his destruction, and he shall drink of the wrath of the Almighty. But in what manner shall this wrath be visited upon him? Man would say, Do to him just what Zophar had declared was to be done to the wicked, and just what Job had suffered; that is, deprive him of his property, afflict him through his children's sufferings and rack his body with pain and his soul with terrors here, where men can witness and gloat over his punishments. But this is not God's way. The rich man did not begin to suffer while men could see him, but after he left the world. The punishment of the wicked is his sudden destruction and sufferings beyond, that mortal eye cannot see. For what pleasure hath he in his house after him when the number of his months is cut off in the midst? This last verse shows that we have correctly stated the doctrine of Job.

This doctrine is directly opposed to human reason, and is not entertained by any of the systems of worldly religion. But, Shall any teach God knowledge? Seeing he judgeth those that are high. He says that his ways are not our ways, but are higher than ours as the heavens are higher than the earth (Isaiah 55:8,9). Job now speaks of something that is often seen, as an illustration of our inability to understand the ways of God, our incapacity for judging and the falsity of Zophar's statements.

One dieth in his full strength, being wholly at ease and quiet. His breasts are full of milk, and his bones are moistened with marrow. And another dieth in the bitterness of his soul, and never eateth with pleasure. And we often wonder why one should suffer so much more than the other. This is among the inscrutable things of God. But Job will not allow a pause here for his friends to pronounce their false judgment, that the sufferer was a more wicked man than the other; but goes on to the end of both: They shall lie down alike in the dust, and the worms shall cover them. So far, therefore, as the human eye can

follow them, their ends are alike; and what advantage now has the one of all his worldly comfort over the other?

Job then challenges them with their thoughts and devices which they have wrongfully imagined concerning him, shows them what is the real end of the wicked – that he is reserved to the day of destruction, and shall be brought forth to the way of wrath, when God, who alone is able, shall declare his way to his face and repay him what he hath done, though he be hidden from mortal reach in the grave – and concludes by asking, How, then, comfort ye me in vain, seeing in your answers there remaineth falsehood?

The questions, Who shall declare his way to his face? and who shall repay him what he hath done? are very suggestive of man's incapacity to decree or execute judgment. Even if it were possible for us to decide upon just the measure and kind of suffering due to any man for his wickedness, yet, before we begin to execute it, he is hidden from us in the grave, and we stand helpless and abashed. Knowing that though we must soon enter those dark portals also, yet we have lost the opportunity of inflicting punishment upon him for ever.

## Chapter XIV.

### THIRD ANSWER OF ELIPHAZ.

#### *Job 22.*

In this chapter we have the third and closing argument of Eliphaz. He asks derisively whether the Almighty can be pleased or profited by Job's righteousness. We may notice these questions more particularly, with the misunderstanding of Job that they imply, and the false intimations they make concerning his doctrine, when we come to the apparently similar questions of Elihu in the thirty-fifth chapter, which are justly asked, but for a very different purpose from that of Eliphaz, and bearing upon an error that he has never discovered.

He now insinuates no longer, but makes his charges plain and direct: Is not thy wickedness great, and thine iniquities infinite? For thou hast taken a pledge from thy brother for naught, and stripped the naked of their clothing. And having thus specified a number of cruel and unjust acts of which he declares Job to be guilty, he says, Therefore snares are round about thee, and sadden fear troubleth thee.

It was absolutely necessary for the maintenance of their false doctrine to insist that Job's afflictions are judgments for personal wickedness; for as soon as they should yield this point, they must yield at once their whole system of religion – a system that presents happiness as a reward for personal merit and good works, and afflictions as a punishment for evil deeds. Therefore Eliphaz continues to repeat his charges of wickedness. Though he can give no direct proof of these evil acts, he chooses to consider his present state as sufficient evidence of them, and also of the aggravating sin of hypocrisy in hiding his crimes under a cloak of religion, and saying, How doth God know? Can he judge through the thick cloud? He therefore takes it upon him to warn Job that God is very high, and so nothing can be hid from his sight.

Hast thou marked the old way which wicked men have trodden? Which were cut down out of time – whose foundation was overflowed with a flood?

This allusion to the old world of wicked men which was destroyed by the flood is made as a proof that God does bring temporal judgments upon men for wickedness. But it sustains the theory which Job has presented in the last chapter, and not at all that of Eliphaz and his friends; for those wicked men, as well as those of Sodom and Gomorrah, lived on the enjoyments of the world until sudden destruction came upon them as in a moment, and they were utterly consumed with terrors, and were not left, like Job, afflicted in the world.

Which said unto God, Depart from us; and what can the Almighty do for them? Yet he filled their houses with good things; but the counsel of the wicked is far from me.

This is similar to the expression used by Job concerning the wicked in the preceding chapter, but stops just short of the description of spiritual wickedness. It is to natural things only that he alludes. He supposes those wicked men, and Job with them, to have thought that they did not need God's help, whom they looked upon as so high, walking in the circuit of heaven, that he would not stoop to notice them, but that they could accomplish their purposes without him. And yet he asserts that God had given them their worldly riches, which he speaks of as good things. Now the words of the wicked, according

to Job's declaration, are, Depart from us, for we desire not the knowledge of thy ways. Here is their rejection of his doctrine. His way of salvation they hate, and desire not the knowledge of it. They desire a religion that gives worldly benefits, bears a worldly glory, "stands in meats and drinks and carnal ordinances," and prospers in the sight of men. But he says, Lo, their good is not in their hand; that is, they cannot hold or retain these worldly good things, and so they are of no real value. And contemplating their false ways and counsel, Job says, The counsel of the wicked is far from me. He does not approve it, nor does he at all follow it. But Eliphaz finds fault that the wicked, whose house the Lord fills with good things, have not acknowledged his help, but have gone on wickedly, and so the Lord has deprived them (witness Job as an example) of these good things. He also says, The counsel of the wicked is far from me.

The righteous see it and are glad, and the innocent laugh them to scorn. So he and his friends rejoice in what they regard as the vengeance of God upon Job, and boastingly present their own continued prosperity as evidence of their goodness. Whereas our substance is not cut down, but the remnant of them the fire consumeth.

Acquaint now thyself with him, and be at peace; thereby good shall come unto thee. Receive, I pray thee, the law from his mouth, and lay up his words in thy heart. If thou return unto the Almighty, thou shalt be built up, thou shalt put away iniquity far from thy tabernacles. Then shalt thou lay up gold as dust, and the gold of Ophir as the stones of the brooks. Yea, the Almighty shall be thy defense, and thou shalt have plenty of silver.

Here we have the closing exhortation of Eliphaz, in which is expressed the whole principle of worldly or Arminian doctrine. Now Eliphaz and his three friends seem to be regarded by many theological writers and speakers as good men, whose doctrine was in the main correct, as well as that of Job, and that their fault was in being too harsh with him, though he deserved a good deal of their reproof. These words of Eliphaz are often used, as are other parts of his and his friends speeches, as a text, and the doctrine they present is generally preached. It appears strange that any should so lightly regard the words of the Lord concerning these men, even if they were unable clearly to discern their error. It was not their manner, but their doctrine, that was wrong. They are not reproofed for speaking harshly to Job, but for speaking falsely of God. Ye have not spoken of me the thing that is right, as my servant Job hath.

Those who have been taught of God, as all of Zion's children are, may easily discover the error that lies in this exhortation of Eliphaz: Acquaint now thyself with him. We are assured that Job already knew and feared God; the very fact, therefore, that Eliphaz thus exhorts him makes it extremely doubtful whether he was himself acquainted with God; for, had he known the true God, he must have recognized that knowledge in Job. Besides, one who knows God will know that such an exhortation, implying that it is in the power of men to become acquainted with him by some endeavor of their own, is false and vain. God is known only by revelation, as the Scriptures abundantly teach, and as every saved sinner knows by experience. "No man knoweth the Father save the Son, and he to whomsoever the Son will reveal him (Matthew 11:27)." We might as well send one out with a torchlight to seek for the sun at midnight as to imply by any exhortation that one in a state of nature, dead in sins, could become acquainted with God the Saviour by the light of natural reason. As the inhabitant of the earth can only see the natural sun and feel the cheering warmth of his beams when he has arisen above the horizon, so the sinner will remain in spiritual darkness, and will be satisfied with that darkness, as Paul was, until

the Sun of Righteousness shall arise upon him with healing in his wings. In his own light only can we see his face. “In thy light shall we see light (Psalm 36:9).”

The command of the Lord, “Seek ye the Lord while he may be found (Isaiah 56:6),” is to his people Israel, who are already acquainted with him. It is addressed to those who are children of the day and not of the night. They are to come out of their dark places – out of error, out of the false systems and associations of the world – and seek the Lord in his truth and in his people, in his promises and in his glory. But it is not addressed to those unto whom the revelation of God has not been made; not addressed literally to the Chaldeans or Assyrians, or to any other nation but Israel; not addressed spiritually to any but spiritual Israel, for whom, and for none others, Christ died and rose again, that they might be “saved in the Lord with an everlasting salvation (Isaiah 45:17).” And it is a command that will be obeyed: “I have not said to the seed of Israel, Seek ye my face in vain.”

This truth, of course, being truth, the natural man will not receive, notwithstanding the plain and abundant testimony of Scripture. “The natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness unto him; neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned (I Corinthians 2:14).” When natural men, therefore, take upon them the forms of religion and begin the business of teaching it before God has called them out of Nature’s darkness into his marvelous light, this is their principal business, to exhort men to acquaint themselves with God. And upon the belief that they can do this, and can be greatly assisted in the work of forming this acquaintance by others, rests the supposed necessity for all the various schools and institutions for teaching and spreading religion which have been established by men as auxiliaries to the Church. Although none of these were established by the Head of the Church, nor authorized by even a suggestion of his in his Word, yet they are supposed to be very necessary, and their human authors and supporters take to themselves great credit for their wisdom and zeal displayed in these inventions, the necessity of which was not foreseen by our Lord when he established his Church.

If the doctrine of Eliphaz and his brethren of this age were correct, then these things would be very advantageous, if not absolutely necessary. But it is not correct, as we have seen, and as those who read even the letter of the Word ought to know. The Church was established by our Saviour precisely as it shall for ever remain, with no changes, either by adding or taking away.

And be at peace. Those who are justified by faith in our Lord Jesus Christ, who died for them, have peace with God (Romans 5:1). He has made this peace for them. All other cries of peace which men are supposed to have made, or to be able to make with God, are vain. “They cry Peace, Peace, when there is no peace (Jeremiah 6:14).”

We need follow this exhortation no farther. The rewards promised to Job are all worldly, as are all those offered now for obtaining the same kind of religion – the privilege of laying up gold as dust, having an all-powerful defense against temporal enemies, and plenty of silver; having all his prayers or worldly desires answered, and all his decrees established. All this is well suited to our worldly mind, but could by no means answer such needs as those of David when he wrote the fifty-first Psalm, after his great transgression; of Peter when bitterly weeping because he had denied his Lord; of Paul, when stricken to the earth by a great light; of the man possessed with a legion of devils; or of Stephen, when his enemies were stoning him to death. All these found, as the poor, heavy-laden sinner always does, in the blessed Redeemer that which satisfies all their needs and spiritual desires, soothes and heals the broken and contrite heart, and gives everlasting deliverance.

## Chapter XV.

### EIGHTH ANSWER OF JOB.

#### *Job 23.*

Then Job answered and said, Even today is my complaint bitter; my stroke is heavier than my groaning.

With what a wonderful power a few words uttered by this afflicted servant of God are made to set forth a great extent of grief! Only by inspiration can language be arranged so fully and touchingly to express the feeling of sorrow and anguish.

So long have his friends been talking, such a multitude of words have they uttered, and yet he still stands alone and desolate in his sorrow, as though no voice had been uttered in his hearing nor any friend come near him; for they have not touched his complaint, nor even seen the place of his grief. Well might he ask, Shall vain words have an end? He is weary of answering those who will still reassert their falsehood and fail to understand the nature of his trouble. He does not, as formerly, reply directly to them, but seems to lose sight of them for a moment as the full bitterness of his condition comes with new force upon him; yet answers their charges of extravagance in his cries, while seeming to say to himself that his groaning has not expressed the full heaviness of his grief. The trouble of our depravity can never be so fully expressed as to satisfy us that it has all been told. Heavy as our groanings are, the affliction is heavier than the expression, and finally wears us out and hushes all our cries in death. But hope sees an eternal purity and joy beyond, obtained for us through the resurrection of the Just One.

Oh that I knew where I might find him! that I might come even to his seat! Eliphaz, ignorant of the experience of God's people, has advised them to acquaint themselves with God. Job expresses the strong desire that is in their hearts even in darkness, the longing for God's presence, and thus answers the false doctrine intimated in that ignorant advice by something above argument. He has known God, that Holy Being who inhabits eternity, and who comes in his power and beauty into the hearts of his children. But now for a long time the light of his countenance has been withdrawn, and the poor sinner is left with his weakness and depravity. But the spirit of prayer and supplication is in his heart, and he feels sure that could he but be enabled to realize God's presence he could plead successfully, and that God's great power would not be exerted against him, but that strength would be given him.

I would order my cause before him and fill my mouth with arguments. I would know the words which he would answer me, and understand what he would say unto me. Will he plead against me with his great power? No; but he would put strength in me. When we have felt a strong and urging desire to plead with God, but could not realize his presence nor enter into that communion we desired, could we but analyze and understand our feelings at such a time and what it is that prompts the desire to plead, we should fully understand these words of Job. He shows by his language the knowledge that only through a Mediator can any come unto God, and that when he finds him and comes to his seat, it will be when he shall see him in the person of his Son, who sits upon his mediatorial throne. There the righteous might dispute with him; so should I be delivered for ever from my Judge. Only by faith in his Redeemer can he speak of himself as righteous before God. That Redeemer has delivered all his people from their Judge, having borne their sins and freely justified them by his blood.

But we cannot rejoice in this redemption while his presence is withheld. In this affliction Job “walks in darkness, and has no light” from the Sun of Righteousness. He longs to see again the God of his salvation, for he knows that he still reigns. Behold, I go forward, but he is not there; and backward, but I cannot perceive him; on the left hand, where he doth work, but I cannot behold him; he hideth himself on the right hand that I cannot see him. How different this from his Arminian friends! They have no such trouble. All they have to do, according to their self-complacent opinion, is to put themselves in motion and they can soon find the Lord, whom they believe to be anxiously waiting and calling for them to come and find him. But they never find that God of whom it is said, “Verily, thou art a God that hidest thyself, O God of Israel, the Saviour (Isaiah 45:15).”

Those from whom God has withdrawn the cheering light of his presence are commended still to trust in him (Isaiah 50:10); and Job clearly expresses this trust in the hearts of God’s people when he says, But he knoweth the way that I take; when he hath tried me, I shall come forth as gold. Here speaks the faith of God’s elect. Though suffering so deeply, he has yet full confidence that it is all in the wise purpose of God and for the trial of his faith, which is much more precious than the trial of gold that perisheth (I Peter 1:7). And not in vain self-confidence, but to express the effect of that trial, he says, My foot hath held his steps, his way have I kept and not declined. Neither have I gone back from the commandment of his lips; I have esteemed the words of his mouth more than my necessary food. This was truly said of him as a man, but even more truly and fully as a saint and as a type of the Church. David frequently asserts the same of himself in the one hundred and nineteenth Psalm and in other places (see particularly Psalm 44:14-20). And the fact of his sins and transgressions does not affect this truth, for it is in Christ that this faithfulness is, and the love of God’s words, which he has given us, no darkness or sin can destroy. Job had continued to maintain sound doctrine, though his friends ridiculed, and though even God in his providence seemed turned against him. There may also be an intimation of the wonder of his natural mind why God should continue to afflict one who continued faithful, for the next expression seems to be the answer of faith to some such wonder.

But he is in one mind, and who can turn him? And what his soul desireth even that he doeth. For he performeth the thing that is appointed for me; and many such things are with him. The doctrine of God’s predestination or absolute decrees concerning all things, which so many are afraid of and will not receive, appears to be Job’s comfort. He is certain that all these afflictions are appointed, and it is because he knows God to be an absolute Sovereign that he is troubled at his presence, and sinks down humbled and softened under his mighty hand. Therefore am I troubled at his presence; when I consider, I am afraid of him. For God maketh my heart soft, and the Almighty troubleth me; because I was not cut off before the darkness, neither hath he covered the darkness from my face.

He trembles at what may yet be in store for him, knowing that God, having with a fixed purpose brought him into this darkness, will not stay his hand until he shall be fully tried.

### **Job 24.**

I will only remark, concerning this chapter, that Job appears to speak here figuratively of false teachers and to show the cruelty of the spirit that moves them, and the dangerous and destructive nature of their doctrine. In other parts of the Scriptures we see the same characters variously represented – as the strange woman whose ways are movable, deceitful and destructive (Proverbs 5:6,7); as the vile person and the churl, who make empty the soul of the hungry, cause the drink of the thirsty to fail, and destroy the poor with lying words (Isaiah 10:1,2; 33:6,7); as the pastors who destroy the sheep (Jeremiah 23);

and in many parts of the New Testament as false prophets and teachers, with the Pharisees, of whose pernicious doctrine the saints are warned to beware.

## Chapter XVI.

### THIRD ANSWER OF BILDAD.

#### *Job 25.*

In this brief answer of Bildad, which closes the argument on the part of Job's friends, the view we have taken of them as men totally ignorant of the truth is fully justified. The persistency of Job in his way seems to have made them silent with astonishment. Bildad, however, finds breath left to merely repeat that argument which stands out prominently in their minds as a sufficient answer to the doctrine of Job and his claims to righteousness. He refers to the greatness and majesty of God, and asks, How then can man be justified with God? Or how can he be clean that is born of a woman? Behold even the moon, and it shineth not; yea, the stars are not pure in his sight. How much less man, that is a worm; and the son of man, which is a worm?

Bildad and his friends do not know how man can be justified or clean, because they do not know God's salvation. This question is not asked, as was a similar one on the part of Job, with a conviction that justification is necessary, and with a strong desire to know how it can be; but this question from Bildad is a strong form of assertion that such a thing cannot possibly be, and also an implication that it is not necessary. Their system of religion does not contemplate the necessity of such a thing. On the contrary, it is regarded as the height of presumption for any one to think of being pure and holy in the sight of God. Their doctrine is, as has been noticed before, that man is to exert his powers to the utmost, and will be rewarded with a position high and bright in proportion to the excellence of his work, but that he will for ever be so far beneath the Almighty in holiness as to be only like a worm. Here, however, is where we shall find the real presumption and vanity of the human heart. If man is as a worm, as he truly is in the sight of God, though they say it with mock humility, it is great presumption to think of the works of such a vile thing being worthy of any reward from a holy God. But of the sinfulness and painfulness of sin they have known nothing, and it matters not to them how far beneath the Almighty they may be, so they are well up in the sight of men. All pride and ignorance and folly!

## Chapter XVII.

### CONCLUSION OF JOB'S PARABLE.

#### ***Job 26.***

But Job answered and said, How hast thou helped him that is without power? How savest thou the arm that hath no strength? How hast thou counseled him that hath no wisdom? And how hast thou plentifully declared the thing as it is? There seems to be some irony in these questions, and especially the last. Bildad has not spoken too highly of the greatness of God, nor is his speech any ways adequate to the subject, but yet he has spoken false doctrine, as we have already shown partially, and as is fully demonstrated by these questions, in which the condition of the quickened sinner is briefly presented, without power, without strength, without wisdom. How has the speech of Bildad helped one who is in such a case? It may suit one who vainly imagines himself possessed of these, but it is no good to the poor sinner to be told that he cannot hope to be clean in God's sight, and that he must earn whatever happiness he shall get. Nothing short of infinite purity and holiness will satisfy the desires of the sinsick soul. The righteousness after which he hungers and thirsts is nothing less than the righteousness of God, and these desires and hungerings, presumptions as they seem to the world, are fully satisfied in our blessed Redeemer, who cleanses us from all sin and clothes us with his own righteousness, so that we are made the righteousness of God in him (II Corinthians 5:21).

Bildad appears to have thought that Job must have forgotten how great and powerful God is, or he could never have dared to speak of coming to where he was and pleading with him. But Job now goes far beyond his friend in ascribing greatness and power to him.

