

ORTHODOXY CONFOUNDED

"THOU ART THE MAN!" (CH. 22)

- THEN answered Eliphaz the Temanite, and said,
²Can a man be profitable unto God? surely he that is wise is profitable unto himself.
³Is it any pleasure to the Almighty, that thou art righteous? or is it gain to *him*, that thou makest thy ways perfect?
⁴Is it for thy fear of *him* that he reproveth thee, that he entereth with thee into judgement?
⁵Is not thy wickedness great? neither is there any end to thine iniquities.
⁶For thou hast taken pledges of thy brother for nought, and stripped the naked of their clothing.
⁷Thou hast not given water to the weary to drink, and thou hast withholden bread from the hungry.
⁸But as for the mighty man, he had the earth; and the honourable man, he dwelt in it.
⁹Thou hast sent widows away empty, and the arms of the fatherless have been broken.
¹⁰Therefore snares are round about thee, and sudden fear troubleth thee,
¹¹Or darkness, that thou canst not see, and abundance of waters cover thee.
¹²Is not God in the height of heaven? and behold the height of the stars, how high they are!
- ¹³And thou sayest, What doth God know?
 can he judge through the thick darkness?
¹⁴Thick clouds are a covering to him, that he seeth not; and he walketh on the vault of heaven.
¹⁵Wilt thou keep the old way which wicked men have trodden?
¹⁶who were snatched away before their time, whose foundation was poured out as a stream:
¹⁷who said unto God, Depart from us; and, What can the Almighty do to us?
¹⁸Yet he filled their houses with good things; but the counsel of the wicked is far from me.
¹⁹The righteous see it, and are glad; and the innocent laugh them to scorn:
²⁰saying, Surely they that did rise up against us are cut off, and the remnant of them the fire hath consumed.
²¹Acquaint now thyself with him, and be at peace: thereby good shall come unto thee.
²²Receive, I pray thee, instruction from his mouth, and lay up his words in thine heart.
²³If thou return to the Almighty, thou shalt be built up; if thou put away unrighteousness far from thy tents.
²⁴And lay thou *thy* treasure in the dust,

and *the gold of Ophir* among the stones of the brooks;
²⁵and the Almighty shall be thy treasure,
 and precious silver unto thee.
²⁶For then shalt thou delight thyself in the Almighty,
 and shalt lift up thy face unto God.
²⁷Thou shalt make thy prayer unto him,
 and he shall hear thee; and thou shalt pay thy vows.

²⁸Thou shalt also decree a thing, and it shall be established unto thee;
 and light shall shine upon thy ways.
²⁹When they cast *thee* down, thou shalt say, *There is lifting up*; and the humble person he shall save.
³⁰He shall deliver him that is innocent:
 yea, he shall be delivered through the cleanness of thine hands.

WE have seen that Eliphaz the Temanite was at heart a good, kindly and God-fearing man. But Job had been dragging him remorsefully to the cliff's edge and at last in his picture of Mr. Badman (ch. 21) had forced him to look down on a storm-tossed world in which there was no vestige of Divine rule and justice. In very terror Eliphaz turned on him.

Let us not be too hard on him. He was potentially the best of Job's friends, but the firm ground on which he thought he stood was essentially less secure than that of the others. Bildad relied on the consensus of human wisdom—if he had lived today, it would have been on some traditional scheme of Scripture interpretation or dogmatic theology—and Zophar on common-sense, but Eliphaz' rock was his own experience. Our experience of God may seem the most certain and comforting thing in life, but in the hour of crisis it may fail us completely, as Asaph discovered (Ps. 77: 6–9). Eliphaz was not the last in his position to panic, when his experience seemed to be contradicted.

Eliphaz begins by repeating the main thought of his dream (vv. 2–4, cf. 4: 17–20). When he had first told it, it might have seemed to the hearer as no more than one of those solemn experiences that colour and mould a man's life. Now we see that it had become a tyranny that held him as in a strait-jacket. Not merely Job but also God was to be understood in terms of the dream, and so Job had to become the chief of sinners and God the mere cold embodiment of an idea. This is the ultimate fate of all those who insist on interpreting God wholly in terms of their own experience.

Somewhat reassured by finding his feet once more on his familiar rock, Eliphaz turns in cold fury on the man who had made his universe shake for a moment. From the poor he had

taken his outer garment (cf. Exod. 22: 26f., Deut. 24: 12f.) for a derisory loan (*for nought*, v. 6). Though he had been *mighty* and *honourable* (v. 8), he had ignored the needy (v. 7) and refused to help the widow and orphan in the hour of their greatest need (v. 9, cf. Exod. 22: 22ff.).

