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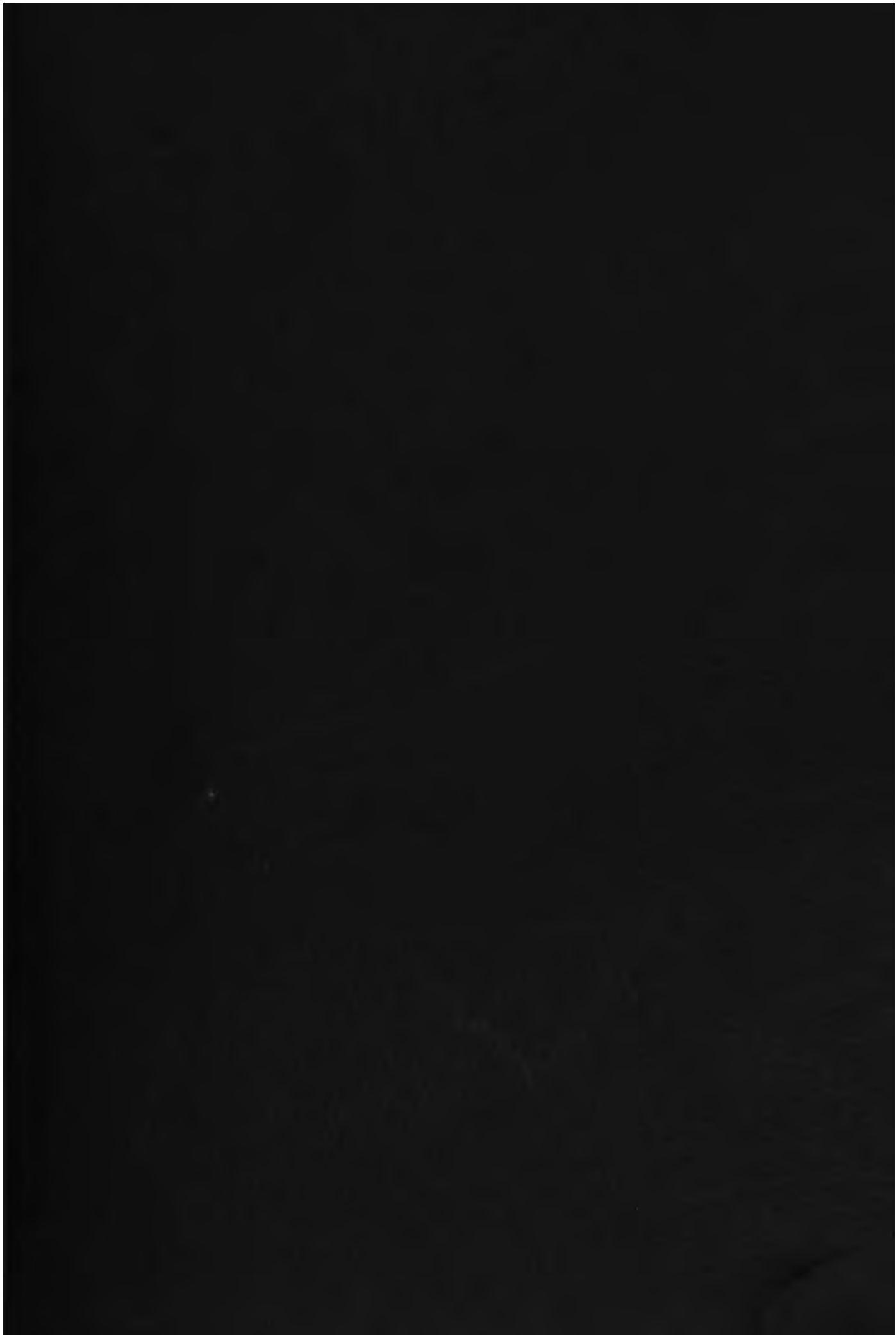