#### ***Job 27.***

Moreover, Job continued his parable and said – We have regarded Job's speech from the beginning as a parable, and now it is expressly so called. Through his parable, from the time he first "opened his mouth," the deep things of God have been presented, "the mysteries of the kingdom" or Church of God, which our Saviour said were spoken to them that are without in parables (Mark 4:11).

As God liveth, who hath taken away my judgment; and the Almighty who hath vexed my soul.

Being a perfect and an upright man, men would judge him worthy of peace and prosperity. The world would regard this as his rightful judgment; and so fixed is it in the minds of his friends that those who are just must be favored of God in the world, that the very fact of Job's being afflicted seems to them sufficient evidence that he is wicked. Whatever has been done to him he has frequently acknowledged to be from God. There may be expressed here the rebellious and impatient feeling of the carnal mind in the allusion to God's having taken away his judgment and vexed his soul, but we must remember that it is as one of the saints that he says it. He has questioned concerning God's dealing thus afflictively with him while he appears to favor the wicked. But so have Jeremiah and other inspired men: "Righteous art thou, O Lord, when I plead with thee, yet let me talk with thee of thy judgments. Wherefore doth the way of the wicked prosper? Wherefore are all they happy that deal very treacherously (Jeremiah 12:1)."

Job in this place appears to express the spirit of the prophet when he speaks for Zion: "Woe is me for my hurt! My wound is grievous; but I said, Truly this is a grief, and I must bear it. My tabernacle is

spoiled, and all my cords are broken; my children are gone forth of me, and they are not; there is none to set up my tent any more, and to set up my curtains (Jeremiah 10:19,20).” There seems a great similarity in this to Job’s condition and also to his spirit here. He speaks of God as having done this to him in order to set forth clearly his steadfastness in the faith and his trust. Although his condition has been rendered so sad, and apparently without cause, yet as that God liveth, All the while my breath is in me, and the Spirit of God is in my nostrils. My lips shall not speak wickedness nor my tongue utter deceit. God forbid that I should justify you; till I die I will not remove my integrity from me. My righteousness I hold fast, and will not let it go; my heart shall not reproach me so long as I live.

This certainly appears to the natural reason very inconsistent in Job to speak so confidently of his integrity and his freedom from self-reproach, while he has acknowledged having sinned and has so bitterly complained of corruption. But it is “all plain to him that understandeth (Proverbs 8:9).” Here we are again called to observe the secret of the Christian experience of the way of salvation. The same Paul who acknowledged himself the chief of sinners and said, “O wretched man that I am!” said, also, “I have kept the faith,” and knew that a crown of righteousness was laid up for him. The righteousness of the saint is in the doctrine which Job held so fast and would not let go – in the Redeemer which that doctrine presents. Weak and helpless as he feels in himself, yet he is assured that those who speak a doctrine he hates shall not steal away his heart from that truth, from that precious hope of righteousness, nor induce him to speak deceitfully concerning himself or the truth, and so justify them. Should he talk differently from what he feels, his heart must reproach him. While Job represents the “perfect man,” or people of God under all their afflictions and their suffering on account of sin, he also manifests their steadfastness in the truth.

The remaining portion of this chapter presents the case of Job’s enemy, the wicked man, “the man of sin,” or Antichrist, showing what his punishment shall be at the hand of God. “When the wicked spring as the grass, and when all the workers of iniquity do flourish, it is that they shall be destroyed for ever (Psalm 92:7).” The sword of God’s wrath awaits all the children of Babylon, and their end is appointed in judgment.

## **Job 28.**

Surely there is a vein for the silver and a place for the gold where they find it. Iron is taken out of the earth and brass is molten out of the stone. Here are four most valuable metals mentioned, with a suggestion of man’s power as manifested in getting them out of the earth and refining them for use. He setteth an end to darkness and searcheth out all perfection: the stones of darkness and the shadow of death. This refers probably to man’s power to overcome the obstacle of darkness in the depths of the earth, and search out the precious stones and treasures that are concealed there in an obscurity that is like the shadow of death; and so figuratively sets forth his power to search out all the perfection of the earth and set an end to the gross darkness of natural ignorance by sending forth the light of natural or earthly knowledge. Before him, as he digs down and presses onward in his explorations, the flood breaketh out from the inhabitant; even the waters forgotten of the foot; they are dried up, they are gone away from men. In the depths of the mine the waters that break out where the foot of man has never been are conducted away, so that the search of man for precious things is not hindered by them. As for the earth, out of it cometh bread, and under it is turned up as it were fire. The stones of it are the place of sapphires, and it hath dust of gold. Bread is another most necessary thing for man which the earth yields, and the industry and wisdom of man in cultivating and preparing it for use are suggested. The precious stones that are

There is a path which no fowl knoweth, and which the vulture's eye hath not seen. The lion's whelps have not trodden it, nor the fierce lion passed by it. If any allusion is made here to that secret path by which men enter into the deep places of the earth in search of precious things, it is only to represent that spiritual path of true wisdom into which the children of wisdom are brought, but which is hidden from all earthly knowledge. The manner in which it is spoken of, and the nature of the animals mentioned, show this. The fowls of the air seem to represent men of worldly religion; the vulture is a ravenous bird with a very searching sight, and the lion goes about to devour. But with all his keenness of sight, which can glance over all the earth, the vulture cannot see this path; and with all his strength, the lion cannot enter it. The prophet says of it: "No lion shall be there, nor any ravenous beast shall go up thereon; it shall not be found there; but the redeemed shall walk there (Isaiah 35:9)."

With all his power to search out earthly knowledge, man is incapable of finding this path. His power is further shown in the few following verses: He putteth forth his hand upon the rock; he overturneth the mountains by the roots. He cutteth out rivers among the rocks, and his eye seeth every precious thing. He bindeth the floods from overflowing, and the thing that is hid bringeth he forth to light. All this power man is very proud of, and regards himself as able to reach, by the exercise of his understanding, all spiritual treasures, as well as natural; and so we have a world full of vain religion. But Job asks: But where shall wisdom be found? And where is the place of understanding? Man knoweth not the price thereof, neither is it found in the land of the living. The depth saith, It is not in me; and the sea saith, It is not in me.

Gold and precious things which the earth produces, and which man is able to find, are now mentioned; but the price of wisdom is infinitely above them all. And the question is repeated, Whence, then, cometh wisdom? And where is the place of understanding? Seeing it is hid from the eyes of all living, and kept close from the fowls of the air.

The search has been thorough, but wisdom is not found upon the earth, and is now positively declared to be hidden from the eyes of all living. In this peculiarly striking manner is the truth enforced which the Scriptures teach and which the saints have learned, that the knowledge of God and of salvation, the true wisdom, is not to be attained by man.

Destruction and death say, We have heard the fame thereof with our ears. Here is the first intimation we have had of any knowledge of it, and a strange source we should think it from which to receive that knowledge. But the path that leads to wisdom passes through destruction and death. They lie between us and it. From that direction only can we hear of wisdom. They have heard the fame thereof; for wisdom, in the person of our Saviour, has fought with and conquered death, and caused destruction to come to a perpetual end (Psalm 9:6). Our earthly hopes are destroyed, and we die to the world before we find the place of wisdom. All the treasures of wisdom and knowledge are hid with Christ in God.

God understandeth the way thereof, and he knoweth the place thereof, for knowledge in heaven and earth is declared to be his. When he made a decree for the rain, and a way for the lightning of the thunder, then did he see it and declare it; he prepared it, yea, and searched it out. And unto man he said, Behold the fear of the Lord, that is wisdom; and to depart from evil is understanding.

Here is the way of salvation, in which that wisdom is manifested that is described in the eighth chapter of Proverbs. It is ancient, and its decrees were before the world was made. In Christ all his people were chosen before the foundation of the world, and when he is manifested to them in time it is as the wisdom of God. He is of God made unto them wisdom (I Corinthians 1:30).

It is the teaching of the Scriptures that no man can know God but by revelation – that by nature all men are inclined to evil and have no fear of God before their eyes; the people of God in their natural condition, as well as all others, being wise to do evil, but to do good they have no understanding (Jeremiah 4:22), and that the Ethiopian will as soon and as easily change his skin and the leopard his spots as they will cease to do evil and learn to do well. When they shall fear the Lord and depart from evil, then they will have found wisdom and the place of understanding. But throughout this chapter it is strongly set forth that man knows not this wisdom, nor has power to see it. He is totally corrupt, and cannot do good in the sight of God. But the Lord knows the place of wisdom, and he is able to give a knowledge of it to man, and to give him a capacity to receive that knowledge. It is all done under the new covenant. He puts his fear in their hearts (Jeremiah 32:40). He turns them from darkness to light, from disobedience to the wisdom of the just, working in them both to will and to do of his own good pleasure.

That path which no fowl knoweth and which no man has seen is the only way to depart from evil. We might think, at first glance, as the natural man would say, that to depart from evil is but to cease evil actions and as many of our evil thoughts as we can. But a moment's reflection, keeping in view the depraved condition of man, will show that there would be no departure from evil in changing our habits unless there should be a radical change of the heart. Being totally corrupt, a man can only depart from evil by departing from himself. Here is where the wisdom and understanding of man fail, but the wisdom of God shows the way. Christ says, "I am the way." To depart from evil is to depart from ourselves to him; and to do this he has given us an understanding (I John 5:20). He gives us a knowledge of himself by bringing us to himself. As his children we no longer hope in ourselves, but we hope in him and abide in him. He is our righteousness, our perfection. We live by the faith of him. The Pharisees go about to establish their own righteousness, and endeavor to save themselves by good works; but they can never in this way depart from evil. They may become whited, but they are sepulchers still, full of corruption, as our Saviour said of them. There is no other way to depart from evil but the way our Saviour went, through death. We are "crucified with Christ;" we are "buried with him by baptism into death;" we are "dead to the law" and "to the world;" we are "risen with him through faith of the operation of God, who hath raised him from the dead;" and now we "live not unto ourselves, but unto him;" we walk in him in newness of life, "serving him in newness of the spirit and not in the oldness of the letter (Romans 7:6);" endeavoring to please him, not for a slavish fear, but from a heart of love.

Here is a safe and a glorious way. He has borne our sins, and they cannot be charged against us. No harm, therefore, can come to us, while trusting in him. No lion can devour us. No eye can see us as travelers in that way save those who are with us there. It is "the secret place of the Most High," and those who are in it "abide under the shadow of the Almighty." It is the King's highway of holiness. The way that seems right to a man is the way of death, but this is the way of life and peace and everlasting glory.

### ***Job 29.***

Moreover, Job continued his parable, and said, Oh that I were as in months past, as in the days when God preserved me; when his candle shined upon my head, and by his light I walked through darkness; as I was in the days of my youth, when the secret of God was upon my tabernacle; when the Almighty was yet with me, when my children were about me; when I washed my steps with butter, and the rock

poured me out rivers of oil; when I went out to the gate through the city, when I prepared my seat in the street!

This chapter continues with the description of Job's former prosperous and happy condition, of the homage paid to him by the great and noble of the earth, and of the blessings he received from the poor and perishing because of his kindness to them. This allusion to his past happiness is most pathetic and touching because of his present darkness and sorrow. We are not to regard what he thus says of himself as at all overstated, as though prompted by a spirit of self-praise, but as the plain truth.

Looking at the Church under her three dispensations, I think we may see the first of these, the patriarchal dispensation, represented by the former condition of Job, which he is now remembering in his affliction. The people of God do not seem to have received rebukes or chastisements then as they did under the legal dispensation. The Lord seemed in an especial manner to preserve them then, to grant them the light of his presence, and to speak with them not by prophets, but as friend to friend. Abraham was, like Job, the greatest of all the men of the East, as were also Isaac and Jacob. He had abundance of all possessions, being very rich in cattle and in silver and gold. Princes and nobles bowed themselves and paid him homage. Kings were overcome by him and destroyed. Like Job, he brake the jaws of the wicked, and plucked the spoil out of his teeth. The Lord thus speaks of him by the prophet: "Who raised up the righteous man from the East, called him to his foot, gave the nations before him, and made him rule over kings? He gave them as dust to his sword, and as the driven stubble to his bow. He pursued them, and passed safely; even by the way that he had not gone with his feet (Isaiah 41:2,3)." I merely intimate this application.

More particularly and more clearly do the first and second conditions of Job represent the early and latter conditions of Israel under the legal dispensation. At first the Lord preserved them. His candle shined upon them. He directed them safely by the pillar of fire, by Moses and Joshua and the Judges. Their abundance is well expressed by the words of Job: I washed my steps with butter, and the rock poured me out rivers of oil. Their enemies could not curse them, but must bless them altogether. Princes and nobles feared them, and nations either fled before them or bowed in humble submission. The Lord caused Balaam to say of them, in that early period of their history, "He hath not beheld iniquity in Jacob, neither hath he seen perverseness in Israel;" righteousness, therefore, clothed them as a garment. This period is afterward referred to as one of exceeding joy: "Therefore I will allure her and bring her into the wilderness, and speak comfortably to her. And I will give her her vineyards from thence, and the valley of Achor for a door of hope; and she shall sing there as in the days of her youth, as in the day when she came up out of the land of Egypt (Hosea 2:14,15)."

Though Israel was smitten from time to time for her transgressions, the duration of his chastisement would be brief. The Lord continued to preserve her as a nation, and her prosperity and greatness continued increasing steadily until they reached their culmination in the exceeding glory of Solomon's reign. From that time the Lord withdrew his preserving care, her glory was taken away, the crown fell from her head, and she was led into captivity and great affliction. While in this sad state there was great mourning. The prophets mournfully allude to the former glory of Zion, or the people of God, as Job does to his former prosperity: "How doth the city sit solitary that was full of people! How is she become as a widow! She that was great among the nations and prince among the provinces, how is she become tributary (Lamentations 1:1)!"

So in all the prophets and the Psalms we find a bewailing of past happiness gone; the children of the captivity weeping when they remember Zion; Rachel mourning for her children; the people of the Most

High deprecating his anger and shrinking under the stroke of his hand; while yet words of comfort are heard by them in this wilderness, and assurances that God will “turn their captivity,” and cause their future state far to exceed their former in glory, as was the case with Job. It is the true Israelites, the elect of God among that people, that Job’s parable here presents. Like him, they mourned the decay of former greatness and the loss of their comforts, caused by the withdrawal of God’s face from them, yet held fast their integrity, humbly received the word of God by the prophets, which their brethren according to the flesh spurned, were assured that their Redeemer lived, and looked with steady hope and unwavering faith to the time when he should stand upon the earth and restore them.

In representing the Church, Job presents, as we have shown, the experience of each member. Every Christian can see to some extent an application of these expressions to himself, when, in present darkness, he has looked back to former seasons of joy and comfort when the secret of God was upon his tabernacle. When we are in spiritual prosperity we realize the exaltation spiritually that is here figuratively described. The Lord is our light and our joy; we walk upon high places, and we speak with a wisdom and authority far above that of kings and nobles, for we speak the word of God. The young men saw me and hid themselves, and the aged arose and stood up. The princes refrained talking, and laid their hand upon their mouth. The nobles held their peace, and their tongue cleaved to the roof of their mouth. So earthly wisdom fails before those who “speak the wisdom of God,” and the mouths of gainsayers are stopped. This is not an effect fully seen by the natural eye, but it is fully realized by the believer in his hour of spiritual triumph and joy. Then our words are words of comfort to the poor and oppressed – the convicted sinner, who is “ready to perish.” The blessing of him that was ready to perish came upon me, and I caused the widow’s heart to sing for joy. All this was literally true of Job, and so he could speak as a type of the Church in this respect.

It is only when our faith is clear and our hearts filled with light and joy that we can triumph in the righteousness and wisdom of God. I put on righteousness, and it clothed me; my judgment was as a robe and a diadem. I was eyes to the blind, and feet was to the lame. I was a father to the poor, and the cause which I knew not I searched out. Our Saviour was as is here described while on earth, and in his truth he gives still the same help. His followers desire to seek out the spiritually lame and blind and minister to them, as they do to those who are temporally poor. The words of truth which they speak have a power to search out and manifest the poor of the kingdom, the quickened souls who feel their poverty and helplessness.

Then I said, I shall die in my nest, and I shall multiply my days as the sand. So when comfortable in the land of Canaan the children of God looked to his promise and supposed they should dwell there for ever. So we, in our days of gladness, have felt as though this comfort must continue, and as though the days of our mourning were ended. How delightful it was! My root was spread out by the waters, and the dew lay all night upon my branch. Thus, as “trees of righteousness” abundantly watered by the “river of God’s pleasures,” and refreshed with his doctrine that distills like the dew, we had no further need. My glory was fresh in me, and my bow was renewed in my hand.

But, alas! When God in infinite wisdom and goodness, for the trial of our faith, “holdeth back the face of his throne, and spreadeth his cloud upon it,” how soon does our power fade away and the glory fall from our head! Then we see where our strength was, being left in our own weakness, and in the condition described at the close of the next chapter.

### **Job 30.**

But now they that are younger than I have me in derision, whose fathers I would have disdained to have set with the dogs of my flock.

While Job speaks thus of those who now oppose him, describing their former inferior and contemptible condition, he at the same time presents in this figurative manner the relative conditions of the people of God and the sons of Belial, the real degradation of those who love false doctrine and hate the truth, and the recognition of this degradation by the saints when they enjoy the light and comfort of the Spirit.

Error is younger than truth, and its devotees are so represented here. The truth is as old as the throne of God, and was given to his people from the beginning, causing them to praise and honor him; and the essence of this truth is that God is an unchangeable Sovereign, and receives counsel or help from none. From the wicked hearts of men, where the prince of darkness works, rises the false doctrine that man has power to exalt himself and a right to demand of God a recognition of his good works. Cain made this demand at the first, and those who “go in the way of Cain” have made it ever since; and as God answered him, so will he answer them. These are proud and vain of their fancied strength, but the saints hold them in contempt: Yea, whereto might the strength of their hands profit me, in whom old age was perished? For want and famine they were solitary; fleeing into the wilderness in former time desolate and waste – who cut up mallows by the bushes and juniper roots for their meat.

In thus describing the beggarly condition of the fathers of those who now vaunt themselves against him, he most clearly presents the earthly habitation and miserable condition of those who falsely exalt themselves spiritually, as viewed by the saints from their true exaltation in the mountain of the Lord’s house. In their seasons of exaltation they see the dwelling-place of the wicked, in which they take such pride, to be but a wilderness, desolate and waste. Here their fathers dug out of the earth the food upon which these children were reared, feeding them with earthly and not heavenly food, or doctrine. But the saints come of a royal line, and are nurtured upon royal fare. Job dwells upon the low and groveling condition and character of those from whom these proud men have sprung. They were driven forth from among men – the men of God – (they cried after them as after a thief); to dwell in the cliffs of the valleys, in the caves of the earth and in the rocks. The men of God, the inhabitants of Zion, will have no fellowship with these children of fools and base men, viler than the earth.

But now that darkness and affliction have come, now that the Lord has made us feel the great weakness of our strength and the weight of our natural depravity, they come with their taunts and derision. And now am I their song; yea, I am their byword. They abhor me, they flee far from me, and spare not to spit in my face. Because he hath loosed my cord and afflicted me, they also have let loose the bridle before me. The same complaint is made by the Psalmist and the prophets, speaking for Zion. (See Psalm 44:13-18; 69: 12,26; Lamentations 3:14,63.)

Upon my right hand rise the youth; they push away my feet, and raise up against me the ways of their destruction.

These teachers of false doctrine strive to push off the feet of the saints from the Rock. It is of their doctrine the wise man speaks when he says, “There is a way that seemeth right unto a man, but the end thereof are the ways of death.” These ways of their destruction they raise up against the saints in their affliction, and they seem greatly to mar their path and set forward their calamity. They came upon me as a wide breaking-in of waters; in the desolation they rolled themselves upon me. It is only when we are in darkness that they can thus afflict. When terrors are turned upon us, then they pursue our soul as

the wind, and our welfare passeth away as a cloud. It was when our Saviour's soul was "exceeding sorrowful, even unto death," that he said, "This is your hour, and the power of darkness." They persecute them whom God has wounded. When it is light with us and faith triumphs they cannot afflict our souls.