It might be profitable for us to pause in our reading and mentally to draw our own picture of Mr. Badman. It is bound to be different, for society has not only changed but also grown so much more complex, and the ties of the family group with its loyalties correspondingly weaker. But is our picture the true one? The sin above all others condemned by our Lord is sin against the weak—the sin against the Holy Spirit is an attitude of mind and heart to God and does not come into consideration here—for He said:

It is impossible but that occasions of stumbling should come: but woe unto him, through whom they come! It were well for him, if a millstone were hanged about his neck, and he were thrown into the sea, rather than that he should cause one of these little ones to stumble (Luke 17: 1f.).

Love is the sign of life, lovelessness of death (I John 3: 14). So, provided we make allowances for the changes in society, the true Mr. Badman of today would bear close resemblance to Eliphaz' picture.

Eliphaz has one more shaft left to fire. He deliberately takes a phrase from Job's picture of Mr. Badman (21: 14f.) and applies it to Job (22: 12-17). Job is not merely bad, he is Mr. Badman.

The typical modern atheist is the product of that intellectual pride of humanism that makes man the measure of all things and of the self-confidence of modern science. At his best there is something noble but pathetic about him. We have only to compare Psa. 23 with Henley's

"Out of the night that covers me,
Black as the pit from pole to pole,
I thank whatever gods may be
For my unconquerable soul"

to realize the vanity and emptiness of human pride.

But the atheist of the Old Testament is the fool (*nabal*) who says in his heart, "There is no God" (Psa. 10: 4, 14: 1, 53: 1). He crosses our path again and again in Scripture and in our daily

lives. It is not that he denies the existence of God by word or intellectual argument; it is his life that denies it. He thinks that if there is a God He is not concerned with him (Psa. 10: 11, 73: 11), or even that God is like him in character (Psa. 50: 21). As a result the only check upon his behaviour is self-interest. Such a one, according to Eliphaz, is Job!

There is nothing vindictive about all this once Eliphaz has regained his equilibrium. Let Job but vindicate Eliphaz' experience and judgment, and he holds out to him in genuine warmth the riches of God's mercy (vv. 21-30) in language that reminds us of his earlier appeal in 5: 17-26. I am sure that, by the time he had finished, the hard feelings had evaporated, and that he was fully expecting Job to take his place on the penitent form. Once again we see how the self-centredness of the "good" man takes "Let God be found true, but every man a liar" (Rom. 3: 4) and makes it run "Let my understanding of God be found true, but every man that disagrees with it a liar."

"I CANNOT UNDERSTAND" (CH. 23)

THEN Job answered and said,
²Even to-day is my complaint bitter:
 his hand is heavier than my groaning.
³Oh that I knew where I might find him,
 that I might come even to his seat!
⁴I would order my cause before him,
 and fill my mouth with arguments.
⁵I would know the words which he would answer me,
 and understand what he would say unto me.
⁶Would he contend with me in the greatness of his power?
 Nay; but he would give heed unto me.
⁷There the upright might reason with him;
 so should I be delivered for ever from my judge.
⁸Behold, I go forward, but he is not *there*;
 and backward, but I cannot perceive him:

⁹on the left hand, when he doth work, but I cannot behold him:
 he hideth himself on the right hand, that I cannot see him.
¹⁰But he knoweth the way that I take;
 when he hath tried me, I shall come forth as gold.
¹¹My foot hath held fast to his steps;
 his way have I kept, and turned not aside.
¹²I have not gone back from the commandment of his lips;
 I have treasured up the words of his mouth more than my necessary food.
¹³But he is one, and who can turn him?
 and what his soul desireth, even that he doeth.
¹⁴For he performeth that which is appointed for me:
 and many such things are with him.
¹⁵Therefore am I troubled at his presence;
 when I consider, I am afraid of him.

<p>¹⁶For God hath made my heart faint, and the Almighty hath troubled me:</p>	<p>¹⁷because I was not cut off before the darkness, neither did he cover the thick darkness from my face.</p>
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I CAN see the ghost of a smile flit over Job's face marked with the scars of disease and suffering. At long last innuendoes and hints had come to an end and Job knew what they had been thinking all along, even though they might not have said it even to one another. As long as there seemed to be a shred of justification in the accusation, the desire for self-justification rose in his heart, but this nonsense could be ignored.