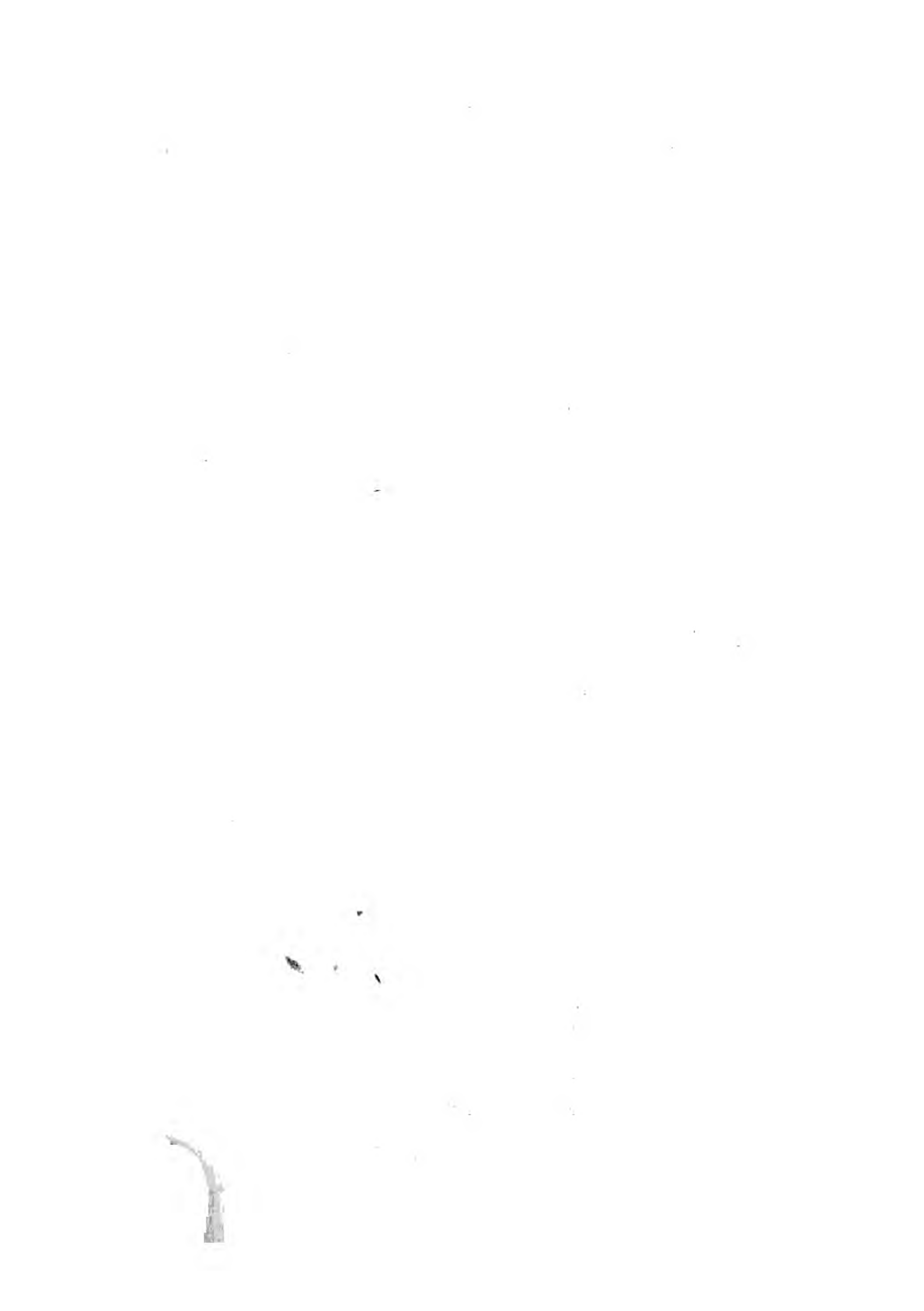
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A  
METRICAL STUDY  
OF  
THE BOOK OF JOB.

HENRY JOHN MARTEN.