Through the remainder of this chapter we follow Job in bitter complaints of God's afflicting hand, like those he has before given expression to. If we condemn his strong expressions, we must remember that David and Jeremiah and other inspired writers have left on record similar complaints, and fully as strong; and it has been my desire to show that Job but expresses feelings that are common to saints in like trouble and peculiar to them, and that the rebukes of the Lord by Elihu and out of the whirlwind are the only ones that can be given for them.

His words are deeply touching, even to the natural mind; but it is only when we are heavily burdened under a sense of our infirmities and unworthiness that we can truly appreciate the sorrowful burden of his speech. We remember how kindly we felt toward all, how we sympathized with the afflicted, how full of love and holy desires we were; and now why have we been left to such desolation of soul, such condemnation? Did not I weep for him that was in trouble? Was not my soul grieved for the poor? When I looked for good, then evil came upon me, and when I waited for light, then came darkness. And all this affliction he ascribes to the hand of God, who does not hear him, who has become cruel to him, whose strong hand opposes him. Such feelings are within us under the like circumstances, yet we may notice that we would hardly dare to speak them, feeling that they are wrong – undoubtedly receiving the spiritual rebuke of the Lord for them. Jeremiah complains, "Thou hast covered thyself with a cloud, that our prayer should not pass through (Lamentations 3:44)." David declares, like Job, that God has afflicted his people, though they have not turned from him: "All this is come upon us; yet have we not forgotten thee, neither have we dealt falsely in thy covenant. Our heart is not turned back, neither have our steps declined from thy way; though thou hast sore broken us in the place of dragons, and covered us with the shadow of death (Psalm 44:17-19)."

We go mourning without the sun. We acknowledge in the congregation of the righteous how unworthy we are to be with them. Whereas in former times we could say, "I am a companion of all them that fear thee," now we declare ourselves worthy only of companionship with the vilest, though we abhor them. We cannot sing the Lord's song in this strange land of affliction, but, like the children of the captivity, hang our harps upon the willows, for they are tuned only to mourning. I stood up, and I cried in the congregation. I am a brother to dragons and a companion to owls. My skin is black upon me, and my bones are burned with heat. My harp also is turned to mourning, and my organ into the voice of them that weep.

### ***Job 31.***

This chapter contains specific denials of the iniquities that have been charged against him; and in each of these assertions of his rectitude there is spiritual instruction concerning the holiness of the Church, the purity of the new man, in thought and word and deed. The Holy Spirit in the saints causes them to hate all injustice and falsehood and hypocrisy. It causes them, therefore, freely to acknowledge before God the sinfulness of the flesh. Knowing their strong desires after holiness, and their humility of soul and sorrow for sin, their desire is that God would answer them. They are willing to abide his answer, but it is only because they know by faith that their Redeemer liveth. If their adversary also would write a book, it would not be to their condemnation. Let him make a record of every fault, of every sin, yet he would bring only false accusations; for all those sins are washed away by the Redeemer's blood.

And while the enemy notes the wanderings of the flesh, he does not record the hatred of sin, the contrition, the hungering after righteousness that is in their heart, nor the belief in God which is counted unto them for righteousness. All that the enemy, “the accuser of the brethren,” could write against them would but more fully show the greatness of their Saviour’s work in their redemption and the wonders of his love, and so would be as a crown unto them.

We will now pass from this. And so we come to the conclusion of Job’s words in this great controversy. We shall hear from him again, but in a different strain.

## Chapter XVIII.

### ELIHU'S ANSWER.

#### *Job 32.*

So these three men ceased to answer Job, because he was righteous in his own eyes. Then was kindled the wrath of Elihu, the son of Barachel the Buzite, of the kindred of Ram: against Job was his wrath kindled, because he justified himself rather than God; also against his three friends was his wrath kindled, because they had found no answer, and yet had condemned Job.

Here is a new character. He appears unannounced, delivers his message, and is heard of no more. He appears to have been a listener to all that has been said, yet by neither Job, nor his friends, nor by the inspired writer of the book has any notice been taken of him, nor is his speech alluded to afterward.

I regard him as representing the gospel ministry, and as having in this discourse made full proof of his ministry, according to the direction of Paul, by preaching the word, rebuking, reproving, exhorting, with all long-suffering and doctrine (II Timothy 4:2,5).

The meaning of his name, Elihu, is, He is my God himself; that of his father's name, Barachel, Who bows before God; and Ram, of whose kindred he was, signifies, Elevated, sublime. As the names used in Scripture have a signification appropriate to the character of those who bear them, we may take from the meaning of these names as evidence that Elihu was a true servant of God.

I will mention here a few evidences drawn from what he says of himself in this chapter:

1st. He was younger than the others, which must be the case if he is intended to represent the gospel ministry. The system of works is older than that of grace in the order of time, although, as we have said, truth is older than error essentially. "That was not first which was spiritual, but that which was natural, and afterward that which is spiritual (I Corinthians 15:46)." The legal dispensation preceded the gospel.

2nd. He shows personal humility in waiting for the others to speak, the fearing to speak himself hitherto because of his youth. He said, I am young, and ye are very old; wherefore I was afraid, and durst not show you mine opinion.

3rd. He does not speak because he lacks a high regard naturally for the persons of the others. He has listened carefully and respectfully to their words, and has weighed them well. But it is clear that they do not understand the truth, and their words are without true wisdom. And now his own mind is filled up, and swells with the knowledge of the truth. Yet he would that another might speak this glorious doctrine, for he does not feel worthy. 1 said, Days should speak and multitude of years should teach wisdom. So the called servant always feels himself unworthy and shrinks from so great a work, and regards some other as more fit and worthy to be sent. So Moses and Isaiah and Jeremiah and Amos would have drawn back, considering themselves too weak and young, and altogether unfit for the sublime work of carrying God's message. And so Paul expresses his self-depreciating feeling and that of all who are called to the work. But the Lord will have his strength made

perfect in weakness, and places the gospel “treasure in earthen vessels that the excellency of the power may be of God and not of us.”

4th. We may also notice here a reason for the fact that Elihu is not made mention of. The importance is attached not to himself, but to the word which he preaches.

5th. Elihu gives another evidence of his character as representing the ministers of God by ascribing his knowledge to the inspiration of God, instead of taking the credit to himself of having obtained it by his own power. But there is a spirit in man, and the inspiration of the Almighty giveth them understanding.

6th. It is not pride or vanity that causes Elihu to speak, but simply the wonderful and mysterious power of the truth working within him, and begetting a desire to speak as imperious as that of a thirsty man to drink. The truth must be spoken and vindicated, and in the absorbing contemplation of it he loses sight of himself and forgets his fear. He waits in vain for another to speak. When I had waited (for they spake not, but stood still and answered no more), I said, I will answer also my part, I also will show mine opinion. For I am full of matter; the spirit within me constraineth me. Behold, my belly is as wine which hath no vent; it is ready to burst like new bottles. I will speak, that I may be refreshed; I will open my lips and answer. So Jeremiah says: “But his word was in my heart as a burning fire shut up in my bones, and I was weary with forbearing, and I could not stay (Jeremiah 20:9).”

7th. Elihu knew not to give flattering titles to man. He had nothing to do with any man but to preach to him the word of God, which levels all distinctions among men and ascribes righteousness alone to God (I Thessalonians 2:4,5).

Other evidences that Elihu represents the gospel ministry will continually appear, but the clearest will be seen in the character of what he preaches.

What he says of the three friends sustains the view we have taken throughout the consideration of their speeches that they spake falsely and ignorantly: They had found no answer, and yet had condemned Job. Yea, I attended unto you, and behold, there was none of you that convinced Job or that answered his words. They had condemned him upon false grounds. He was to be reprov'd, but not for anything that they could see. Lest ye should say, We have found out wisdom: God thrusteth him down, not man. It was not even Elihu as a man that could administer reproof, but as a servant of God, as in God's stead. Now he hath not directed his words against me, neither will I answer him with your speeches. We shall see that Elihu does not answer with their speeches as we proceed to consider his sermon.

### **Job 33.**

Wherefore, Job, I pray thee hear my speeches and hearken to all my words. Thus, as a servant of God, he calls with assurance for the attention of Job to what he shall say; for poor and ignorant as he feels in himself, he has no doubt of the excellency of the truth given him to preach, nor of the uprightness with which he shall speak it. My words shall be of the uprightness of my heart, and my lips shall utter knowledge clearly.

Job has desired that God would appear to him disrobed of the awful terrors of his majesty, so that he might reason with him. His wish is now gratified. Here is one whom the Spirit of God hath made and

the breath of the Almighty hath given life – a creature of God, like Job. He therefore calls Job to answer if he can. Behold, I am according to thy wish in God's stead; I also am formed out of the clay. Behold, my terror shall not make thee afraid, neither shall my hand be heavy upon thee. We cannot but see an intimation here of the great favor that it is to us in our weakness to have the word ministered to us by brethren like ourselves; and from this to see a little of the wonderful goodness of God to his tempted children, that they have a Saviour and Advocate who knows all their weakness and infirmities, having been tempted in all points like as they are, yet without sin. But though Elihu be of clay, he cannot speak but the words of God. To the servant of God he has said, "Preach the preaching that I shall bid thee." Job therefore cannot enter into judgment or argument with him to answer his words, but only to humbly acknowledge them. Peter said to Cornelius, "Rise up, for I also am a man;" yet he was to speak the unchangeable and unanswerable words of God.

We now come to the specific objections of Elihu against Job: Surely thou hast spoken in mine hearing, and I have heard the voice of thy words, saying, I am clean without transgression; I am innocent; neither is there iniquity in me. Behold, he findeth occasions against me, he counteth me for his enemy. He putteth my feet in the stocks, he marketh all my paths.

Now we will observe, first, that Elihu has made a fair statement of what Job has said. His friends seldom did so, for they could not understand his experience, and so whenever they deviated from his express words they misrepresented him. For instance, Zophar charged him with saying, I am clean in thine eyes (11:4); but this was more than Job had said. He has continually acknowledged in words and in the spirit of his speech that in the eyes of God he is a sinner (7:20). Yet he has contended that he was clean without transgression, as Elihu says. And this was true in any sense in which the eyes of man could mark him, for he was free from crime and all evil conduct. He was free also in the eye of the law, for he was a perfect and upright man. But his perfection was in a Redeemer, and his ability to walk uprightly and eschew evil was through grace in that Redeemer. In himself he was weak and corrupt by nature, and this the Lord was now fully causing him to realize.

We will next observe carefully the nature of Elihu's answer to these words of Job, and we shall see that it differs essentially from the answers of his three friends, as he has said that he would not answer him with their speeches. They have uniformly answered him by denying the truth of his declarations concerning his own innocence, and by multiplying charges of wickedness against him. But Elihu does not contradict him, nor does he here or elsewhere bring against him one such charge as they have. But he reproves him for murmuring against God and complaining against his dealings with him. He says, Behold in this thou art not just; not that he has not spoken truly concerning the cleanness of his hands from evil nor concerning the heaviness of God's hand upon him, but that he is not just or right in thus complaining. That this is his meaning the following words clearly show: I will answer thee – how? By telling him that he is guilty, and that God is only punishing him for his evil deeds? No; nothing of the kind. I will answer thee that God is greater than man. Why dost thou strive against him? for he giveth not account of any of his matters. He does not deal with men according to man's judgment. His ways are higher than ours as the heavens are higher than the earth. He gives comfort or affliction as he will, and always in infinite wisdom, and Job is reprov'd for striving against him. And by the same words, let us remember, David and Jeremiah and all the saints are reprov'd. They are not to complain, but humble themselves under the mighty hand of God.

Concerning these words of Job that are here quoted, we have seen heretofore how they express the experience of the saints. But we must remember that in our experience we are continually feeling the

rebukes and reproofs of God within us, such as Elihu gives. Let us now consider Job's case a little further. Suppose one to be perfect in the sight of men, so that none, upon the most careful scrutiny, could find cause for complaint; yet such a one in the sight of God feels himself, as he is by nature, a miserable sinner, and groans, being burdened. Let him, however, be accused of wicked acts by those who know nothing by experience of man's condition, and we can easily see how indignantly he would repel their false accusations. And he would tell them, as Job did, that God multiplieth his wounds without cause – such cause as they can see. In their sight he is not a sinner. But in the sight of God he is depraved totally, except as he is graciously regarded through a Saviour; and the gospel always finds the one to whom it comes a poor, helpless sinner; to such only is it sent. Elihu, therefore, takes Job upon a plane far above the sight or understanding of his three friends, giving him reproofs that they cannot hear, for that in him which they have not seen.

From the fourteenth to the thirtieth verses of this chapter there is a clear and full statement of the way in which God deals with his people, and here we shall find Job's experience, as he has related it at large, most fully comprehended. In this we see the most conclusive evidence that Elihu is a gospel teacher. All false teachers, like the three friends of Job, spend their time in telling how much man can and ought to do in order to win God's favor; but the true servant of God tells what God does for man in bringing him from darkness to light. He preaches Christian experience in preaching the gospel, so that the poor sinner, groaning in anguish, may see the hand of God in his afflicting knowledge of his depravity.

For God speaketh once, yea, twice, yet man perceiveth it not. The child Samuel was called three times before he knew that it was God who spoke to him. So it seems to be with the Lord's people when they are called. They are first made to know themselves as sinners and to experience the suffering described here, yet do not perceive the voice of God in this teaching. In this he speaks once through the law. He speaks again through the gospel, revealing the way of salvation through the Redeemer; but we have to be instructed that this also is the voice of God, and that the peace we experience is the peace of God. So Peter knew that Christ was the Son of God, but seems not to have known, until our Saviour told him, that it was God who had revealed it unto him, and that he was blessed in having that knowledge. We are thus, probably, to understand how God speaks once, yea, twice. The Psalmist says, "God hath spoken once; twice have I heard this; that power belongeth unto God (Psalm 62:11)." In learning that we are justly condemned sinners, we learn that power belongeth unto God, as he gave an evidence of that power from Sinai that no man hath power to save. In the gospel we hear also that power belongeth unto God, for it is "the power of God unto salvation." In both cases it is God who speaks, but we do not perceive it until expressly told. When we learn that God has been speaking to our souls, then we have "full assurance of hope."

In a dream, in the vision of the night, when deep sleep falleth upon man, in slumberings upon the bed, then he openeth the ears of men and sealeth their instruction. Man can reach us with his instruction only when we are awake; and then we may resist his power as a teacher by turning away our eyes, closing our ears and burying our minds in other subjects. But God is not so limited. He can reach us when he will, and no slumber is so deep as to shut our souls away from the searching power of his voice. When trouble, on account of sin, begins to come upon us we try to drive it away, for it is not pleasant to feel guilty; and we may seem to do so for a while by engrossing our minds in the cares of business or intoxicating them with the pleasures of the world. But in sleep we have no control of our minds. We cannot choose what shall be our dreams; and our true character will often be presented to us then. Often in a dream we stand before ourselves disrobed of all our fancied goodness, in the hideous

deformity of our depraved and deceitful nature, receiving our own abhorrence and condemnation. Thus our ears are opened to hear instruction concerning ourselves, and we cannot close them. Like Job, we can say, “Thou scarest me through dreams, and terrifiest me through visions.”

We may try again and again to think ourselves good when the light of day is about us and we are in the company of those who esteem and commend us, and when we think of our various virtues and our careful avoidance of the evil ways of many. But night closes about us again, and deep sleep shuts away our friends and the things of the world, leaving us utterly alone; and then again comes forth to our view what was hidden in the mysterious recesses of our nature, a capacity for all evil in action, and we can deny no charge that is brought against us in our dreams; but like Joseph’s brethren, when accused of being spies, we can only say within ourselves, Verily, we were guilty of this or that thing that is now brought to our remembrance. If we have not actually done this or that wrong act, yet we have manifested the same evil nature in some other act or wish so that we are speechless before God.

In the Scriptures we find that God often speaks to men in a dream; and this, as well as this declaration of Elihu, may represent his power at will to shut away the world from our minds as effectually as though deep sleep had fallen upon us, leaving us alone with him. When he tells us we are sinners, it is night with us, and worldly interests fade away. The voice of the Lord silences other voices; and, like Daniel, when we hear the voice of his words we are in a deep sleep on our faces toward the ground (Daniel 8:18; 10:9).

The Lord seals instruction. This no earthly teacher can ever do. Though they begin with the plastic minds of children, they cannot seal instruction so that it cannot be forgotten. How vain, therefore, is their profession of power to teach the knowledge of God. What God teaches is sealed to our knowledge for ever.

That he may withdraw man from his purpose, and hide pride from man. Here is the object and the effect of this painful lesson which God gives us concerning our depravity. He has a purpose of his own concerning all the children of promise, “which he purposed in himself,” that they should be holy and without blame before him in love; and to prepare them for himself, and to fulfill his purpose in them, he thus withdraws them from their own purposes, which are worldly, and destroys all their pride.

He keepeth back his soul from the pit, and his life from perishing by the sword. Under the heavy burden of our sins, and of the just condemnation of God’s holy law, destruction seems certain and near at hand; and often death appears preferable to this anguish. Sometimes thoughts of self-destruction may occur, but we are kept from their power. Again, we may go trembling with fear that our life will be a prey, knowing that we do not deserve to keep it. But God, who controls all the powers of destruction, is leading us, so that while we shall see how well we deserve death and the pit, we shall be kept from perishing.

He is chastened also with pain upon his bed, and the multitude of his bones with strong pain. We see how closely he follows the experience of Job in thus delineating the experience of God’s people; for he has complained that instead of finding relief upon his bed, he was so full of tossings to and fro that he longed for the night to be gone. Elihu shows him that this being the working of God with him, as even Job knew and declared, he had no reason to complain. Though God appears to count him for his enemy, setting a watch upon him so that no sin shall be hidden, and heavily afflicting him, yet he has no right to complain. We observe again that Elihu has not denied the truth of Job’s words which he repeated, but reproves him for the complaint. The most perfect Christian that ever lived, and the one most free from

transgression, can yet appropriate to himself under all his sufferings the question of the prophet: “Wherefore doth a living man complain, a man for the punishment of his sins (Lamentations 3:39)?”

How strong are the expressions here used to describe the painful sense of sin! But there is a tender intimation of the everlasting love of God that lies back of all this suffering, in the use of the word “chasten;” for “whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth.”

So that his life abhorreth bread, and his soul dainty meat. We once relished the worldly doctrine with which men fed us, and swallowed greedily the dainty meats of flattering and delusive philosophy. But now we turn from them with abhorrence, for they not only cannot satisfy our hunger, but they sicken our souls. “The Lord called for a famine upon the land: he brake the whole staff of bread (Psalm 105:16),” and thus caused the brethren of Joseph to go to him for bread. So we are brought hungering and fainting to our spiritual Joseph for the bread of life.

His flesh is consumed away that it cannot be seen; and his bones that were not seen, stick out. Thus is represented the loss of all hope in ourselves and of all self-esteem. It is through such an experience that we come to “have no confidence in the flesh.” Under this heavy suffering, and the loss of appetite for earthly bread, the flesh consumes away. We did not before know that we could have suffered so. The bones that were not seen stick out. Our meager condition, which had been hidden from our view by our vain self-confidence, as the bones are hidden by the flesh, now fully appears. We are “ready to perish.”

Yea, his soul draweth near to the grave, and his life to the destroyers. The terrible scene seems about to close, and the poor, justly-condemned sinner waits the moment when he shall be swept away by the wrath of a righteously indignant God into everlasting darkness.

But what is this that comes dawning upon us here? What new and wonderful light breaks through the darkness? What is this sweet and peaceful rest that folds about the weary spirit, while a great love heaves through the very being, melting the poor, broken heart into a fountain of thankfulness? This is the Sun of Righteousness arising with healing in his wings. Right here, in this extremity of trouble and darkness, the new and living way of salvation opens to our view, and the love of God appears, filling us with rapturous amazement.

If there be a messenger with him, an interpreter, one among a thousand, to show unto man his uprightness, then he is gracious unto him, and saith, Deliver him from going down to the pit: I have found a ransom. Here is the dawning of gospel light. This messenger is Jesus, the “Messenger of the covenant (Malachi 3:1),” the interpreter of God’s will and of his dealings with men, “the chiefest among ten thousand.” Each of his ministers is as one among a thousand. “How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of him that bringeth good tidings, that publisheth peace, that bringeth good tidings of good, that publisheth salvation (Isaiah 52:7; Romans 10:15)!”