Eliphaz had capped Job's exaggeration about Mr. Badman with even greater exaggeration. This must have helped to restore Job's balance, and I get the impression that he had been quietly telling God that he knew that he had been drawing the long bow a trifle; but, for all that, he could not understand God's ways among men, for—and here he begins to speak aloud, to God, not to his friends—he could not understand God's ways with him.

The atmosphere and confidence of ch. 19 are still with us. There is no doubt in Job's mind that if he could only have a face-to-face talk with God he would be able to clear up the mystery. The progress of Job's thought is fascinating, but to understand it we must think of this chapter as a soliloquy with pauses from time to time. In vv. 2-7 it is not the old rebellious wish to argue out his case with God that we hear, but rather the sequel to 19: 27. The A.V. and R.V. mg. are correct as against R.V. text in v. 2, which we should, however, render with the R.S.V. (Moffatt essentially concurs):

Today also my complaint is bitter,
His hand is heavy in spite of my groaning.

Vindication after death is all very well, but the wronged heart of man yearns for it in this life. Let it be even in private, but *I should be acquitted for ever by my judge* (v. 7, R.S.V.).

Alas, there was no such finding of Him (vv. 8f.), but instead of this reducing Job to despair, as it did formerly, it only led him on spiritually. No longer do we get the strange picture of a duality in God, of a God who contradicts Himself (cf. 7: 8, 21; 16: 19). Now Job realized, even if only for a passing moment, that the mystery of darkness that had fallen on him was only God's refining fire (v. 10). Since in the days of his prosperity

Job had set himself to know God's will and to do it (vv. 11f.), he had no doubt as to the outcome.

In any case, he realized, the wish to find God was foolish, for *He is unchangeable* (v. 13, R.S.V., a translation that gives much the same sense as the emendation supported by most modern scholars, "He hath chosen"), and so all Job's arguments would be wasted. He must await the working out of God's will (v. 14); with that he sinks back temporarily into his misery (vv. 15ff.).

For those who from their childhood have known God only as seen in the face of Jesus Christ, it is hard to realize to what extent the Incarnation has made God more humanly comprehensible to us, and how, for this very reason, the Gospel is such a stumbling block to both Judaism and Islam. But this very comprehensibility constantly leads us into a hopelessly superficial outlook on life around us, and on God's ways with it.

There are not a few who assure us that it is comparatively easy to come to the throne of God and to talk things out with Him and so to obtain complete clarity on our own problems and often on those of others. Some claim to be able to do this by a correct use of the Scriptures, others by a technique of prayer or "listening," yet others by due attention to "the inner light." I do not want to seem to deny the strong element of truth in this, but it is a most serious exaggeration. Even our Lord on the cross cried out, "My God, My God, why . . .?" Though God graciously allows Himself to be found in measure by those who seek Him, He remains the God who hides Himself, and not until we see Him shall we know fully as we have been fully known.

So we find that today, as in the days of Job, while good men insist on the greatness of God and on the inscrutability of His sovereign purpose, they are convinced, for all that, that His purposes are easily discernible in the daily round of life, in spite of the fact that experience repeatedly denies their assertions. To affirm that "we know that in everything God works for good with those who love Him" (Rom. 8: 28, R.S.V.) is an expression of faith, not of understanding. To count it all joy, when we meet various trials (James 1: 2) is to recognize with joy God's working, but it does not imply knowledge of the extent or of the immediate purpose of the trial. In spite of the superficial optimism of our pundits, God does bring Himself glory by early death, ill-health, poverty, inability to use the gifts of God's own giving and the many other things which we are often assured should have at the

most a transient place in the Christian's life. It is our failure to realize this that brings so many of God's afflicted ones to the verge of despair, and sometimes beyond it.

THE EVILS OF SOCIETY (CH. 24)

WHY are times not laid up by
the Almighty?

and why do not they which know
him see his days?

²There are that remove the land-
marks;
they violently take away flocks,
and feed them.

³They drive away the ass of the
fatherless,
they take the widow's ox for a
pledge.

⁴They turn the needy out of the
way:
the poor of the earth hide them-
selves together.

⁵Behold, as wild asses in the desert
they go forth to their work, seek-
ing diligently for meat;
the wilderness *yieldeth* them food
for their children.

⁶They cut their provender in the
field;
and they glean the vintage of the
wicked.