Observe the peculiar doctrine of the gospel here, so clearly different from the doctrines of men. Instead of saying, as Job’s friends did, that this poor, afflicted man of whom he is speaking, ought now to acquaint himself with God and be at peace, he makes his deliverance depend upon something that is entirely beyond his control – something in the bringing about of which he has no hand whatever, which he cannot affect one way or the other. He does not say that God will be gracious to him if he will do something pleasing in his sight – perform some condition. This would be turning aside the meaning of all that he has related. The very purpose of the trials that have been brought upon him is to show him that he can do nothing meritorious in God’s sight. And it is because he knows this that his soul draweth

near to the grave. But he makes his deliverance depend entirely upon the will of God in sending to him a messenger.

He simply shows here at what stage in our experience the gospel light appears, and the wonderful effect of it. We need not be told that we are helpless, depraved, destitute of righteousness and destitute of power to get any, for all this we have painfully learned. But when the messenger from God shows us, by the interpretation of his word, that all men are in that condition, and that God's people alone become conscious of it in this life, then we hear with interest. And when he presents Christ as the uprightness of the poor and sinful, as the Lord our righteousness, thus showing unto man his only uprightness in a blessed Redeemer then the grace of God appears; and, as the light of that blessed truth enters our souls, the chains of darkness and of fear are broken and fall away, and we are delivered. Christ is the glorious ransom. We are not delivered for what we have done, but for what he has done. We knew nothing of this salvation, and therefore could not even have asked for it. The sinner never perceives the possibility of being saved upon any other principle than that of becoming worthy, nor thinks of that worthiness being in another, until the Lord brings the knowledge of that way to him in his own salvation. No worldly teacher ever speaks of that way, no matter how much he may talk about Jesus. The Lord sends the knowledge by his own special Messenger to each redeemed soul, and then arise songs of joy and praise, and shouts of victory to the God of salvation.

His flesh shall be fresher than a child's; he shall return to the days of his youth. He is a child in the kingdom of God, and the fresh and innocent pleasures of natural childhood do but faintly represent the divine enjoyments that are ever new and fresh and holy in the presence of God. "In his presence is fullness of joy, and at his right hand there are pleasures for ever more."

He shall pray unto God, and he will be favorable unto him; and he shall see his face with joy, for he will render unto man his righteousness. Here are the blessings of gospel privileges – the privilege of prayer in the name of the Saviour; the blessing of communion with God, whose righteousness is rendered unto his people through his Son. Here is "the blessedness of the man unto whom God imputeth righteousness without works (Romans 4:6)."

He looketh upon men, and if any say, I have sinned and perverted that which was right and it profited me not, he will deliver his soul from going into the pit, and his life shall see the light.

Here begin the exhortations to repentance and the assurances of forgiveness through the Saviour to those who confess their sins. These are only to those who have been brought under the gospel. It is to the saints and of the saints that the Apostle John speaks when he gives the same blessed assurance that Elihu does here: "If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness (I John 1:9)." This confession is not merely an acknowledgment with the lips, but consists in such a sore knowledge of his sins as has been heretofore described.

Lo, all these things worketh God oftentimes with man, to bring back his soul from the pit, to be enlightened with the light of the living. Here is the conclusion of this complete gospel sermon, declaring the salvation of God and showing how it is wrought in the heart; following the sinner from the darkness of nature, when God first begins the work, to its performance, when he comes in the liberty of Jesus Christ (Philippians 1:6). Not a word of man's work, or power to work, in the whole of it. Not a word even about repentance and confession until after the gospel light has appeared, and then only as manifestations of God's gracious work in the heart. For repentance, like all other blessings, is the gift of Jesus Christ (Acts 5:3 1).

Mark well, O Job, hearken unto me; hold thy peace and I will speak. If thou hast anything to say, answer me; speak, for I desire to justify thee. If not, hearken unto me; hold thy peace, and I shall teach thee wisdom.

The gospel ministry, whether it brings reproof or instruction in righteousness, will justify the children of wisdom in teaching them.

### **Job 34.**

We are regarding Job as representing the Church, all imperfect in herself, and black “as the tents of Kedar,” but perfect in Christ, and white “as the curtains of Solomon (Song of Solomon 1:5).” He receives justly, therefore, through the administration of the word by Elihu, all the reproofs that the various members of the Church require. And while we find Paul administering rebukes and admonitions to those whom he addresses as “holy brethren,” we need not wonder to find them here. Did we not find them, we should conclude we were wrong in supposing the Church to be typified.

It is to be continually observed that Elihu brings no such charge against Job as his friends have. He finds no fault with his doctrine, neither does he accuse him with falsehood, hypocrisy or any kind of wickedness. His only objection is against Job’s expressions, against his complaints and murmurings. While these, as we have formerly shown, are truthful expressions of his burdened soul, and so not to be seen by worldly wisdom as sinful, yet as between him and God they are rebellion – the rebellious expressions of his old, depraved nature which is being humbled. This distinction is to be seen only in the light of true wisdom; and so to the truly wise, the children of wisdom, Elihu addresses himself. Hear my words, O ye wise men, and give ear unto me, ye that have knowledge. For the ear trieth words as the mouth tasteth meat. It is only for those who have the Spirit of God to discern the things of the Spirit, and distinguish the words of truth from those of error (I Corinthians 2:11). Let us choose to us judgment; let us know among ourselves what is good. For Job hath said, I am righteous, and God hath taken away my judgment. Should I lie against my right? My wound is incurable without transgression. What man is like Job, who drinketh up scorning like water; which goeth in company with the workers of iniquity, and walketh with wicked men? For he hath said, it profiteth a man nothing that he should delight himself in God.

Here, again, are specific charges made against Job. Here there appears to be implied a denial of the truth or correctness of these assertions of Job; but we shall see that the element of the charge against him, the real evil for which he is reprov'd, is, as before, his murmuring against God. Job has declared himself righteous, and we have heretofore considered the truth of this declaration. He has also declared that God has taken away his judgment – that is, has given affliction instead of comfort. His friends have affirmed that these evils are but the bringing of judgment to him; and it is in answer to their unjust charges he has said this, and in this sense it is true. But he thus complains of God for afflicting him; and this is the evil of his answers for wicked men. Such a complaint impugns the wisdom and right of God, who cannot do wrong nor take away a man’s judgment. Job, in the bitterness of his anguish, and goaded by the falsehood of his friends, has spoken fiercely and without wisdom. Every murmur and complaint springs from the ignorance of our carnal nature.

We are not to understand Elihu as having intimated that Job has gone with wicked men in crime, but, as he expressly declares, in saying, It profiteth a man nothing that he should delight himself with God, or that he should be righteous, since by his righteousness he cannot escape suffering. Now this is the very element of complaint, and it is the reasoning of the carnal mind of God’s people as well as of wicked

men. They say, If God has done all things according to his will, then he is unrighteous to take vengeance (Romans 3:5), because he might have kept men from evil; and especially if one had eschewed evil, as Job had, they would deny God's right to bring pain upon him. And Job, in giving expression to his complaints, which spring from his rebellious nature, has gone in company with wicked men in their opposition to the ways of God, while yet he despises them.

The peculiarity of Elihu's reply shows that we have touched the point of his reproof. Instead of going on to accuse Job of wickedness, he gives the same answer that Paul does in Romans 3:4,6; 9:20, asserting that God is right in doing what he will. Therefore hearken unto me, ye men of understanding; far be it from God, that he should do wickedness, and from the Almighty, that he should commit iniquity. For the work of a man shall he render unto him, and cause every man to find according to his ways. The works of the flesh are evil, and in the flesh even the saints shall find trouble and sorrow, and yet have no cause to reply against God. So the Psalmist says, "All our days are passed away in thy wrath." Our Saviour says, "In the world ye shall have tribulation;" yet God is not unjust. Our depravity brings affliction justly; only in Christ can any man find peace.

Yea, surely God will not do wickedly, neither will the Almighty pervert judgment. Who hath given him a charge over the earth? or who hath disposed the whole world?

What right have we to say what God ought to do, or to murmur at what in his infinite wisdom he does? The Infinite must do right. When he chooses, all flesh shall perish together, and man shall turn again to dust. Can we reply against this? Man, by nature, hates right, and shall even he that hateth right govern? and wilt thou condemn him that is most just? For Job had complained because wicked men prospered while the righteous suffered. But Elihu shows how unfit it is to intimate, by even a murmur, that there is injustice with Him that accepteth not the persons of princes, nor regardeth the rich more than the poor; for they all are the work of his hands. In a moment shall they die, and the people shall be troubled at midnight, and shall pass away; and the mighty shall be taken away without hand. God sees and marks the ways of all men, and renders infinite justice to all. We have no wisdom to judge what is right, but must wait for God's work to appear. He will not lay upon man more than is right; that he should enter into judgment with God. Notwithstanding our rebellious complaints and false judgments, he goes on with his own unchanged purposes, revealing to us so much as we have need to know. And he has revealed this, that his people have affliction in this life, but that the wicked shall also be plentifully rewarded. He overturneth them in the night, or striketh them as wicked men in the open sight of others – that is, in the sight of his people, who are taught to understand his ways – just as seems good to him.

What a clear declaration of God's sovereignty, and of the falsity of the doctrine of Job's friends, is there in this passage! When he giveth quietness, who then can make trouble? and when he hideth his face, who then can behold him? whether it be done against a nation or against a man only; that the hypocrite reign not, lest the people be ensnared.

Elihu now exhorts to an humble submission to God in all his dealings and an acknowledgment of his errors, as did Christ and his apostles: Surely it is meet to be said unto God, I have borne chastisement, I will not offend any more. That which I see not, teach thou me; if I have done iniquity, I will do no more. So the apostles say, "Humble yourselves therefore under the mighty hand of God, that he may exalt you in due time (I Peter 5:6; James 4:10)." Paul also enjoins the same, and charges upon the "holy brethren" the same error that Job is reproofed for: "Ye have forgotten the exhortation that speaketh unto you as unto children (not as unto aliens), My son, despise not thou the chastening of the Lord, nor faint when thou art rebuked of him (Hebrews 12:5)." Should it be according to thy mind? He will

recompense it, whether thou refuse or whether thou choose; and not I; therefore speak what thou knowest. Although the preacher administers the word of reproof, it is not he that recompenses, but the Lord; and he will give the needed chastening, whether we receive it willingly or not. It will not be according to our mind or judgment; and why should it? He taketh not counsel of any. Our Saviour set the example of the perfect submission that is due to God, saying, "Not my will, but thine be done."

Men of understanding are called upon to observe that Job hath spoken without knowledge, and his words were without wisdom. Jeremiah also spoke without knowledge when he complained that God had deceived him, and refused to speak any more in his name (Jeremiah 20:7-9). Paul spoke without wisdom when he asked the Lord to remove the thorn from his flesh. The Lord gave it to him in wisdom, and the desire to have it removed, though a truthful expression of his suffering nature, yet was not the desire of wisdom.

Elihu desires that Job may be tried unto the end for the rebellion that he has expressed against God's hand in answering the unjust charges of wicked men. And he will be tried until all the dross is removed, and he shall come forth as gold.

### ***Job 35.***

Thinkest thou this to be right that thou saidst, My righteousness is more than God's? How it would often astonish us to see the true meaning of our murmurings set forth in plain words, as Elihu has here set forth that of Job's. He little thought that he had declared his righteousness to be more than God's – for such words had not escaped him – but it is the interpretation of what he has said. For thou saidst, What advantage will it be unto thee? and, What profit shall I have if I be cleansed from my sin? As though he had said, It will neither be any advantage to God nor any profit to me to continue me in this furnace of affliction; therefore it is not in righteousness, but for his pleasure, that he afflicts me; and my righteousness in judging that he ought to remove his afflicting hand is more than his in keeping it upon me. Our complaint against affliction signifies that it would be better, or more righteous, in God not to afflict. But when we are fully tried, we shall acknowledge with the Psalmist, "I know that in righteousness thou hast afflicted me."

The doctrine of natural men is, that what good we do is for the advantage of God, and he rewards us for it. Job therefore has gone in company with the workers of iniquity in this, and so Elihu answers him and them together: I will answer thee, and thy companions with thee. And this he does by referring to the exaltation of God, manifest even to the natural eye by the height of the heavens, and asking, If thou sinnest, what dost thou against him? or if thy transgressions be multiplied, what does thou unto him? If thou be righteous, what givest thou him, or what receiveth he of thine hand? What a complete answer to all the vain thoughts of man! Our wickedness or righteousness may affect men, and we hear the oppressed cry out by reason of the arm of the mighty. But how brutishly dull and ignorant men are, looking not beyond the earthly oppressor, and asking only to be free from the temporal oppression! for none saith, Where is God, my Maker, who giveth songs in the night? who teacheth us more than the beasts of the earth, and maketh us wiser than the fowls of heaven? And Job in his complaints has made himself their companion. He is exhorted to turn away from such vanity as the pride of evil men teaches, and, however dark and inscrutable the ways of God may seem, yet to remember that judgment is before him, and therefore to trust in him.

## **Job 36.**

We must pass much that it would be pleasant and profitable to dwell upon, and will take up but one more subject for particular examination in the discourse of Elihu. That is the subject of the discipline of God's people, in the discussion of which he is fully manifested as representing the gospel ministry. His boldness in declaring the truth and importance of what he has to say is like that of Paul, but his confidence is in the truth and righteousness of God, and not in any knowledge of his own acquisition.

Suffer me a little, and I will show thee that I have yet to speak on God's behalf I will fetch my knowledge from afar, and will ascribe righteousness to my Maker. For truly my words shall not be false; he that is perfect in knowledge is with thee. The Spirit of truth, which is perfect in knowledge, is with Job, and will enable him to see the truth of Elihu's words. The ministry of the word will only be received by, and be edifying to, those who have the Spirit.

Behold, God is mighty, and despiseth not any; he is mighty in strength and wisdom. He preserveth not the life of the wicked, but giveth right to the poor. The poor, or righteous, are distinguished from the wicked in all God's dealings, and his might and wisdom are manifested in his preservation of them through all the trials he brings upon them. He withdraweth not his eyes from the righteous, but with kings are they on the throne; yea, he doth establish them for ever, and they are exalted. These are the elect – “the poor of this world, rich in faith and heirs of the kingdom (James 2:5);” raised from the dust, and made to inherit the throne of glory (I Samuel 2:8). They are made kings (Revelation 1:6), and established for ever with Christ upon his throne (Psalm 89:36,37).

And if they be bound in fetters, and be holden in cords of affliction, then he showeth them their work and their transgressions that they have exceeded. The Psalmist describes the same condition of the Lord's people under his discipline, and their deliverance (Psalm 107:10-14). He openeth also their ear to discipline, and commandeth that they return from iniquity. If they obey and serve him, they shall spend their days in prosperity and their years in pleasure. He is not teaching a conditional system of salvation here. These are not natural men of whom he is speaking, who are informed how they may become subjects of grace and be saved; but they are the righteous, the elect. To them are all the warnings and admonitions of the gospel. If they take heed to these, walking in gospel order, obeying the precepts of Christ, and serving him “in their bodies and spirits, which are his,” then they shall enjoy spiritual comfort and assurance. Thus they dwell in God's presence, at his right hand, where there is fullness of joy and pleasures for ever more (Psalm 16:11).

But if they obey not, they shall perish by the sword, and they shall die without knowledge. These are still the same people – the righteous, the elect, the heirs of salvation. All such expressions as this concerning their fate if they obey not are understood by the world to refer to their everlasting destiny and to mark them as finally lost. But this is not so, as the Scriptures clearly teach. The next verse we shall see makes a clear distinction between these as erring children and the hypocrites in heart. The Lord, by the Psalmist, speaks of the punishment that shall be inflicted upon his children if they obey not, but declares, nevertheless, that he will not take away his loving-kindness and faithfulness from them as it is given them in Christ (Psalm 89:29-36). Paul says to the saints, “If ye live after the flesh, ye shall die; but if ye through the spirit do mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live (Romans 8:13).” Death is a separation. The death here spoken of is the separation of the child of God from the comforts of religion – from the privileges and blessings and honors of the Church. In one's personal experience he finds that “to be carnally-minded is death.” Let his mind become engrossed in the world or follow after its errors and delusions, and he loses the sweet comforts he before enjoyed, and his mind becomes

a prey to harassing doubts and fears, or is left in even more distressing coldness. The right path is called “the path of life;” and only while walking in it can we enjoy the sweets of spiritual life. Those who have never been in it, who have no spiritual life, cannot know the extreme suffering of a separation from its joys in this mortal state.

Elihu now shows the distinction between these disobedient children who shall suffer punishment here, and the “vessels of wrath,” by referring to that class. But the hypocrites in heart heap up wrath; they cry not when he bindeth them. These do not suffer as the righteous must under the display of God’s anger toward them in this life. Though God controls them, and binds them when he will, they do not know his hand nor cry out by reason of his wrath. They have their good things in this life. “There are no bands in their death.” We have referred to them heretofore, with the description of them in life and death contained in the seventy-third Psalm. They die in youth – that is, before they have reached the number of years they expected, and which is necessary to the accomplishment of their worldly purposes and the enjoyment of worldly pleasures and their life is among the unclean.

With the people of God it is not so. They do cry when he bindeth them, and he delivereth the poor in his affliction and openeth their ears in oppression. Even so would he have removed thee out of the strait into a broad place where there is no straitness; and that which should be set on thy table should be full of fatness. We have to bear in mind that Job, as a type of the Church, must represent all her members in all their disobedience, and must therefore receive all the admonitions and reproofs required under gospel discipline by every grade of offense. Transgressors, who stand, when exposed by the gospel light, in a condition well represented by the literal condition of Job, full of shame, self-loathing and anguish, are assured, through these words of Elihu to him, that had they truly humbled themselves before God, he would have restored unto them the joy of his salvation. But thou hast fulfilled the judgment of the wicked; judgment and justice take hold on thee.

In the light of gospel truth Job is condemned for his foolish complaints against God. How great the sin of such complaints only the clear light of God’s truth can show us. It is not the wisdom from above, but the judgment of the wicked, the counsel of the carnal mind, that is fulfilled in these complaints and murmurings and these inquiries into God’s right to do as he pleases. The tendency of true wisdom is to silence the rebellion of our old nature, and cause us to bear affliction with resignation, as Job did at the first, when, as yet, he had not sinned with his lips nor charged God foolishly.

We must find also in him to whom these strong words of Elihu are spoken the representative of all those who transgress in any manner, as David and Peter, and those mentioned by Paul (I Corinthians 5:5; I Timothy 1:20), who fulfill, or act in accordance with, the judgment of the wicked, and upon whom judgment and justice will surely take hold.

If our transgressions under the gospel dispensation are such that we must be cut off from the Church, this is to die, or to perish by the sword; and how fearful a state it is can only be known by the child of God who has suffered it or has felt that he deserved it. To the carnal professor it looks comparatively trifling – a temporary separation from some companions or from some worldly honors, the place and enjoyment of which can easily be supplied by something else. But to the true Israelite it is worse than natural death, and no pain or affliction of a worldly kind is to be compared with it; that is, when the separation is by the just administration of the laws of Christ’s kingdom. When a Church which stands in perfect order separates one from her fellowship in accordance with the direction of the apostles, there is also a complete separation from spiritual enjoyment.

It is to such a fate that many of the warnings of Christ and the apostles allude. Such are some of those of our Saviour, when he speaks of those who shall have their portion assigned with the hypocrites and unbelievers; not that they are themselves hypocrites and unbelievers, else it would cause them no weeping to be cast out among such and lose the companionship of the saints. Such also are the following: "But I keep my body under and bring it into subjection, lest that by any means when I have preached to others, I myself should be a castaway (I Corinthians 9:27)." "For if we sin willfully after that we have received the knowledge of the truth, there remaineth no more sacrifice for sins, but a certain fearful looking for of judgment and fiery indignation, which shall devour the adversaries (Hebrews 10:26,27)." This describes the fearful state of mind into which such transgressions bring and leave the transgressor. But only those who are under law to Christ can transgress his laws, and these are his children, freed from the law of Moses by his death. Paul shows in the same connection that he speaks only of God's people: "For we know him that hath said, Vengeance belongeth unto me, I will recompense, saith the Lord. And again, The Lord shall judge his people. It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God (Hebrews 10:30,31)."

Such is the warning of Elihu: Because there is wrath, beware lest he take thee away with his stroke; then a great ransom cannot deliver thee.

So Paul alludes to the case of Esau as a warning: "Lest there be any fornicator or profane person, as Esau, who for one morsel of meat sold his birth-right. For ye know how that afterward, when he would have inherited the blessing, he was rejected; for he found no place of repentance, though he sought it carefully with tears (Hebrews 12:16,17)." Truly "the way of the transgressor is hard;" while the ways of wisdom are ways of pleasantness, and all her paths are peace.

As Esau could not regain the birth-right he had sold for a morsel of meat, so the apostle appears to teach that the birth-right privileges of the child of God in his house, the Church, may be sacrificed so as never to be regained, although the transgressor seek them again carefully with tears. What degree of transgression that may be which must receive such fearful punishment does not so clearly appear. We may believe that the truly humbled and penitent soul, after due chastisement, can be restored to the joy of God's salvation. The word beware, in this warning of Elihu, shows that there is yet hope for him who has fulfilled the judgment of the wicked, or has been led away by and into their devices, if he truly humble himself. A great and most precious comfort is conveyed in the assurance of the beloved disciple: "If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness (I John 1:9)." But if we continue regardless, and the stroke falls, then it will be too late. Whatever degree of force there is in the stroke we must now bear, and a great ransom cannot deliver us. Will he esteem thy riches? No; not gold, nor all the forces of strength. This shows that by the "great ransom" Elihu does not refer to Christ as the Ransom who delivers from death, but to some temporal advantage which the transgressor may possess, such as great power, or honors, or riches, by which he might hope to procure deliverance from chastisement, as he could from worldly judges. But God is no respecter of persons. The rich as well as the poor, those that have great gifts as well as the lesser members, are subject to discipline, and cannot escape the punishment due to their transgressions by reason of any earthly power, position or possessions which may belong to them.

Desire not the night when people are cut off in their place. Take heed, regard not iniquity; for this hast thou chosen rather than affliction. This probably refers to Job's frequently expressed desire to escape from his afflictions by being carried away into darkness and silence. Elihu now interprets the true meaning of this wish, and shows him what iniquity there is in it. It is only through great affliction and

tribulation that we can be separated from the world, where iniquity abounds, and enter the kingdom of God (Acts 14:22). That affliction, therefore, which God sees fit to send upon us for this purpose we ought to receive even thankfully and rejoice in. To murmur at it shows that we would prefer peace in the world of iniquity to the furnace of affliction with the hope of being holy. And this is the choice of the carnal mind, though not of our spiritual mind. It chooses iniquity rather than affliction. Is there any saint who has not seen this in his own mind, when he shrinks back from affliction and tries to avoid it? It is by faith, by the Spirit, that we are enabled to “rejoice in tribulation.”

Now Job’s desire to be hidden away in darkness was that he might escape from the searching eye of God, whose marking of his paths and bringing to light his corruption made his suffering so bitter. And this represents a thought or feeling that we may recognize in the mind of the transgressor. It is but a foolish suggestion of the natural mind that we can escape from the punishment we know to be our due by hiding from the eye of God, in the secret of our hearts, as we can from the eye of man. It is the Lord, and not man, by whom we are judged, and from whom judgment falls. Therefore the warning, Desire not the night, when people are cut off in their place.

In the remainder of this, and the whole of the following chapter, Elihu presents evidences of the great power and wisdom of God, and his words are full of spiritual instruction. But we will leave his discourse now, as he has concluded his direct reproofs to Job.

## Chapter XIX.

### THE ANSWER OF THE LORD OUT OF THE WHIRLWIND.

#### *Job 38.*

Then the Lord answered Job out of the whirlwind, and said – Although all Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is to be very reverently handled as his word, yet I cannot but feel a more profound awe and reverence in approaching this place, and more hesitation and fear in attempting to consider the words of this wonderful answer. The Lord does not speak here by the mouth of a man like ourselves, whose terror shall not make us afraid, but with his own voice of terrible majesty and with an exhibition of his mighty power.

The coming of the Lord is often represented in the Scriptures as in the whirlwind: “The Lord cometh with fire, and his chariots like a whirlwind (Isaiah 66:15; Jeremiah 4:13; 23:19).” “The Lord hath his way in the whirlwind (Nehemiah 1:3).” “The Lord shall go with the whirlwinds of the south (Zechariah 9:14).” And with what wonderful power is the effect of his approach to man thus represented! As the whirlwind tears and sweeps away whatever is unsubstantial about us, scattering our earthly treasures and leaving desolation in its track, so the approach of the Lord to man sweeps away his earthly riches, honors and supports, and leaves him naked and bare and trembling in the presence of infinite majesty and holiness. Before the face of the Lord nothing of an earthly nature can endure. Even the everlasting mountains were scattered and the perpetual hills did bow as he stood and measured the earth, and beheld and drove asunder the nations, who are chased is a rolling thing before the whirlwind (Hebrews 3:6; Isaiah 17:13).

Only the righteous can endure his coming and stand when he appeareth, for with them is the word of our God, which alone shall stand for ever. To the wicked his coming is destruction (II Thessalonians 1:9; 2:8); and their destruction cometh as a whirlwind (Proverbs 1:27). As the whirlwind passeth, so is the wicked no more (Proverbs 10:25). They are driven away as the chaff that is driven with the whirlwind out of the floor (Hosea 13:3). Such expressions are frequent in the prophets, and the day of the Lord’s coming is called, “the day of the whirlwind (Zechariah 7:14).”

When the Lord communicates with his people, and causes his voice to be heard by them, all their own wisdom and knowledge and all their earthly purposes and hopes are scattered as with a whirlwind, and they stand bereft and silent to hear what he will speak. The Psalmist describes his voice as “powerful” and “full of majesty.” “The voice of the Lord breaketh the cedars; yea, the Lord breaketh the cedars of Lebanon.” “The voice of the Lord divideth the flames of fire.” “The voice of the Lord shaketh the wilderness.” “The voice of the Lord maketh the hinds to calve and discovereth the forests; and in his temple doth every one speak of his glory (Psalm 29).” The word of the Lord came to Isaiah as “the burden of the desert of the sea,” came “as whirlwinds of the south pass through (Isaiah 21:1).” And so it still comes to all his servants, breaking down and sweeping their opposition and fears, and leaving them with nothing to speak but the word that has thus come to them. When he would speak to Elijah in the Mount of Horeb, a strong wind, an earthquake and a fire made way for the still small voice of his word; and in a whirlwind he came to take the prophet from earth to heaven. In like manner, with an awful display of terrible majesty is he described as descending to deliver the Son of God from the

sorrows of death and hell – from the grasp of his strong enemy; and then were the foundations of the world discovered, as they are to all his children when he comes to them (Psalm 18:4-17).

Let us now turn to Job; and may the Lord enable us to understand by our own experience something of the divine power that touched his soul as the answer of the Lord out of the whirlwind reached him! There may have been a sound to the natural ear, but we do not think that it was with the natural ear that the voice of the Lord was heard. We cannot even imagine Job still sitting in the ashes literally, surrounded by his friends, while the communications of the Lord came to them all with an audible sound and awed them into silence. How long his trial has lasted we are not told, nor is it necessary to the spiritual instruction for which the record is given that we should know whether hours or years, nor whether he remained in the same place. The trial was spiritual, and throughout the history we are regarding a soul, rather than worldly circumstances – a soul heavily burdened and cast down with sorrow, yet not destroyed; bearing itself with a firmness it cannot itself understand, in defense of the truth, against all of the opposition of the world and the devil; a soul bowed and humbled before the great Jehovah, yet sending up from its heavy sorrow questioning groans and complaints to the very throne of the God it adores – complaints that are prompted by the fleshly mind, which is to be yet more completely humbled and silenced. We have seen that soul listening in humble silence to the authoritative words of Elihu; and now it is that soul alone that we can think of as listening to the answer of the Lord. Where his friends may be our mind does not inquire. There is the suffering soul that questioned not but that all his affliction was from the hand of a just and infinite God, yet questioned why one so great and mighty should ordain affliction and send pain upon the creature of his power. We see that soul bowed in silent awe and reverence while the searching voice of the Infinite sounds through all the mysterious chambers and depths of its intelligence and feeling. While that speech of the Omnipotent continues the complaints are hushed, the pain and sorrow are forgotten, swallowed up, swept away. When heavenly wisdom breaks into and fills the soul it leaves no place for the recognition of pain. When the thoughts are lifted to the Infinite they cannot contemplate trouble.

Who is this that darkeneth counsel by words without knowledge? Gird up now thy loins like a man: for I will demand of thee, and answer thou me.

I desire to express plainly and fully as I may be able how I think may be seen here a representation of what is spiritually experienced by the child of God when the Lord comes with power into his soul. How few and far apart are the moments when we feel a full and absorbing sense of the presence of Almighty God, and are able to speak with absolute present experience of his power and of his everlasting, enrapturing love. We may hear the words of truth proclaimed day by day, and believe them and rejoice in them and contend earnestly for them and rest upon them all our hope, and yet all the time be waiting for an experience of their power. When that comes, it is the answer of the Lord directly to our souls, in which, as with a whirlwind, he sweeps away all earthly hindrances and objects that intervene, and brings us into full spiritual communion with himself. Whatever we speak concerning him at another time is, in a certain sense, darkening counsel by words without knowledge. The feeblest saint, triumphant in the hour of death, speaks with more certain and absolute knowledge, so far as himself is concerned, than the mightiest prophet. The prophet speaks with absolute certainty and authority by inspiration of God, yet may himself be at the same time searching and inquiring diligently concerning the power of what he speaks as God gives him utterance (I Peter 1:11), and may be longing to feel the full power and enjoyment of it. Every preacher of the gospel, as well as all who speak upon the glorious subject, will understand what is intimated here. And as it is with the preacher, that he is often obliged to speak and knows that he is speaking the blessed and comforting truth of God while yet his

own soul is barren of enjoyment, longing in vain to feel its power, so it is with the hearer; of all the array of spiritual truth which we receive and retain in the memory, but one word may be applied with power so as to lift us up, and so that we can say in our souls to God, Now mine eye seeth thee. This word the Lord gives us. It is his answer out of the whirlwind.

When we were first shown that we were sinners, it was by a revelation of God to our soul. Men had told us before, and we had probably acknowledged with the lips and natural understanding, that we were sinners; but now, for the first time, we felt it. How the thoughts arrayed themselves through the mind in which the infinity and holiness of God were presented, perhaps none could remember to describe; but they are all, no doubt, embraced in these questions of the Lord. When a peaceable hope was given and our despairing souls quieted, through what train and connection of thoughts it came no one can fully tell, but it was by a more full revelation of the Infinite in his glorious grace and mercy. We had heard of the Saviour and had heard the truth concerning salvation, and perhaps gave it a natural assent, even believed it, but now we felt it. We saw the Saviour, but it was in the soul we saw him and with the spiritual intelligence, and the thoughts were in some way involved, though how we cannot tell. From that time we may go on long hearing the Word and gladly receiving it, before we have another full experience of its power. And often the waiting and hoping Christian has to look back for assurance to the time when he felt the power of God at the first. To the last of our pilgrimage we are as dependent upon him for an experience of his power and love as at the first.

We have never been able by voluntarily setting our minds to work to reach upward and outward far enough to see and feel the power of unfathomable mystery to know that we cannot know, to feel what it is to be finite. But sometimes our thoughts seem to be carried away by some wonderful, unknown power to the very verge of the infinite in space and time, not enabling us to see its extent, but that we may see that it is infinite and beyond the possible reach of thought.

While we are walking among hills and through woods, we may know as well as at another time that the earth is very wide and that great extent is wonderful. But when we emerge from the confined place, and the eye all at once is sweeping free over the broad expanse of earth or ocean, and barred only in its onward course by the limit of its own strength, then we feel what in the narrow dell our imagination could not bring to us. So the mind at times emerges from the narrow wilderness paths and confined places of ordinary thought, and sees the sweeping distances of immeasurable extent stretching away before it, and springs with all its sense of power onward to reach the limit of space or time, but to return baffled from the illimitable.

It is not when we are looking at the distant stars and estimating their wonderful distances that this sense of the infinite is experienced. The eyes are closed, perhaps, as in thought we go on and on, determined not to flag, until finally we ask, with a mental gasp as for breath, Where is the end? and what is beyond that? and is there no bound? And with one more great and desperate effort to reach farther, and grasp some bounding line, and gather into our view the limit of the circle that nowhere exists, we shrink back weary and affrighted and humble.

A great rock lies where we look upon it daily. We know it is of great weight. But some morning, when an exultant sense of energy pervades our frame, we bear ourselves against it, gathering against it all our power, and straining each feeling of strength to the utmost, yet it feels not the slightest jar. Then we simply know that there is in our body no power that can measure its weight. So when the mind feels strong, with all its mysterious energies gathered and at its command, then, if it be directed till it reach

the great mysteries, and suffered to force itself with all its concentrated power against them, it will simply feel what the mystery of the infinite is, and fall humbled before God.

It is thus that Job is made to feel and see the sovereign and infinite power and wisdom of God. He is prepared with all his own power, commanded to gird up his loins like a man, bring into exercise all his strength, and then answer. It is by questions that we cannot answer that the greatness of God is made known to us. Not questions addressed to the outward ear or natural intelligence, but inquiries the power of which we are prepared by Him who sends them into our soul to feel, and which rush through our very being, filling us with a burning sense of the infinite interest they bear, and urging a strong and pervading desire to break through by the door of their answer into the mysterious realms of knowledge that lie beyond. With every such unanswerable question another intimation of the greatness of God is given to us.

Job has been reasoning concerning the necessity of his own affliction, which he knows to be according to God's counsel, and has murmured at it. Let the lover of the truth remember the questionings that have arisen in his own mind concerning God's ways in providence, which perhaps he has feared to acknowledge even to himself. Through the words of Job he has seen the working of his own mind exposed. Now comes this whirlwind of knowledge from God concerning his unapproachable wisdom and power and glory. The mysteries of the universe are gathered before him. His mind is whirled away to the beginning of time and before; upward to the vast regions of space; downward to the great depths; into the wonders of all existences and their preservation; then the doors of darkness and the shadows of death stare upon his wondering thoughts; and the inexpressible greatness of Him who holds all in his will and who inhabits eternity seems to come full upon his view, leaving him with neither power nor will to answer again.

Where wast thou when I laid the foundations of the earth? Declare, if thou hast understanding.

Who can even suggest the many questions that are involved in this one, the mysteries enrolled in mysteries? Before the world was made, where was that out of which man's wonderful body was formed, and where his more wonderful life and intelligence? And in asking this, we overlap innumerable wonders concerning the descent to each of us, through all the evolutions and involutions of generation, and the manifestation in us of that being and life that was hidden in the existence of Adam when he walked the garden. Here is now an intelligence, a soul, one of a myriad such that were all in that one man, and which, at the time to which the question refers, existed only in the eternal repose of God's mighty power. And can this soul send up a question concerning the work of that Being?

All the inscrutable wonders of power and wisdom displayed in the creation of the world out of nothing are here presented to the mind that has been made attentive by the Lord. From whence came Jehovah to the work of creation? What existed before where the world now is? How from nothing came forth all this mighty mass? Let question after question arise, but they must remain for ever unanswered to our mortal intelligence. Where wast thou? So we are made to feel that God is infinite, and that we have no understanding.

Who hath laid the measures thereof, if thou knowest, and who hath stretched the line upon it? Whereupon are the foundations thereof fastened? Or who laid the corner-stone thereof when the morning stars sang together and all the sons of God shouted for joy?

It is said of Christ that all things were made by him and for him (Colossians 1:16). All visible things are figures of the invisible or spiritual, and set forth the wonders of the Redeemer's kingdom. And now while the natural mind is carried back by these interrogations to the beginning of time and to the inscrutable mysteries of natural creation, faith beholds greater things presented here even the wonders of redemption, the everlasting purpose of God, in which are enfolded all the mysteries and glories of the kingdom of Christ. The foundation and corner-stone to which Job is referred may be regarded as Christ, the Foundation of the New Earth, in the laying of which judgment is laid to the line and righteousness to the plummet.

Although the manifestation of Christ in the flesh was long after Job lived in the order of time, yet "he is before all things and by him all things subsist." He is before and above all time, "the King eternal, immortal, invisible." He is, as the Foundation in Zion, before the first of earth's children who hoped, for upon him the hope of the righteous rests. He says, "Before Abraham was, I am." He does not speak as though Abraham had to look forward to see him, neither does he place himself back in the order of time to a point previous to the day of Abraham. He does not say, Before Abraham was, I was. But he whose "goings forth have been from of old, from everlasting," "with whom there is no variableness, neither shadow of turning," "Jesus Christ, the same yesterday and today and for ever," "with whom a thousand years are as one day, and one day as a thousand years," says, "Before Abraham was, I am!" Men have been and are to be, but Christ only and forever is.

When the morning stars sang together. Christ is the Sun of Righteousness, whose rising is the morning. His angels or ministers that follow him, "that do his bidding, hearkening unto the voice of his word," are called stars, and they shine in the firmament of the New Heavens for ever. When Christ arose from the dead it was as the Sun of Righteousness. Then was the spiritual morning manifested. Then was made known "in the midst of the years (Habakkak 3:2)," the eternal realities of the world of glory. Then the disciples, the apostles – the morning stars – proclaimed glad tidings, sent forth their light in the utterance of that blessed doctrine which is as a glorious song to the hearts of those who rejoice in it, and were perfectly harmonious in all their proclamations and teachings, being "of one heart and of one soul." As the myriad stars that filled the vast expanse above in the morning of the creation, though differing in glory, mingled their various radiance in a perfect harmony of light, like various strains in a glorious song of praise, so these morning stars, set in the spiritual firmament, sang together. It was long after the world was made, in the order of time, that this morning light broke forth upon the world. And so it is still later and later that it appears to each of those who come after as they are successively manifested in time. With each it is morning when the light of truth first breaks upon his soul, bringing peace and joy. Yet when he sings the new song, it is in harmony with the morning stars, yea, in harmony and together with Abraham and all the earlier saints, with whom, and with all the general assembly of the Church of the first-born, he has set down together in the everlasting kingdom that is not of this world nor of time, upon the Mount Zion (Matthew 8:11; Hebrews 9:23); for there his dwelling-place must be when he is enabled to sing, and his songs take hold on eternity (Isaiah 42:11).

But who shall be able to say when the light of that morning was first formed, when the glory of salvation was first ordained and sent forth to fill the heaven where Christ eternally dwells? It was not when it first dawned upon our souls. It was not when it shone forth transcendently on the day of Pentecost. It was not when the earliest saint first found comfort in its heavenly radiance. It was not when God commanded the light of this natural world to shine out of darkness. Who shall say that the morning of that spiritual day of which Christ is the light, and which we rejoice and are glad in when his glory is revealed to us, is later than the morning of time, or that it is at all connected with time? Farther

back yet we must go, or farther upward or beyond; for we leave the region of successive years and ages, where duration is measured and where there are past and future, and rise to that changeless eternity that is not divided or disturbed by all this stretch of time that we sometimes speak of as intervening between the eternity past and the eternity future, before we dare to look for the beginning of that Light that was in the beginning with God, and to say when heaven began to ring with songs of praise to the King of glory. And here we fail, and see the weakness of our powers of thought, and find the mystery of salvation, and feel the force of the question, Where wast thou? When spiritual and eternal joy was first ordained for sinners to be redeemed from death, where were we? Shall not such a question, such a thought, silence our murmurings and make us truly humble before God? So he says to us, "Be still, and know that I am God."

Or who shut up the sea with doors, when it brake forth as if it had issued out of the womb? When I made the cloud the garment thereof, and thick darkness a swaddling-band for it, and brake up for it my decreed place, and set bars and doors, and said, Hitherto shalt thou come, but no farther; and here shall thy proud waves be stayed?

With what fullness and strength of language are the mysteries of the ocean and its issuing forth from the recesses of Almighty power here presented, and how wonderfully forced upon the mind! But when the sea is made to represent to us the great existence of evil, with its, to us, undefined boundaries and immeasurable extent, a greater import is seen in the question. And it seems to be so presented in the Scriptures. Out of the sea the great beast arose; in it Leviathan has his abode; and, like the troubled sea, the wicked cast up mire and dirt. But there is nothing undefined or undecreed with God. He has his decreed place for the mighty ocean of iniquity. It is fully within his creative and controlling power (Isaiah 45:7). It shall do his bidding. It shall come so far as he will, but there its proud waves shall be stayed. There is nothing that can transpire through the wrath of man or the rage and malice of Satan but shall redound to the praise and glory of God (Psalm 76:10).