⁷They lie all night naked without
clothing,
and have no covering in the cold.

⁸They are wet with the showers of
the mountains,
and embrace the rock for want of
a shelter.

⁹There are that pluck the fatherless
from the breast,
and take a pledge of the poor:

¹⁰they go about naked without
clothing,
and being an-hungred they carry
the sheaves;

¹¹they make oil within the walls of
these men;
they tread *their* winepresses, and
suffer thirst.

¹²From out of the populous city men
groan,
and the soul of the wounded crieth
out:

yet God imputeth it not for
folly.

¹³These are of them that rebel
against the light;
they know not the ways thereof,
nor abide in the paths thereof.

¹⁴The murderer riseth with the
light, he killeth the poor and
needy;
and in the night he is as a thief.

¹⁵The eye also of the adulterer
waiteth for the twilight,
saying, No eye shall see me:
and he disguiseth his face.

¹⁶In the dark they dig through
houses:
they shut themselves up in the
daytime;
they know not the light.

¹⁷For the morning is to all of them
as the shadow of death;
for they know the terrors of the
shadow of death.

¹⁸*Ye say*, He is swift upon the face
of the waters;
their portion is cursed in the
earth:
he turneth not by the way of the
vineyards.

¹⁹Drought and heat consume the
snow waters:
*so doth Sheol those which have
sinned.*

²⁰The womb shall forget him; the
worm shall feed sweetly on him;
he shall be no more remembered:
and unrighteousness shall be bro-
ken as a tree.

²¹He devoureth the barren that
beareth not;
and doeth not good to the widow.

²²Yet *God* by his power maketh the
mighty to continue:
he riseth up, and no man is sure of
life.

²³*God* giveth them to be in security,
and they rest thereon;

and his eyes are upon their ways.
²⁴They are exalted; yet a little while,
 and they are gone;
 yea, they are brought low, they
 are taken out of the way as all
 other,

and are cut off as the tops of the
 ears of corn.
²⁵And if it be not so now, who will
 prove me a liar,
 and make my speech nothing
 worth?

ALREADY in our study of chs. 7 and 14 we saw how Job's suffering gave him a truer picture of human life as a whole than that possessed by his friends. With the slackening of tension brought by the rise of hope Job was able to look at the suffering around him more objectively. In answering Zophar the second time (ch. 21) Job had merely challenged and denied his friends' fundamental outlook on life. Now he works out the implications of his challenge. He looks on life and cries out:

Why has not the Almighty sessions of set justice?

Why do His followers never see Him intervening? (24: 1, Moffatt).

Many scholars feel that this chapter is an anti-climax after the very strong language of ch. 21 and suggest that Job did in fact express himself so vigorously about the fate of the righteous that some pious scribe felt compelled to replace what he considered blasphemy by relatively harmless platitudes. Quite apart from the inherent objection to such a view, it is to ignore the change in mood that set in in ch. 19, and also the background of the whole book. It is true that Job had become one of the great and mighty, but the whole discussion is on the level of the Wise. These were in ancient society, together with many of the priests, the nearest approach to our modern middle class. Except where they dabbled in plots, or where the state went down in blood and fire, they were more cushioned against sudden adversity than others.

They were peculiarly prone to the besetting weakness of the middle classes: an undue respect for the rich and powerful, and a blind eye for the need and suffering of the poor. This was strengthened by a tendency we find throughout ancient society, which is reflected in the Old Testament.

When John the Baptist wished to know of a certainty what he had to think of Jesus, the supreme proof of His Messiahship was "the poor have the gospel preached to them" (Matt. 11: 5). Though we seldom recognize the fact, the Old Testament, quite in keeping with its historic background, is concerned mainly with

the full citizen in Israel. The landless and broken man, the slave, and the hired servant, the harlot and the outcast, the bastard and the leper leave their mark on its pages, but it is seldom that the prophetic message is addressed to them, and often they had no place within the cultus of Israel.

It was not until the Son of God came in utter poverty, and, after having grown up in a place from which nothing good could be expected (John 1: 46) and having consorted with the outcast and the notorious sinner, became an outcast by being hanged on a tree (Deut. 21: 23), that the average man could even conceive that God was concerned with the outcast. By the educating work of the Holy Spirit during the inter-testamental period the Pharisees had come to realize clearly enough that riches were not a guide to whether a man enjoyed God's favour, but the hard words, "This multitude which knoweth not the law are accursed" (John 7: 49) show how little true understanding most of them had for the outcast. It was not until Jewry knew itself as an outcast in exile that there grew up in many hearts a truer understanding for the broken and despised.