Host thou commanded the morning since thy days; and caused the dayspring to know his place; that it might take hold of the ends of the earth, that the wicked might be shaken out of it?

What a forcible reminder is here of man's limited power – of his utter inability to control in any degree that which represents his own joy and comfort! The spiritual application of the question is apparent in the terms used. It is "the Dayspring from on high" that is here presented, which, "through the tender mercy of God, hath visited" his people, "a light to lighten the Gentiles" – the ends of the earth – "and the glory of his people Israel (Luke 1:78; 2:32)." It is by the power of this light that the wicked, as shades of darkness before the rising sun, are shaken out of the earth, "destroyed with the brightness of his coming (II Thessalonians 2:8)." Have we ever been able to command this blessed morning, and bring the warming and comforting beams upon us when we were in spiritual darkness and coldness? The question is not asked of those who, like the earthly friends of Job, have never seen this light, but of him upon whom it has once shined. Can he look back to the time when it first shone forth from the infinite mind of God? Was it ordained at man's will? It came not at the first to answer any command of ours, nor is it now within the reach of our control. We wait for it as "they that watch for the morning (Psalm 130:6);" and when at the command of Him who causes it to know its place it breaks upon us, then the call is obeyed; "Arise, shine! for thy light is come, and the glory of the Lord is risen upon thee (Isaiah 60:1)." And then we sing, "This is the day which the Lord hath made; we will rejoice and be glad in it (Psalm 118:24)." In the darkness of which we have complained he prepared us to enjoy this heavenly light.

It is turned as clay to the seal; and they stand as doth a garment.

As the earth does not remain obdurately in darkness when the sun would impress upon it the seal of his glory, but yields passively to the power of his light, so when the spiritual Sun sends his beams upon the earth it is turned passively to their influence as clay to the seal. When he seals his people with his Holy Spirit, they are made plastic to receive the impress of that seal, which they bear unto the day of redemption (Ephesians 1:13; 4:30). His people are made willing in the day of his power (Psalm 110:3). The morning, the dayspring, stands as a garment, a vesture, enolding the unapproachable glory of God. “Thou clothest thyself with light as with a garment.”

And from the wicked their light is withholden, and the high arm shall be broken. Who shall dare question why light is withholden from one and given to another? It is the Lord that speaks. “Let the kings of the earth hold their peace.” “He hath done whatsoever he pleased (Psalm 115:3).” And we have only to hear what he speaks (Psalm 85:8), and say, “Even so, Father, for so it seems good in thy sight (Matthew 11:25,26.)”

Host thou entered into the springs of the sea? or hast thou walked in the search of the depth?

Away down there in the mysterious depths of ocean how often the inquiring thoughts wander, asking whence all the waters arise, how the constant supply is kept, and longing to look upon the strange wonders of the deep! But those mighty and marvelous depths are for ever closed from our view. Much more the great depths where the prince of darkness reigns – where Leviathan holds his course, unmoved by fear or love or pity. Have we walked in search of the depths of iniquity? Have we explored the recesses of evil and the fountains of wickedness that are within the hearts of the ungodly? Have we been able to measure and comprehend wickedness itself, and to know fully the exceeding sinfulness of sin? “The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked; who can know it (Jeremiah 17:9)?” How then shall we judge Him in his work and dealings with men before whom are the righteous and the wicked, and to whose eye there is no depth or hidden place? His “judgments are a great deep (Psalm 36:6),” in which are comprehended all other depths. Who can search them out?

Have the gates of death been opened unto thee? or hast thou seen the doors of the shadow of death?

How rapidly the varied mysteries are presented, and the mind whirled from one to another! Let him who has dared to lift a murmuring thought to God concerning his dealing with us now try his power upon some of these, and answer when he demands. Why does the mind grow dizzy and faint even from the first? The bars and bounds between us and the infinite are here revealed, and the mind of him to whom they are shown by these demands is allowed to throw itself with all its power against them, that it may feel how utterly impassable they are.

How many dear friends we have seen die! How many an hour we have spent in the contemplation of death! Surely cannot we say that we have seen the doors of the shadow of death, even if they have not been opened to us? No, we have never seen them. We have seen the eye close, the breath cease, the pulse grow still; and then our imagination has followed the spirit, as we thought, on its viewless journey to its eternal home. But in all this we have been strictly confined to the world; our imaginations have been material and worldly. We have never yet seen what it is to die, except what appears to the outward view, nor had a glimpse of the realm beyond. It is impossible for the human mind to conceive of a state of existence where neither space nor time is.

Faith only has looked beyond, and mortal comprehension cannot receive the knowledge of faith. We only know of faith that it is a confiding grasp and embrace of the word of God, “the substance of things hoped for and the evidence of things not seen,” and that it brings peace and rest.

And yet, while death is so impenetrable a mystery, Job has uttered a wish that he might find in its darkness and silence a release from his afflictions. This was but a wish of the natural mind, an uttering which he spoke without wisdom, and darkened counsel by words without knowledge. What mortal could know that darkness and silence and rest are beyond? The faith of God’s elect, in the exercise of which our afflictions are borne with patience, sees a certain and unending rest in the bosom of eternal love that shall be fully enjoyed when we shall pass through the doors of death. But the imagination of man does not reach there. The saint does not know what he shall be, but it is enough for him to know that he shall be like his Saviour when he shall appear (I John 3:2).

Host thou perceived the breadth of the earth? Declare, if thou knowest it all.

Here at least we might suppose was a question that we could answer in the affirmative; for although the glance of one man can go but a little way over the breadth of the earth, yet by the united view and work of many has it not been all mapped and measured? But here also the infinite is presented. That which this question embraces is still beyond the powers of our perception. With the breadth of the earth is included all that lies within that breadth, with all the mysteries presented in the ensuing questions. When shall we ever be able to complete a survey and perceive it all, since at one point we should be held an age without having yet been able to explore and unravel the secrets it holds? We think we can imagine an infinity of greatness and extent as we look up to the revolving worlds above us and consider their countless numbers and immeasurable distances. But have we attempted to imagine an infinity in the opposite direction? And yet infinity is there, boundless and unsearchable as that of immensity. Smaller and smaller we may imagine the atom or point in space to become as we divide and sub-divide, but where shall we find a resting-point at nothing, where the lessening process cannot still go on? How long shall we have divided, how great shall have become the decrease, when we can no longer divide the imagined particle or point into ten thousand or a million parts, and continue still to reduce? Away down there, in the realms of littleness, in the infinite convergency of space, in the infinitesimal point, unnumbered degrees removed away from our sight, though lying within the circle of our reach, there is a world, a universe, an infinity, which the glance of the Almighty alone can survey, and where infinite power and wisdom alone can work. And the limitless character of God is presented to us by the unanswerable inquiries in this as well as in the other direction. Who can say he has perceived the breadth of the earth? Who knoweth it all?

But when we consider the New Earth, the Mount Zion, where the innumerable company of the saints are gathered and have their infinite spiritual dwelling-place, and where are all the wonderful and precious things that God has prepared for them that love him, the question carries us to the far higher range of spiritual things, and leaves us lost in adoring wonder, love and praise as the boundless fields of heaven present themselves to our faith and the glorious light of God fills us with unquestioning joy.

Where is the way where light dwelleth? And as for darkness, where is the place thereof that thou shouldst take it to the bound thereof and that thou shouldst know the paths to the house thereof? Knowest thou it because thou wast then born, or because the number of thy days is great?

Search through all the writings of men, and where shall we find language so perfectly fitting with expression the deep and longing inquiries of the mind concerning the most familiar things about us?

longings and inquiries that reach into the (to us) vague regions beyond the possible explorations of science, and wander there for ever without satisfaction or rest, until they are quieted by a humble and rejoicing trust in God, and lost in an absorbing feeling of praise to Him the depths of whose wisdom and knowledge are unsearchable and past finding out. Philosophers may investigate and cause us to wonder at the published results of their researches and study, and yet the secrets which these questions of Jehovah cover remain secrets still. The searches of the human mind and the answers of science and philosophy do not even point in that direction.

The origin and nature of light have been made the subject of deep and learned study, and theories have been elaborated and illustrated by marvelous experiments, and yet the question is as unanswerable as ever by man – Where is the way where light dwelleth? If we trace the rays of natural light to the sun and explain all we can as to how it sends them forth, we yet have not seen the place where light dwelleth. How came light in the sun? Whence did it first spring forth, and what was before light? And as for darkness, that also is part of the creation of God (Isaiah 45:7). When it comes upon us, can we trace it back to its hiding-place? Can we follow it like a river to its source? Can we see its bounds, and follow the paths by which it has come to us till we reach the house it occupies? At what point in time or eternity did it first come forth?

With spiritual light, the knowledge of the glory of God, how much greater the mystery to the saint! Words may be multiplied in telling what inquiring thoughts we have had concerning the wonders of spiritual light, which represents all spiritual knowledge, love, joy, peace, comfort; and concerning darkness, or the absence of all these, and the experience of sorrow, coldness, pain. But these inquiries can never be fully told, nor can any other so comprehensive expression be given to them as in the form of these questions. As for the light and darkness themselves, we can experience them, but not explain them. One moment joy is in our mind, peace nestles softly in the heart, and love thrills all the being with delight; we may watch the feeling, but cannot explain it. The love of Christ passeth knowledge (Ephesians 3:19), the peace of God passeth all understanding (Philippians 4:7), and the joy of the Holy Ghost is inexpressible (I Peter 1:8). The next moment, perhaps, grief takes the same place, or rasping anger, or withering fear, or the cringing pain of self-reproach and shame. We note the difference in the feeling from the former, and the various shades of difference among these various feelings, as one recedes before another, or several passions hold mingled or conflicting sway; but what can we tell about it? Light and darkness are alike inexplicable. We only know that God created both light and darkness, peace and evil (Isaiah 45:7), and yet that “in him is no darkness at all;” that he is the fountain of light; and that when we are enabled to drink at that fountain and to rest humbly in him, our questionings and murmurings cease and our longing souls are satisfied. “Truly the light is sweet, and a pleasant thing it is for the eyes to behold the sun (Ecclesiastes 11:7).”

Host thou entered into the treasures of the snow? Or host thou seen the treasures of the hail, which I have reserved against the time of trouble, against the day of battle and war?

As the rain cometh down, and the snow from heaven, so God’s word is sent effectually forth upon the earth (Isaiah 55:10). His doctrine drops as the rain and distills as the dew, reviving and nourishing the tender plants in the garden of the Lord. His word also is like the snow when that work is required which the use and effect of snow upon the earth represents. The Church is not afraid of snow for her household, for they are all clothed with scarlet (Proverbs 3 1:21). To them God “giveth snow like wool.” As the snow, though cold in itself, yet benefits the land where it rests through the winter, so from the same source from which the refreshing spiritual rain descends upon us there comes also the

cold of snow – afflictions and griefs – to protect us as wool from the destructive chill of winter; and as the land is softened and broken up by the melting snow in spring more deeply than ever by the rain, so are we prepared by affliction for the reception of spiritual seed that may take root downward and bear fruit upward to the honor and glory of God.

The hail that destroyed the Egyptians sets forth in a figure the terrible judgments of God by which he overcomes his enemies when he goes forth in his anger against the inhabitants of the earth. If the treasures of the natural snow and hail are so unsearchable, how much more so are these spiritual treasure-houses, builded we know not where, from whence come forth at the command of God showers of blessing, afflictions like fleeces of protecting snow, and hail-storms of vengeance!

And how can we follow farther the vast and incomprehensible array of wonders and inscrutable mysteries? We are but the more and more lost in bewilderment at every new question, yet permitted to rejoice a little in being able to get a glimpse of spiritual things through them. All we have attempted to do has been faintly to connect these inquiries with our own experience, and try to recall the feeling that was ours when the force of each question was upon us, and see something of their meaning by the light of other Scriptures, as the Spirit might direct. Not a spiritual inquiry has ever arisen in our mind but the essence of it is here suggested in these answers of the Lord to Job, which compass about all our intellectual and spiritual being, make plain to us the limit of our powers and knowledge, and stretch away in every direction infinitely beyond.

The inquiries proceed concerning the parting of the light, the scattering of the east wind and the making a way for the lightning of thunder; concerning the purpose that sends rain upon the desolate wilderness, as well as upon the fruitful field cultivated for the use of man; the care that nourishes the herb and tints the flower with beautiful hues, as well in the desolate places where there is no man as where there are multitudes to enjoy them. And all at once how the all-supervising care, the overruling power, the purpose of love and mercy that lies back of all manifestation, are presented in the question that comes suddenly upon us, wonderful in simplicity, yet suggesting the mighty power and wisdom and loving-kindness from which all spiritual blessings descend: Hath the rain a father? Or who hath begotten the drops of dew?

The inquiries concerning our knowledge are here suspended for a while, closing with the wonders of the ice and the hoary frost of heaven, by which the waters are hid as with a stone under the frozen face of the deep.

And now what of our power to do, which includes wisdom and knowledge and strength combined?

Canst thou bind the sweet influence of Pleiades, or loose the bands of Orion? Canst thou bring forth Mazzaroth in his season? Or canst thou guide Arcturus with his sons? Knowest thou the ordinances of heaven? Canst thou set the dominion thereof in the earth?

And if the constellations and ordinances of the natural heavens are so amazingly beyond our reach, how much more those of the spiritual firmament! Men untaught of God suppose they have much to do with the arrangements of the Church, and much power to place gifts for her light and instruction, to ordain angels or ministers who are as stars in the gospel heaven. But much more within their power are the stars in their courses than are these divine ordinances. God only can set their dominion in the earth. More readily could we keep back the light of Pleiades from the earth than we could bind the sweet influences of God's precious gifts in his church, which he has set as he pleased in radiant and harmonious clusters, or restrain the light that he has given to one of his servants to dispense for the

comfort and joy of his people; and the bands of Orion were more easily loosed by mortal hands than the bands of his restraint from any man. When God sends forth his servants and loosens their tongues to speak his truth, all the powers of earth and hell cannot bind or restrain the sweet influences of their light; and when he withholds his light the mightiest prophet is powerless to speak – is “shut up, and cannot come forth.” How can one who knows not even where light dwelleth imagine himself able to bring forth a star of light and set its dominion in the earth – tell where and when and for whose comfort it shall shine? How should a poor limited mortal, filled with darkness which is itself beyond his comprehension, suppose himself able to render even the least assistance in raising up and qualifying and sending forth one to preach the everlasting gospel, or to hasten or retard the time of his going to work? Though they are but weak mortals like their brethren, and only “earthen vessels,” yet, as God’s ministers, they are higher than the stars above human reach, and move in the work he has called them to, unaffected by all the changes of earth. (See Acts 13:2, and 14:26.) The work to which he appoints them, notwithstanding all the interference of men, is fulfilled. We have to wait upon him for all gifts in the Church, which he hath set as it hath pleased him (I Corinthians 12:18). He brings forth Mazzaroth in his season, and guides Arcturus with his sons.

Canst thou lift up thy voice to the clouds, that abundance of waters may cover thee?

When man can speak to the clouds and bring down the rain at his command, then may he have some reason to suppose that he can bring down abundance of spiritual blessings at his will and secure heavenly favors by his own works, which the false teachers declare that man is able to do. For God has said by Moses, “My doctrine shall drop as the rain (Deuteronomy 32:2),” and by Isaiah has expressly compared his word to the coming down of the rain in blessing upon the earth, which fully accomplishes his purpose (Isaiah 55:11). But Job knew that man possesses no such power, but must wait upon Him who alone can “make bright clouds (Zechariah 10:1),” and send forth “the earth and the latter rain.” He is therefore reprov’d for his murmurs.

Canst thou send lightnings, that they may go and say unto thee, Here we are? There is in the flashing lightning a more startling exhibition of God’s infinite power than in the growing blade of grass or the mild ray of light, though no more clear to the observance of wisdom. The more strikingly his infinite greatness is displayed, the more clearly do we see our own weakness. The lightnings go at his bidding, and each flash throughout all the ages of time and all the extent of the earth has been exactly timed and directed to fulfill his purpose.

Who hath put wisdom in the inward parts, or who hath given understanding to the heart?

Here we would pause to dwell for a moment upon the wonderful mystery of the mind and of the affections that is sometimes presented to us; but we can find no language to express the depth and peculiarity of that mystery, nor our feelings when it is before us. Thought most signally fails when thought is the subject. The powers of the mind cannot comprehend themselves, whence they came nor how they are set in motion. God has given wisdom and understanding to each in such degree as he would, and alone comprehends each motion and emotion of the mind and heart. Shall created wisdom reply against its infinite Creator, or presume to judge his work? What humility becomes us.

Who can number the clouds in wisdom, or who can stay the bottles of heaven when the dust groweth into hardness and the clods cleave fast together?

How can any dare to say that God’s eternal decrees have not embraced everything and every event? The mere fact and manner of his mention of these things show them all to be within the scope and

perfect control of his eternal counsel. From the beginning of time, of all the myriads of clouds that have sailed over the expanse of the natural heavens, whether wafted by the gentle breeze, driven fiercely before the tempest or gathered in somber rest over all the face of the sky, not one but was guided by his Almighty wisdom and fulfilled his everlasting purpose concerning it. And so with the clouds in the spiritual heavens – whether those that hide the light from his people, when “he keepeth back the face of his throne and spreadeth his cloud upon it,” or the “bright clouds” which he makes to give reviving showers when they are needed – all are numbered and guided in wisdom. And who but He that has power to open the windows of heaven, break up the fountains of the great deep and send floods upon the earth, can stay the bottles of heaven when the earth suffers under them?

Wilt thou hunt the prey for the lion, or fill the appetite of the young lions when they couch in their dens and abide in their covert to lie in wait? Who provideth for the raven his food? When his young ones cry unto God, they wander for lack of meat.

When we think of the unnumbered variety of the animal creation, of the myriads that roam over the earth, fly above in the air and swim in the sea, and remember that each that has had even the briefest existence since the foundation of the earth has had its supply of food provided by the Almighty, who has had a specific purpose in the existence of each, we are lost in amazement at the omniscience and omnipotence that has kept all in view, and provided for all in the remotest wilderness and deepest recesses and minutest points of space, as well as in the fields where man numbers his flocks and herds. Suppose that it were ours to see that all had their supply, and our powers were made equal to the task, yet would we feel inclined to seek food for the venomous reptile or the ravenous beast of prey? Why, we would reason, should we nourish those that would destroy us? Yet God sustains them; and here he rebukes Job for asking, “Wherefore do the wicked live, become old, yea, are mighty in power?” In asking this question, Job asserted a truth which his friends denied; yet before God he expressed a murmur by the questioning form of the assertion, for which he is now reproved. God cares for all. “He giveth to the beast his food, and to the young ravens which cry (Psalm 147:9).” “He maketh his sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust (Matthew 5:45).”

### **Job 39.**

In the closing verses of the last chapter and throughout the whole of this, individuals of the animal creation are brought to our notice. Each one no doubt has a special spiritual significance, but what this may be I cannot hope fully to understand. In some cases I may suggest an interpretation of the figure which will be sustained by the Scriptures, and then we may feel a degree of certainty in regard to its correctness. When any part of God’s word is necessary to the present comfort and instruction of any of his children, it will be then unfolded to them by his Spirit directly or through the ministry of his servants. I trust that through this feeble effort of mine in these pages it may be God’s will that some ray of light and comfort may be given to some of his dear children. It will be so if his blessed Spirit is directing me in this work, as I humbly pray that it may.

I will merely allude to the different beasts and birds mentioned in this chapter:

The wild goats of the rock and the hinds cannot be watched over by man as the flocks of his field are, yet all their ways are marked out by the Lord and their wants supplied. The goat is in one or two places used to represent those who shall not inherit life (Matthew 25:33). The hind is frequently used to represent in some sense the people of God. Naphtali is compared in the blessing of Jacob to “a hind let loose.”

The wild ass may fitly represent the natural state and inclination of man, whose house God has made the wilderness and the barren land his dwellings. He scorneth the multitude of the city – the heavenly Jerusalem where the saints have their dwelling – neither regardeth he the crying of the driver. No man can tame him, bring him in from the wild freedom in which God has sent him forth, put upon him the yoke of Christ, the restraints of love and spiritual desires, and set him in the narrow path of life. The range of the mountains is his pasture, and he searcheth after every green thing – after all earthly pleasures. Israel in her transgressions is said to be “a wild ass used to the wilderness (Jeremiah 2:24; Hosea 8:9).”

What is said of the unicorn may bring before the mind the great and ungovernable strength of the wild passions of men as they are exhibited in the horrid cruelties of some uncivilized nations, and of some wicked rulers who are unrestrained by either fear or affection from the course suggested by their cruel or ambitious desires. Where these passions bear unrestrained sway, we cannot look for deeds of kindness nor repose any confidence whatever. Wilt thou trust him because his strength is great, or wilt thou leave thy labor to him? Wilt thou believe him, that he will bring home thy seed and gather it into thy barn?

The goodly wings of the peacock well represent the foolish vanity of the human heart, and the ostrich is so described as to present an emblem of cruelty and forgetfulness. God has given her great strength, but has withheld wisdom from her. “The daughter of my people is become cruel like the ostriches in the wilderness (Lamentations 4:3).”

Hast thou given the horse his strength? Hast thou clothed his neck with thunder? Canst thou make him afraid as a grasshopper? The glory of his nostrils is terrible. He paweth in the valley and rejoiceth in his strength; he goeth on to meet the armed men. He mocketh at fear, and is not affrighted; neither turneth he back from the sword. The quiver rattleth against him, the glittering spear and the shield. He swalloweth the ground with fierceness and rage; neither believeth he that it is the sound of the trumpet. He saith among the trumpets, Ha! Ha! and he smelleth the battle afar off the thunder of the captains and the shouting.

Brief as this description is, so plain and life-like a picture could not be given by man in volumes of writing of both the horse and the battle-field where his mighty strength and fearlessness are displayed. There is an element in the description that tells of its spiritual meaning. We read the “the Lord of hosts hath visited his flock, the house of Judah, and hath made them as his goodly horse in the battle (Zechariah 10:3).” Here is evidently the Lord’s description of his “goodly horse,” which represents his servants whom he sends forth into the battle armed with the power of his Word. In themselves they are ignorant as the horse, which, with all his strength, “is a vain thing for safety (Psalm 33:17).” But as his servants or ministers he sends them forth in his strength, which they can feel and exert, but can no more understand of themselves than the horse can understand concerning the great strength he can display. While the servant of Christ feels his own weakness and declares his insufficiency, as did Paul, yet he has a spiritual courage and eagerness for the battle answering fully to this description. He may lack natural courage, may be the most timid and retiring of men, but when God has clothed his neck with the thunder of his word, he mocketh at fear and turns not back from the sword of his spiritual enemy. He can fight with carnal weapons no better than before, but with his spiritual weapons and spiritual strength he is invincible. “Though a host should encamp against me,” he says, “what shall I fear?” And “rejoicing in the Lord and in the power of his might,” confident and rejoicing in his strength, he goeth on to meet the armed men unchecked, though the quiver of Satan rattleth against him, the glittering

spear and the shield. His speed is equal to every necessity. No power of man is required, nor would be competent, to convey or hurry him to the field of battle. The Lord, and not man, has prepared him for the work, and has given him the swift eagerness that will, under his control and direction, bring him to the place designed and to the face of his enemies at the right time. Let the feeblest saint look within himself at the feeling with which he regards the truth, at his confidence in it, and remember the courageous exaltation of soul with which it has sometimes inspired him, making him willing to declare before a gainsaying world his confidence in it, and his assurance that it will prevail over all its opposers, and making him sure that the bitterest persecutions, even to death, could not prevail to turn his soul from that confidence and rejoicing, let him consider this feeling of his concerning the truth, and he will have an intimation of that which is represented by the strength and courage of this goodly horse. With this love of the truth and confidence in the Lord, laying hold on eternal life, the servants of God fight the good fight of faith.

In the flight of the hawk, stretching her wings toward the south, the wisdom of God and the limits of man's wisdom are seen.

Doth the eagle mount up at thy command, and make her bed on high? She is a bird of prey, seeking it from the crag of the rock, and beholding it afar off Her young ones also suck up blood, and where the slain are, there is she. Our Saviour says, after warning his disciples of the false prophets who "shall show great signs and wonders, insomuch that if it were possible they shall deceive the very elect," "For wheresoever the carcass is, there will the eagles be gathered together (Matthew 24:28; Luke 17:37)."

#### **Job 40.**

Moreover the Lord answered Job and said, Shall he that contendeth with the Almighty instruct him? He that reproveth God, let him answer it.

As Job has been murmuring under the mighty hand of God, thus contending with him, and reprovng him for laying his hand so heavily upon one so feeble and insignificant, exhibiting the rebellious disposition of our poor fallen nature, the Lord has swept before his view the wonders of his wisdom and power as displayed in the familiar things of nature and in the kingdom of his grace. Now, if the sufferer under a sense of sin who longs to be holy, considering the ability of God to do what he pleased, should let a thought rest upon his mind that it would have been better that he should have been made and held so as never to have sinned, but to have enjoyed happiness for ever in this life, or that he should have been taken away in infancy, or that he should never have been called into being – all of which Job, as many another, has either intimated or plainly expressed in the bitterness of his soul – let him justify himself if he can in these wishes that are but reproofs to God, being against his way, by answering these questions. But Job is overwhelmed and humbled by the unanswerable display, and says: Behold, I am vile; what shall I answer thee? I will lay my hand upon my mouth. Once have I spoken, but I will not answer: yea, twice, but I will proceed no further.

There is yet more, however, to be displayed before him: Then answered the Lord unto Job out of the whirlwind and said, Gird up thy loins now like a man; I will demand of thee, and answer thou me. Wilt thou also disannul my judgment? Wilt thou condemn me that thou mayest be righteous?

Shall it be shown by Job's complaints that God's ways are not best – that his judgments, either in reference to the righteous or the wicked, are to be condemned? How wonderful has been the manner of

the Lord's answer thus far! It has been but to display his work, and by unanswerable questions to show how far his wisdom is beyond the conception of man. Infinite wisdom cannot err.

Heretofore the objects presented in the questions, if we have understood anything of their spiritual signification, have in some way referred to the "mystery of godliness" – either to the everlasting purpose and creative power and wisdom of God, the various subjects connected with the Church, or to the natural state of man. Two more subjects are to be presented - "the mystery of iniquity" as it appears upon the earth, and the prince of darkness. Two more beasts are presented after this pause in the answer of the Lord, and but two, which are thus separated from all the others.

Before these beasts are spoken of, Job seems to be prepared for the consideration of them and that which they represent by the following questions, in which is brought to his mind his utter inability to deal with the manifestations of Satanic pride and wickedness among men:

Hast thou an arm like God, or canst thou thunder with a voice like him? Deck thyself now with majesty and excellency, and array thyself with glory and beauty. Cast abroad the rage of thy wrath, and behold every one that is proud and abase him. Look upon every one that is proud and bring him low, and tread down the wicked in their places. Hide them in the dust together, and bind their faces in secret. Then will I also confess unto thee that thine own right hand can save thee.

How forcibly by these words are our weakness, and littleness, and insignificance, and impotency made to appear to us, and how gloriously shines forth in them the mighty power of God! What can we do with pride and wickedness? When it rises in our own hearts we are at once overcome, unless God arise for our help. When it appears against us in our enemies, we may cast abroad the rage of our wrath, but it falls impotently. We cannot even see the wicked or discern when evil pride exists, unless God anoint and direct our eyes. But it is all before God, and he need but turn his eye upon it and it is consumed. "He beheld and drove asunder the nations (Habakkuk 3:6)." He had but to look upon the Egyptian host, and Pharaoh in all his pride was brought low and the wicked were trodden down in their places. Reproof is evidently conveyed here for the feeling of haste and fretfulness which Job has exhibited while he has repelled the false accusations and contended against the false doctrine of his three friends. And what Christian but can feel in some degree the force of the reproof resting upon him? David says, "Fret not thyself because of evil-doers." But we know that we do often fret, that our human nature often interferes while we contend for the truth against its opposers, and that anxiety and a hasty and even angry spirit are often exhibited, as though we felt that it was our task to abase their pride and bring them low. We can often witness in ourselves the feeling which caused Moses at the rock to say, "Must we fetch you water out of this rock (Numbers 20:10)?"

What has been already presented in the preceding chapter would seem to have most conclusively shown the inability of Job to abase pride, tread down the wicked and put evil out of existence. But the subject is now more fully displayed in its greatness and depth:

Behold now behemoth which I made with thee; he eateth grass like an ox.

What particular animal is here intended – whether the elephant or hippopotamus, or some species larger yet of which none remain now upon the earth – I do not consider it material to inquire. It is no doubt the largest and most formidable animal that was created upon the earth. The word behemoth literally signifies beasts, being plural; and considering the peculiarity of the description, the fact that it is the Lord who describes it, the circumstances and evident typical character of the one addressed, and the place in the general subject where it is brought in, it seems clear that it is not merely a literal animal to

which the attention of God's people is thus commanded, but that there is represented here the great embodiment of spiritual pride and wickedness upon the earth, the organized opposition to the ways of God; the same subject that is variously or in parts presented in Revelation by the beasts that rose up out of the sea and out of the earth, the image of the beast and the great red dragon.

The thoughts of the awakened soul are sometimes turned with wondering but unanswered inquiry to the blind and cruel ignorance of the savage and idolatrous races of men, to the shocking inhumanity displayed in the rites of their religion. Why should the Creator have allowed such things? What must be the feeling that possesses them! How impossible for us to effect a change! The impossibility being, we suppose, because of the great extent of the evil, the great preponderance of the nations where it is. But when we get a view of the nature of spiritual pride, perhaps seeing it in our own hearts or seeing its manifestation in another, seeing how stupidly perverse and obstinate it is in its nature, then appears to us the inherent impossibility of its overthrow by mortal power. But then again, when the light of truth is very clear to us, we behold with greater astonishment the same blind and cruel principle displayed more hideously in the organizations of men professing to be followers of Christ, yet hating and bitterly opposing his truth. Here is "Anti-christ," "the man of sin," "Mystery, Babylon the great," the embodiment of the "mystery of iniquity."

As he is described in the various Scriptures that speak of his characteristics and manifestations, so he is described here: Lo, now his strength is in his loins and his force in the navel of his belly. He moveth his tail like a cedar; the sinews of his stones are wrapped together. His bones are as strong pieces of brass; his bones are like bars of iron. The vain self-confidence and pride of the children of wickedness are thus most strongly set forth. David says, "Their strength is firm." No man can break it down. In II Thessalonians 2, Paul also describes him in his proud confidence and vain exaltation. We look upon him with wonder. He is chief of the ways of God. God has a purpose in him which is far beyond our power to comprehend, and when that purpose shall be fulfilled we are told that the Lord shall consume him with the spirit of his mouth (II Thessalonians 7:8). So here we are told that He that made him can make his sword to approach unto him. Man can only look upon him and wait God's time. He must first "fill up the measure of his iniquity." The mystery of iniquity must first be finished. Job, "the perfect man," is therefore called upon to behold him and consider his appearance and ways, and to know that he also is within the creative and controlling power and wisdom of God, who made darkness and evil as well as light and peace (Isaiah 55:11), who raised up Pharaoh as well as Moses, to make known his power (Romans 9:17). Which I made with thee. The righteous and the wicked in their natural state were made together, and in both the "perfect man" and "the man of sin" the power of God is made to appear. His ways are inscrutable.

In the description of this beast the contrast between the wicked and the righteous appears, although he eateth grass like an ox, as the false teachers appear to worldly view much the same as the true servants of God. His strength is in his loins – in himself – while the strength of the perfect man is in the Lord. The mountains bring him forth food – earthly food – while the food of the saint comes down from heaven. He lieth under the shady trees, in the covert of the reed and fens. The shady trees cover him with their shadow; the willows of the brook compass him about. So the workers of iniquity are said to work in secret. Coverts and dark places they choose for their dwellings spiritually, while they take counsel together and bring forth "their unfruitful works of darkness." "It is a shame to speak of those things which are done of them in secret (Ephesians 5:12)."

The man of God stands trembling before Jordan, the river of judgment, or hasteth to flee from the swelling of its waves, until God shall come to his help, roll back the overflowing tide and show him a pathway through the deep waters. But as for this self-confident and presumptuous beast, Behold, he drinketh up a river and hasteth not; he trusteth that he can draw up Jordan into his mouth. He taketh it in with his eyes; his nose pierceth through snares. The judgments of God are nothing to the false teachers and workers of iniquity. They know nothing of that righteous judgment which was against God's people, as it is for ever against all others, which the death of Christ alone could fulfill for his people's deliverance, that they might pass over into the land of peace and rest. They blindly believe themselves able to answer all the demands of the law – to fulfill its judgments. They never haste, as the righteous do, in fearful apprehension of the overwhelming judgments of God, for "there is no fear of God before their eyes." They trust they can drink the river of judgment dry and get over safely. As Pharaoh in his haughty pride and blindness took in the sea with his eyes, making light of that which caused Israel to tremble and cry out in fear, so do they look lightly upon judgment, seeing it in all its depth and breadth, as they vainly imagine, and feeling sure of their strength to meet and pass over it, until suddenly justice and judgment take hold upon them, and they sink "like lead in the mighty waters" which were divided only for the people of God to pass through.

The snares that beset and perplex the way of the righteous do not trouble him. His nose pierceth through snares.

### ***Job 41.***

#### **Canst thou draw out leviathan with a hook?**

The great monster of the deep is the last brought to the notice of Job. If this wonderful description were applied merely to the whale, some parts of it would hardly seem appropriate, though the fearful admiration with which he inspires the mind is fully expressed through this highly figurative language. But there is more than a literal fish or serpent, be he never so great, presented here. This is "that old serpent, which is the devil and Satan," whose abode is in the deep; the great source of all the various manifestations of evil; "the prince of darkness." Here is innate wickedness, considered in its own essential being, as a separate thing, unaffected by human interests or affections, which seems to soften or partially cover its hideous fearfulness as it is manifested in the world. Here is hatred of good as a distinct principle; not a passion excited in the human breast by the action of another, where there is affection that may turn or fear that may hold back its fury, but simply the essential principle of hatred and enmity against God.

What an unsearchable mystery is sin! We have wondered concerning its origin, and much more concerning its essential nature. But all our speculations are in vain. Here is a mystery, a great deep, that can be fathomed and surveyed only by the mind of God.

The tenor of the description does not seem to sustain the idea that the prince of darkness is coeval with God, and came from within his dominions to wage unsuccessful war against him; nor, on the other hand, that he was ever in that heaven of eternal glory where the glorified saints dwell with their Redeemer. Nor do I find such theories in the Scriptures.

The object of this answer of the Lord seems to be to display to Job the infinite greatness of the Almighty in power and wisdom, and the inability of mortal intelligence to find out or judge of his works. "How unsearchable are his judgments, and his ways past finding out!"

Whatever theories we may choose to have concerning the devil, we must not allow a thought that there has ever been an existence or an event that has contradicted the eternal purpose of God. We must not hold a theory or harbor a thought that will trammel in our minds the free consideration of God as infinitely before all other existence, and as infinitely surrounding all on every side, both in presence and existence, and in creative and controlling power and wisdom. “Who hath directed the Spirit of the Lord, or, being his counselor, hath taught him.”

“Now the serpent was more subtle than any beast of the field which the Lord God had made.” Concerning the origin of that subtlety, we can no more understand than we can understand concerning the origin of the goodness of God. We are repelled by the bars of infinity in wisdom and by a just fear of God from seeking after such knowledge.

We will pause but at a few points in this description, though every word is undoubtedly significant. After showing by the first few questions how powerless man is to deal with this being, to fight against sin and overcome iniquity in his own strength, the Lord says to Job, Lay thy hand upon him, remember the battle, do no more. This battle is that which our Saviour fought, wherein he “destroyed him that had the power of death, that is the devil,” thereby freeing them “who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage (Hebrews 2:14,15).” This battle and victory Isaiah thus prophetically declares: “In that day the Lord, with his sore and great and strong sword, shall punish leviathan the piercing serpent, even leviathan that crooked serpent; and he shall slay the dragon that is in the sea (Isaiah 27:1).”

As I have alluded to the popular theory that Satan once inhabited the eternal heavens and was cast out for rebellion, I will here remark that I believe all those expressions of Scripture which speak of there being war in heaven, and of Satan being cast out or falling as lightning, refer to this battle, this conflict and victory of Christ through his death and the deliverance of his people from Satan’s power, and not to any former war that was ever carried on in that blessed abode of the righteous where God dwells. Satan had a place in the legal heavens; the children of Belial there went through the forms of worship with the children of God. He has a place in the world, where he “walks up and down and goes to and fro,” as we find to our sorrow. But when our Saviour arose in triumph, Satan fell from his place in the Church or legal heavens, and in her gospel form there is found no place for him any more. (See Revelation 12:7,8.) In the gospel heavens, when we can spiritually dwell there, we find perfect safety and freedom from his annoyance. He only attacks us when we go out upon the earth, live after the flesh, start down from Jerusalem to Jericho, which is a most unsafe journey for a child of God.

In ourselves we are powerless, yet through Christ we are victorious, and remembering the battle, remembering his death and resurrection, we lay our hands as conquerors upon the great enemy in the name of the Captain of our salvation, and do no more. It would be distrusting or denying the sufficiency of his work to take for a moment the doctrine of the world concerning salvation, that something is left for us to do. Satan would soon swallow us up; therefore the saints are warned and commanded to hold him as conquered in the name of the great King, and do no more.

The idea of the natural man seems to be that Satan, as his spirit is manifested in the human heart, can be persuaded and overcome by working upon some imagined weakness or kindness. But, Behold, the hope of him is in vain; shall not one be cast down even at the sight of him? None is so fierce that dare stir him up; who then is able to stand before me? The more we have entered into a knowledge of the depths of evil and have seen the dark mystery of it, the more have we recognized the immeasurable power over it. Who hath prevented me, that I should repay him? Whatsoever is under the whole heaven

is mine. I will not conceal his parts, nor his power, nor his comely proportion. And they are fully displayed to those who shall see the glory of God and rejoice therein. We pass by the description of his awful strength and firmness, his pride in them, and the glaring light and fire that go out of his eyes and mouth, which men so greatly mistake for the light of truth and heavenly fire, but which are full of destruction.

In his neck remaineth strength, and sorrow is turned into joy before him. The sorrows and anguish of those with whom he can meet are his joy. To cause pain and witness agony are his delight. His essential nature, in all its unimagined coldness of cruelty, could not be more forcibly expressed: Sorrow is turned into joy before him.

No mortal power can affect him through the infliction of pain, for to that he is insensible. The flakes of his flesh are joined together; they are firm in themselves; they cannot be moved. No word of entreaty can be heard, no pity felt by him, for his heart is firm as a stone; yea, as hard as a piece of the nether millstone. How awful to think that a principle whose nature can be so described can have a lodging-place within us! Yet here is the nature of the spirit of depravity, or iniquity – “The spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience.” This principle is hard and cold. It cannot be warmed, cannot be made to feel, except to joy in works of evil and to delight in the suffering it can witness. It is exemplified in all those evil and wicked passions that lurk within us, upon any one of which, if we look abstractly and fix our attention for a while, we shall see the hardness of the nether millstone. It is manifested by the self-righteous Pharisee in condemning the poor Publican, as well as by Herod in slaying the children; by the zealous Saul in persecuting the saints, as well as by Cain in slaying his brother; and by the saints themselves, if left to themselves for a moment unprotected by grace against the influence of this monster of the deep. Only God has power over this spirit to break it down and destroy it, as he does in all his saints. Man is powerless to fight it alone. The sword of him that layeth at him cannot hold: the spear, the dart, nor the habergeon. Why should he not esteem iron as straw, count slingstones and darts as stubble, and laugh at the shaking of a spear, when pain is his delight, when sharp stones are under him, and for his pleasure he spreadeth sharp-pointed things upon the mire? Man cannot make him flee, for upon the earth there is not his like, who is made without fear.