But do not let us criticize the men of the Old Testament or the Pharisees too readily. Though it could doubtless have been said of all the early churches as it was said to the Christians in Corinth, "Ye see your calling, brethren, how that not many wise men after the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble are called" (1 Cor. 1: 26), yet already James (2: 1ff.) had to warn against undue deference to the rich. It has not been so much false doctrine or antinomianism that have been the great enemies of the Church in every period, but rather an undue respect for riches and intellect, which has made the poor and outcast feel strangers in what should have been their home. Though there have been repeated movements inside and outside the organized Church to alter this, they have always succumbed sooner or later to the prevailing atmosphere.

Job had shared the prevailing feelings of the Wise. Not until he became an outcast did he see his fellow outcasts as his fellow men rather than as objects of charity or condemnation. He now saw that the fate of the weak (vv. 2-4) was due to the evil character of the strong and not to the sin of those they oppressed; equally, the bitter life of the landless and wronged (vv. 5-12) could not be imputed to their fault. Yet for all that there was no sign of God's judgment (vv. 1, 12c.). Because his friends

assumed that the outcasts must be suffering for their own sin, they entirely failed to realize that even if the fate of the wicked was what they described, it would mean no relief for those whom they had wronged the most deeply. It was just here that Job saw the clearest proof of a lack of Divine rule in the world, and we fail to see the problem at our peril. The fact that we cheerfully assign the great and evil leaders of Fascism and Communism and the conscienceless controllers of world finance to hell does not answer the problem of their victims, godly and godless alike.

From the victims of wrongdoing Job turns (vv. 13-17) to a type of wrongdoer who plays little part in the thinking of his friends, but who, for all that, does more real harm to individuals and society than does the *rasha'*, the arrogantly wicked man, *viz.* the thief who is prepared to murder in cold blood, and the adulterer prepared to break up homes to satisfy his lusts. They shun the light of day, unlike the *rasha'*, and so escape detection, while they undermine society. Note the R.S.V. rendering in v. 17b, *For they are friends with the terrors of deep darkness.* It is given to few to see sin where it really is. The sinner is all too often profoundly comfortable at church services, for the sins denounced there have little relevance to his own life. Apart from that, however, we should realize that the real threat to society comes not from those who serve more than half a lifetime of penal servitude or even meet their end on the scaffold, but from those who make their own desires their god, but are normally sufficiently astute to keep within the letter of the law, while achieving their purposes.

Apparently the R.V. mg. and R.S.V. give the only acceptable sense when they render v. 18, *Ye say, He is swift . . .*; vv. 18ff. must apparently represent the opinions of Job's friends. The meaning and text of v. 24 are far from clear, but in the context it must mean that while death overtakes the wicked it is only the common fate of all. With his survey of life completed Job challenges his friends to prove him wrong (v. 25). They do not really try, for they know that Job has laid his finger on the mystery of God's providential dealings with men.

CONFUSION (CHS. 25-27)

THEN answered Bildad the Shuhite, and said,

²Dominion and fear are with him; he maketh peace in his high places.

³Is there any number of his armies?

and upon whom doth not his light arise?