Many of the expressions referred to, which could by no means apply to the whale or serpent literally, plainly suggest a spiritual application, and show that we are correct in regarding this as a figure of that mighty monster, the “prince of darkness,” “the prince of the power of the air,” the enemy of God and his people, from whom spring all sin, all “spiritual wickedness in high places,” all pride of iniquity and blasphemy; and the last expression concerning him fully establishes the application of the figure: He beholdeth all high things; he is a king over all the children of pride.

Great and marvelous is the power of our Saviour, which is displayed in the destruction of this enemy to the peace of his people, and in granting them the fruits of that victory, by subduing their evil passions under the reign of his grace and freeing them from the power and dominion of sin by faith in his all-prevailing name. “Thanks be unto God, who giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ!”

## Chapter XX.

### THE HUMILITY, RESTORATION AND EXALTATION OF JOB.

#### *Job. 42.*

Then Job answered the Lord and said, I know that thou canst do everything, and that no thought can be withholden from thee. Who is he that hideth counsel without knowledge? Therefore have I uttered that I understood not; things too wonderful for me, which I knew not. Hear, I beseech thee, and I will speak; I will demand of thee, and declare thou unto me. I have heard of thee by the hearing of the ear; but now mine eyes seeth thee; wherefore I abhor myself, and repent in dust and ashes.

The trial is ended, and its effect is seen in the humility of Job and in his increased and abiding confidence in God. He will speak, but no longer with a desire to declare unto God, but that the Lord may be pleased to declare unto him. Softly bowed down, he is willing to acknowledge his self-abhorrence for having uttered selfish wishes and complaints in his blindness. Let us carefully observe the first expression of his humility; and if there has arisen in our minds any objecting thought while considering any of the subjects presented, any desire to deny that God has absolutely decreed all things, or to rebel against that truth and ask why he should have ordained this or that, or why he yet finds fault, since none have resisted his will (Romans 9:19), or whether he is not unrighteous to take vengeance if all things are foreordained (Romans 3:5), may all such rebellious thoughts be hushed and destroyed, and we be enabled to say with Job, I know that thou canst do everything, and that no thought can be withholden from thee.

I have heard of thee by the hearing of the ear. This is when we hear the truth and believe it, but are not possessed with its power, as was probably the case with Job while Elihu spoke. When the Lord speaks out of the whirlwind the clouds of sense are broken and dispersed, and we experience rather than hear, and are wrapped in the glory of his presence. Then we can say, Now mine eye seeth thee. The Lord has only asked questions and presented wonders, not one of which Job could answer or understand, and yet he says, Now mine eye seeth thee. He sees him in the majesty of his eternal power and the solitary glory of his underived wisdom, before all worlds, inhabiting eternity. "Behold, the nations are as a drop of a bucket, and are counted as the small dust of the balance; behold, he taketh up the isles as a very little thing."

We may hear a man described with the utmost particularity, but we do not know him yet; we only know the description, and in speaking to another of him we must use the words we have heard, and if we vary from them we cannot tell but we vary from the truth. But when we have seen his face ourselves, we may use our own words in describing it, and may vary and enlarge with safety whenever we speak, for the face is ever before our mind's eye. So when God has revealed himself to our souls we see him in his own light, and have daily something new to say of the wonders of his beauty and glory which we see in our daily experience. The false teacher, whenever he leaves the express words of Scripture, speaks falsely, for he knows not of what he speaks; and even in using the Scriptures wrests them and handles them deceitfully, or so as to deceive. But the servant of God, daily beholding as in a glass his glory (II Corinthians 3:18), which shines in the face of Jesus Christ, is enabled to bring forth for the comfort of

his people things new and old. With this vital knowledge of God, we always experience the self-abhorrence and repentance expressed by Job.

The Lord now said to Eliphaz, My wrath is kindled against thee and against thy two friends, for ye have not spoken of me the thing that is right, as my servant Job hath. They are commanded, therefore, to go to Job and offer up for themselves sacrifices. And my servant shall pray for you, for him will I accept, lest I deal with you after your folly, in that ye have not spoken of me the thing that is right, like my servant Job. So they did as the Lord commanded them; the Lord also accepted Job. We do not learn here that they received forgiveness of sin and acceptance as God's children, but that through the intercession of Job they were spared from being dealt with after their folly. For the sake of the Church, God spares for a long time men of iniquity, enduring "with much long-suffering the vessels of wrath fitted to destruction;" and the saints are taught to pray for all men, as Stephen prayed for his enemies, "Lord, lay not this sin to their charge."

And the Lord turned the captivity of Job when he had prayed for his friends; also the Lord gave Job twice as much as he had before.

Such an expression is here used in reference to the healing of Job's afflictions as is employed in reference to the restoration and exaltation of Zion, of which he is a type. The people of God were carried away into captivity, reduced very low and humbled under suffering. The prophets describe the degradation of Zion, her bitter complaints under the cruel oppression of her adversaries, who are but the hand of God, and her humble acknowledgments of the righteousness of God's judgments. But her release and exaltation under the gospel dispensation are also declared and spoken of as a turning of her captivity, and it is known in the experience of all the saints when they are brought into the liberty of the gospel. "When the Lord turned again the captivity of Zion, we were like them that dream. Then was our mouth filled with laughter, and our tongue with singing; then said they among the heathen, The Lord hath done great things for them (Psalm 126:1,2)."

So it was with Job when the Lord turned his captivity. Then came there unto him all his brethren, and all his sisters, and all they that had been his acquaintance before; and they bemoaned him and comforted him over all the evil that the Lord had brought upon him; every man also gave him a piece of money, and every one an earring of gold. How similar is the description of the exaltation of Zion! "The Gentiles shall come to thy light, and kings to the brightness of thy rising. Lift up thine eyes round about and see; all they gather themselves together, they come to thee. Thy sons also shall come from far, and thy daughters shall be nursed at thy side (Isaiah 60:3,4)." For Zion, like Job, had been desolated of her children, but the Lord had promised that they should come again in the end from the land of the enemy. (See Jeremiah 31:15-17.) The abundance of the riches that should flow to Zion in her exaltation is represented by multitudes of camels and flocks of Kedar, with gold and silver and incense, brought by the dromedaries of Midian and Ephraim and Sheba and the ships of Tarshish. "And the sons of strangers shall build up thy walls, and their kings shall minister unto thee." The abasement also of Eliphaz and his two friends before Job is answered in the representation of Zion. "The sons also of them that afflicted thee shall come bending unto thee, and all they that despised thee shall bow themselves down at the soles of thy feet." Job had complained that all his acquaintance and inward friends abhorred and despised him, but now they are bowing before him.

So the Lord blessed the latter end of Job more than the beginning. And so the exceeding glory of the Church under the gospel dispensation is set forth. But though his goods were increased, the number of his children remained the same, for he had also seven sons and three daughters. Whether his children

were really slain, as the devil's messenger said, it is not necessary to know, for we have only to do with the spiritual signification, and to the last the figure is maintained. The children of Zion are the same under all dispensations, never increased or diminished, being all written and numbered in the Lamb's book of life before the foundation of the world.

## Chapter XXI.

### CONCLUSION.

“Ye have heard of the patience of Job, and have seen the end of the Lord; that the Lord is very pitiful and of tender mercy (James 5:11).”

We may possibly have sometimes wondered that Job should have been set forth as an example of patience, since that word, as commonly used, signifies the quality of enduring affliction calmly, without murmuring or fretfulness, while Job was full of complaints. I trust, however, we have been enabled by the blessed Spirit during these contemplations to understand in some degree wherein his patience consisted, and to see the end of the Lord in his trial.

The primary meaning of the word patience is endurance, continuance; and this we shall find to be its scriptural signification. When our Saviour told his disciples of the fearful persecutions they should endure before his coming and the end of the world, he assured them that not one hair of their heads should fall to the ground, and said, “In your patience possess ye your souls (Luke 21:19).” In the book of Revelation we find this word twice defined in a most remarkable manner. First, in connection with the account of the beast that rose out of the sea, who spoke blasphemies, and had power to make war with the saints and overcome them, and who should be worshiped by all that dwell on the earth, save those whose names are written in the book of life of the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world: “He that leadeth into captivity shall go into captivity; he that killeth with the sword must be killed with the sword. Here is the patience and the faith of the saints (Revelation 13:10).” Second, in connection with the proclamation of the angel concerning the punishment that should be inflicted upon the worshipers of the beast; “And the smoke of their torment ascendeth up for ever and ever; and they have no rest day nor night who worship the beast and his image, and whosoever receiveth the mark of his name. Here is the patience of the saints; here are they that keep the commandments of God and the faith of Jesus (Revelation 14:11,12).”

In these two passages and their connections we find but particular illustrations of what our Saviour foretold in the Scripture first referred to concerning the blasphemous deceivers and persecutors that should be encountered by his disciples. “The sword” and “captivity” represent the exercise of worldly power. The nations and powers of the earth, fighting with carnal weapons and leading into captivity, are themselves mutually destroyed in this way; while the saints, against whom their bitterest hatred is directed, though their bodies may be bound or killed, are not harmed as saints. Not one hair of their heads falls to the ground. They cannot fight with the sword nor offer carnal resistance, but “they overcome by the blood of the Lamb.” Their continuance in the truth and in hope while enduring opposition is patience, and their victory is their faith; for “This is the victory that overcometh the world, even your faith (I John 5:4).”

The worshipers of the beast, the smoke of whose torment ascendeth up for ever and ever, and who have no rest day nor night, represent all followers of false religion and opposers of the truth, who cannot rest, but “like the troubled sea cast up mire and dirt (Isaiah 57:20),” and of whom God has said, “These are a smoke in my nose, a fire that burneth all the day (Isaiah 65:5).” Though false religion bears a most flattering appearance to the worldly mind, and though its teachers have all worldly arts of persuasion to employ in extending it, presenting the glory of the kingdoms of this world to attract men,

yet it is not possible for them to deceive the elect (Matthew 24:24), whose names are written in the Lamb's book of life. These see the delusion because they have the light of life. Here is the patience and the faith of the saints.

Patience, then, in its scriptural signification, is a quality peculiar to the saints. It is a quality developed, or, we might say, brought into being, by contact with suffering. The hardness of iron is manifested by heavy strokes of the hammer, the purity of gold is exhibited by the fire. By this contact with destructive and tarnishing influences there is developed in these metals the distinct quality of endurance. So the power of God's truth in the soul, the perfection of his work within his people, is tried by contact with that which will destroy anything else but his word and work, and thus endurance or patience is developed. So we are told that "tribulation worketh patience," though only in the saints; false professions are manifested by it, as the counterfeit of gold is destroyed by the action of the fire.

As patience implies a hope and expectation of future deliverance and comfort, so it belongs to the believer in his pilgrimage state. His hope enters into that within the veil, and cannot be destroyed. His expectation looks to the coming of Jesus, and cannot be cut off. He has known the truth, and it can never be unknown. He has seen the light of the Sun of Righteousness, and it shall never depart from him. Now let the sword of persecution come against him; can it destroy that hope, even though it kill the body, since its life is not in this world, but in that which is to come?

Let false teachers gather around with their vanities and delusions; can they make him believe contrary to what his eyes have seen and his hands have handled of the word of life? (See I John 1:1.) Though through flattery or fear working upon his fleshly feelings they should cause his lips to speak falsely for his heart, as Peter's did, and so bring upon him the sharp stings of a wounded conscience, still the denial of his lips would be rebuked by the truth in the heart, and his patience would yet remain.

But we are full of doubts about this work within us, whether it is truly the work of God, whether it will endure to the end, and whether we shall not lose our hope and crown. These doubts and fears are the temptations of Satan. He is ever present thus, or endeavors to be, when the sons of God come to present themselves before the Lord, declaring, through their fears and doubts, to God's face that they have some worldly and selfish motive for their service, and that extreme earthly loss and suffering would cause their faith to fail, their service to be discontinued and their hope to be swallowed up in the black gulf of despair. But the Lord has shown us in the trial of Job how Satan is answered and overcome, by allowing all the worldly evils and spiritual trials Satan has caused us to fear to be brought upon us, and all his delusive doctrine to be raised up against us. The lies of Satan are thus manifested to us, for we cannot let go our hope nor make ourselves love false doctrine. He does all he can. When earthly possessions and pleasures are taken from us, he tempts us to turn away from a God who deals so harshly with us. But we know that we have no right to claim good at the hands of God rather than evil, and so the tempter fails. Then he brings out to our view our corruptions of the flesh, causes them to stare upon us, and then taunts us because we dare to hope. And here let us notice in what consists that great temptation from which God has promised to deliver us. He has said that with every temptation he will make a way of escape that we may be able to bear it. (See I Corinthians 10:13.) Now, if the temptation here meant were, when we were tempted to transgress in any way then should we ever yield, we must give up any claim to this promise, since we had not escaped. But the temptation is such as is illustrated in the case of Job as a type. Through the wiles of Satan we transgress in thought or word or deed, speaking as a follower of the meek and lowly Jesus should not, and acting as does not become the gospel of Christ. Thus our depravity and corruptions of the flesh are brought out and

manifested to our view, and perhaps in the sight of others. The transgression may be more or less great in the sight of the world. It may be only an unguarded word uttered in anger, which worldly men would count as nothing, or a denial of the faith through fear of man, for which the world would praise us; or it may be what men would esteem a greater transgression. Or at a time when we are not conscious of any present transgression, and when none could be marked against us by any man, we may be so made to feel the burden of our depravity of nature, may be so made “to possess the iniquities of our youth,” may have our secret sins so set to our view in the light of God’s countenance, that our condition, as we feel it, is just like that of Job according to his bitterest and strongest descriptions of it. Now comes the real time of temptation. Bereft of all worldly enjoyments, perhaps with no outward sign of God’s favor, and with our sins and unworthiness all manifested to us, filling our minds with anguish and self-abhorrence, and making us feel as though we are as a lamp despised, as though all must see us as we see ourselves, and so scorn us, Satan tempts us to give up our hope and turn from our trust in God. Our old nature tells us, as the wife of Job did, to do so. We feel the power of the temptation most bitterly. No words can fully express the agony of mind under it. We have to say with Job, “My stroke is heavier than my groaning.” Under the most insupportable burden, hedged in on every side, we have in the secret of our souls longed to die, and wondered why light should be given to one who is in such bitterness that he longs for death as for a hid treasure, and murmuringly and pleadingly by turns we have in our inmost thoughts asked God to take us away. For we say to ourselves, or Satan says to us, What a shame and reproach to your God for so vile a sinner to pretend to be his child! And this temptation, the sorest that ever came upon a poor sinner, is not left upon us for a moment only and then removed, but it is continued from day to day through the false doctrine that Satan causes to be preached to us. This peculiar temptation extends through, and is an element in, all the doctrine of the world. Now that we are so self-abased and miserable, it is the time for that trial to come. Our brethren, as false teachers persist in calling themselves while they have any hope of gaining us, gather about, misjudge our case, condemn where condemnation does not belong, reproach unjustly, heap contempt upon us for pretending to hope without doing something to cleanse ourselves and make ourselves acceptable to God by our good works, and then try to force upon us the absolute necessity of their doctrine. All this is Satan’s temptation, and it is continued from day to day so long as God’s face is hidden from us. The Lord having made darkness, all the beasts of the forest have come forth to terrify us to death (Psalm 104:20). They profess to be friends and to desire to comfort us, but their tongues are “sharp swords,” and their bitter words are “as arrows shot out.” Satan is most busy now, though he appears to be out of sight. He rouses up our fears and fretfulness and murmurings within, and keeps up the fire of persecution from without. He tempts us to give up our belief in that doctrine which is foolishness to the wise of this world and a stumbling-block to worldly religion; and if this were not the Lord’s work within us, or if the Lord’s work could fail, we should yield and commence upon the system of man’s work. But the truth never was more clear to the poor sinner than when he feels most unworthy. He tempts us with inward fears and outward declarations of our friends that God has become our enemy, and that he really hates us. And if the Lord’s work could fail we should sink in helpless and endless despair. But God has put a word within us, and Satan cannot bring us so low as to drown the voice of that word. He cannot prevent our saying in the last extremity, “Though he slay me, yet will I trust in him.”

Christ has prayed for each of his children, as he did for Peter, that when Satan has them to sift them as wheat their faith shall not fail. The Lord will try his people as gold and refine them as silver. He will keep them in the fire until the dross is thoroughly removed. He will reprove their rebellious murmurings by the voice of his servants and by his own all-penetrating voice out of the whirlwind; he

will show them that they are not less worthy of his love when they see their own corruptions and are covered with shame and self-loathing, than when those corruptions are hidden from their view and they are self-complacently at rest – that his love is not theirs because of any goodness or beauty in them, but that he has loved them in Christ with an everlasting love, having chosen them in him before the foundation of the world, that they should be holy and without blame before him in love. When they are tempted to think that now certainly they can hope no longer, because they are so vile and have wandered so far that they can never claim or receive his favor again, he will manifest a way through Christ for their escape. They shall endure to the end through the power of the truth. They shall be kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation, and they shall finally be brought to the shores of everlasting deliverance, to the praise of the riches of his grace. For he is very pitiful and of tender mercy, and his faithfulness cannot fail; and though he speak against his chosen in their backslidings and through their trial, yet does he earnestly remember them still (Jeremiah 31:18-20).

The admonitions and reproofs of Elihu, corresponding with those of our Saviour and his apostles, are given to the saints for their comfort. They are to restrain their feet from the way of evil and keep their tongue from speaking guile. They are so to order their walk and conversation as to adorn the doctrine they delight in and honor the God they adore. They are to let patience have her perfect work. There is somewhere within us, since first we hoped in Christ, a calm and serene certainty of final deliverance into eternal joy. This divine assurance is in some deep and secret recess of our being – not always within the scope of our consciousness, not easily kept in our wavering, unsteady sight in time of trouble, but is like some faint star in the infinite depth of heaven that now dimly appears, and now seems to recede from our view into the fathomless depth. But it is always there, and always steadily influences us. In the deepest darkness and bitterest anguish and amid the most harassing fears it is there yet. It is the certainty of the faith of the Son of God. It is that principle by which he saw through the darkness of death and beheld the joy that was set before him. It is the patience of the saints. Tranquil and quiet, it looks on while we groan in sorrow and pain, sees us tossed to and fro with fears and sinking with self-abhorrence, and knows that all is for our good and God's glory. When we lose all sight of the way, and cannot possibly see how we can escape, that calm certainty is there. This is patience. When this shall act outwardly upon our lives, then we shall cease to murmur; shall go serenely through darkness; shall rejoice in tribulation; shall be meek and humble before God in word and action, and mild with our fellow-men; shall walk softly in the bitterness of our souls and endure chastisement willingly; shall boldly fight against all error, yet answer our opposers with no railing accusation nor desire to take vengeance on our enemies. Thus we shall let patience have her perfect work. For here we have only to endure and wait, calmly reposing upon the faithful word of God.

Thus wisdom points out her ways to her children, in which they shall find pleasantness and peace. But let them take heed also that they give no place to false suggestions of Satan that for their correct walk they are to receive eternal life as a reward. Let them rather contemplate continually the view that God has given to their faith of the Church complete in all her members, always perfect and upright in her glorious Head, finally delivered from all her trials and all her enemies, and exalted to shine in superlative excellence and glorious beauty, fair as the moon, clear as the sun and terrible as an army with banners.

The end of the Lord is accomplished in the trial of Job and of all his children. In sweet humility we are made to submit ourselves to his will. Then we rise up in his strength, and receive an abundant entrance into his everlasting kingdom. We have contemplated the endurance of affliction. But oh how sweet, how blessed when the mind is allowed to dwell upon the rapturous delights of life for evermore! To

receive the soft impressions of an abiding peace in God and joy in the Holy Ghost! To contemplate the heavens of eternal glory, never more to be clouded, and dwell in the light of God! Then the soul becomes as a watered garden, fresh and fragrant with joy and praise.

If we have yet more trials to endure, and must now turn back again to darkness and warfare and sorrow, let us endure patiently, knowing that the trial of our faith is more precious than of gold that perisheth, and that the Lord, who works all things for our good, will not withdraw his mercy and loving-kindness from us. Let us quietly and trustfully wait the time of his blessed and final appearing. It will be only a few more days, and then our weary, toilsome way will close in unending rest, every sorrow give place for ever to unspeakable joy, and all the mists and shadows that have hung about us here upon the earth be lost in everlasting glory.

**The End.**