- ⁴How then can man be just before God?
or how can he be clean that is born of a woman?
- ⁵Behold, even the moon hath no brightness,
and the stars are not pure in his sight:
⁶how much less man, that is a worm!
and the son of man, which is a worm!
26. Then Job answered and said,
²How hast thou helped him that is without power!
how hast thou saved the arm that hath no strength!
³How hast thou counselled him that hath no wisdom,
and plentifully declared sound knowledge!
⁴To whom hast thou uttered words?
and whose spirit came forth from thee?
⁵The shades tremble beneath the waters and the inhabitants thereof.
⁶Sheol is naked before him,
and Abaddon hath no covering.
⁷He stretcheth out the north over empty space,
and hangeth the earth upon nothing.
⁸He bindeth up the waters in his thick clouds;
and the cloud is not rent under them.
⁹He closeth in the face of his throne,
and spreadeth his cloud upon it.
¹⁰He hath described a boundary upon the face of the waters,
unto the confines of light and darkness.
¹¹The pillars of heaven tremble
and are astonished at his rebuke.
¹²He stilleth the sea with his power,
and by his understanding he smiteth through Rahab.
¹³By his spirit the heavens are garnished;
his hand hath pierced the swift serpent.
- ¹⁴Lo, these are but the outskirts of his ways:
and how small a whisper do we hear of him!
but the thunder of his power who can understand?
27. And Job again took up his parable and said,
²As God liveth, who hath taken away my right;
and the Almighty, who hath vexed my soul;
³all the while my breath is in me,
and the spirit of God is in my nostrils;
⁴surely my lips shall not speak unrighteousness,
neither shall my tongue utter deceit.
⁵God forbid that I should justify you:
till I die I will not put away mine integrity from me.
⁶My righteousness I hold fast, and will not let it go:
my heart shall not reproach me so long as I live.
⁷Let mine enemy be as the wicked,
and let him that riseth up against me be as the unrighteous.
⁸For what is the hope of the godless,
when God cutteth him off,
when God taketh away his soul?
⁹Will God hear his cry,
when trouble cometh upon him?
¹⁰Will he delight himself in the Almighty,
and call upon God at all times?
¹¹I will teach you concerning the hand of God;
that which is with the Almighty will I not conceal.
¹²Behold, all ye yourselves have seen it;
why then are ye become altogether vain?
¹³This is the portion of a wicked man with God,
and the heritage of oppressors,
which they receive from the Almighty.
¹⁴If his children be multiplied, it is for the sword;

- and his offspring shall not be satisfied with bread.
- ¹⁶Those that remain of him shall be buried in death,
and his widows shall make no lamentation.
- ¹⁶Though he heap up silver as the dust,
and prepare raiment as the clay;
¹⁷he may prepare it, but the just shall put it on,
and the innocent shall divide the silver.
- ¹⁸He buildeth his house as the moth,
and as a booth which the keeper maketh.
- ¹⁹He lieth down rich, but he shall not be gathered;
he openeth his eyes, and he is not.
- ²⁰Terrors overtake him like waters;
a tempest stealeth him away in the night.
- ²¹The east wind carrieth him away,
and he departeth;
and it sweepeth him out of his place.
- ²²For God shall hurl at him, and not spare:
he would fain flee out of his hand.
- ²³Men shall clap their hands at him,
and shall hiss him out of his place.

WE have already seen in ch. II that the text of this section is almost certainly in confusion and that part may well have been lost. This suits the position of the speakers well enough, for it mirrors their own confusion of mind. The obstinacy of his friends has gradually driven Job to a position he hates and does not really want to defend. His friends on the other hand can only maintain their traditional positions by shutting their eyes to facts and by repeating platitudes in a loud voice.

We need not hesitate to hear Bildad in ch. 25, though it may well be that ch. 26 belongs to him too. If Bildad were, like the writer of Ecclesiastes, taking up an agnostic position and claiming that God's ways are beyond man's understanding, his contrast of God's greatness (25: 2f.) with man's sinfulness and insignificance (25: 4ff.) would be valid. But he entirely overlooks that the argument that is intended to crush Job's impious views is equally effective against his own confident picture of God's moral rule as seen in the prosperity of the good and destruction of the wicked. One of the commonest fallacies that beset good men is the idea that because a theory is "edifying" it must be true.

It could be that Job replies with an even stronger affirmation of God's all-might and concludes with an affirmation of complete agnosticism (26: 14). Since, however, this would be an implicit retraction of his arguments of ch. 24, which is most unlikely, we would do well to base no arguments on ch. 26.

There is no doubt that it is Job we hear in 27: 2-5. The witness of his conscience is too strong for him to bow to his friends' affirmations of his sinfulness or of the all-might of God. The

voice of God will yet prostrate him in humility and penitence, but the purely human measuring rods used by his friends merely drive him to even deeper anguish.

Unless we are to plead for a sustained note of sarcasm, of which there is no indication and which we could hardly justify in the setting, it seems impossible to ascribe 27:7-23 to Job. The passage is an affirmation of all the three friends have been proclaiming and a flat contradiction of Job's own views. We shall probably do best to see Zophar speaking here, making dogmatism take the place of evidence and vehemence that of proof. It may be that Job's answer is lost, or more probably he looks on such statements as unworthy of being refuted again and deals with them by implication in his summing up (chs. 29-31).

So the third round ends in inevitable confusion, the confusion that must arise when orthodoxy turns its back on experience and creates a world to suit its theories, and when experience ignores revelation and seeks to make itself the measure of truth.