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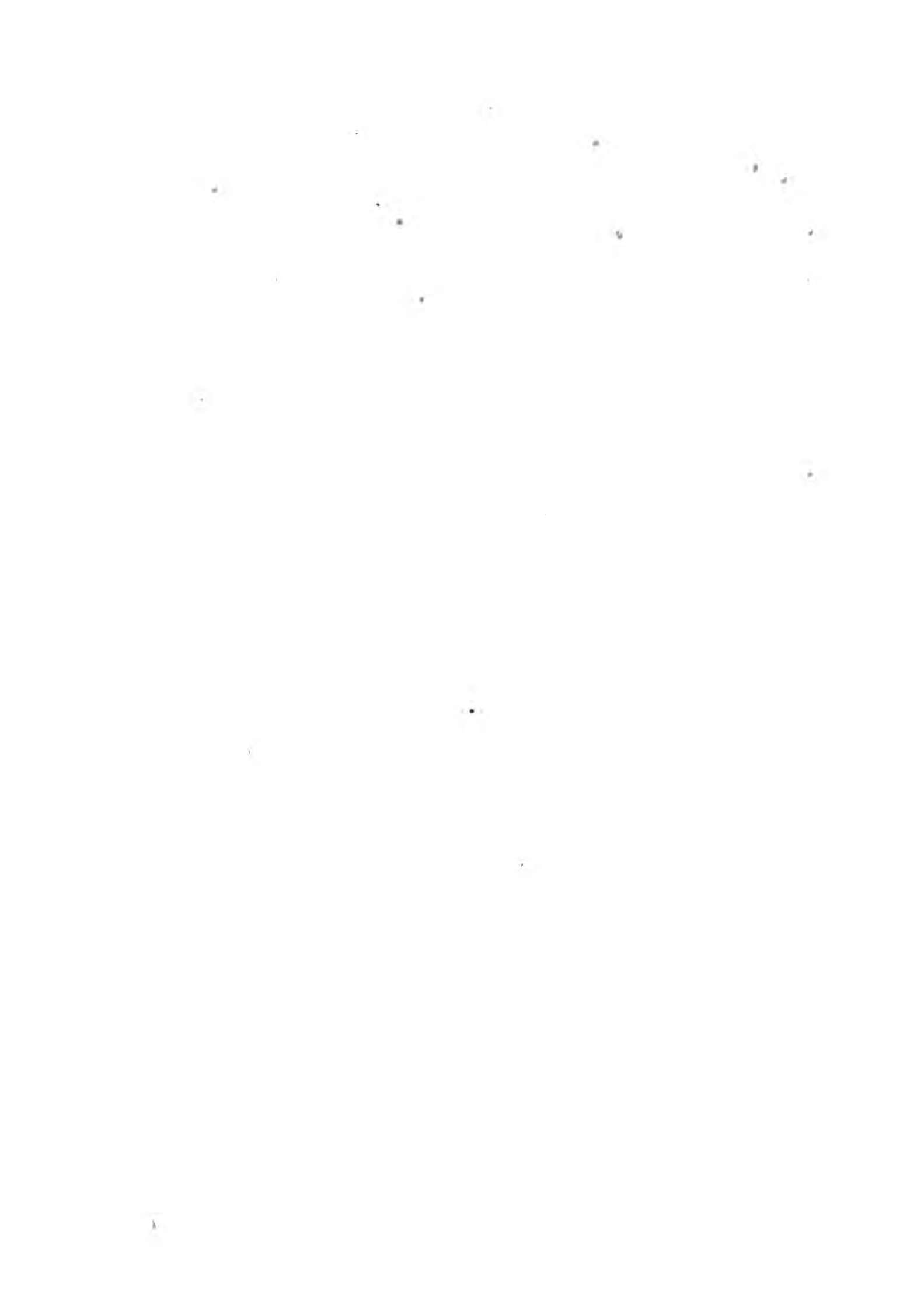


BY  
HENRY JOHN MARTEN.

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—  
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Dedicated

TO

ALL THOSE

WHO,

BY REASON OF THE TRIALS AND SORROWS OF THIS LIFE,

CAN SYMPATHIZE WITH

THE

AFFLICTIONS OF THE

PATRIARCH

JOB.





# J O B.

---

IN the far land of Uz,  
There was a man whose name was Job ;  
A perfect, upright man,  
And one that fearèd God, and evil shunn'd.

CAP. I.

And there were born unto him seven sons,  
And daughters three ;  
Also,  
His substance was,—  
Full seven thousand sheep,  
Three thousand camels,  
And five hundred each,  
Of yoke of oxen and she asses sleek ;  
His household too was great,—  
So that he rank'd of all men in the East,  
The greatest man.

And thus his sons,—  
Each one upon his day,  
And each in his own house, prepared a feast,  
And to each feast,  
Their loving sisters call'd,  
With joy and mirth to eat and drink with them.

And so it was,—  
That when the days of feasting were gone round,  
Then Job,  
Uprising at the early dawn  
Sent for,  
And sanctified his sons,  
And to the number of them all,  
Offer'd burnt offerings ;  
For thus Job said ;—  
“ It may be that my sons have sinn'd,  
And e'en,  
God their Creator cursèd in their hearts.”

Thus pious Job continually did !

---

Now on a solemn day,  
The sons of God came to present themselves before the Lord,  
And Satan likewise came among them too.

Then said the Lord ;—  
“ Satan, whence comest thou ?”  
Who thus replied ;—  
“ From going to and fro,  
And walking up and down in all the Earth.”

Then said the Lord again ;—  
“ My servant Job,  
Hast thou consider'd,  
That in all the earth none is like him ;  
A perfect, upright man,  
And one that feareth God and evil shuns ?”  
Then Satan said ;—  
“ Doth Job fear God for nought ?  
Hast thou not set a hedge about his house,  
And about him,  
And about all he hath ?  
Hast thou not bless'd the labour of his hands ?  
Is not his substance in the land increased ?  
But now,  
Put forth thy hand,  
Touch all he hath,  
And he will curse Thee to Thy very face !”  
Then said the Lord to him ;—  
“ Satan !  
Behold,  
All that he hath is to thy pow'r giv'n ;  
Only,  
Upon *himself*,  
Put not thy hand !”

Then from the presence of the Lord went Satan forth.

And so it fell,—  
Upon a certain day,  
As in their eldest brother's house,  
His sons and daughters of a feast partook,  
Eating, and drinking wine, with joy and merriment,

There came a messenger to Job,  
     And said ;—  
     “ Ah me, alas !  
     While as the oxen plough'd,  
     And the she asses quiet fed beside,  
     Down the Sabeans rush'd,  
     And took them all !  
 Yea ! and thy servants with the sword they slew,  
     And I—I only—am escaped to tell !”

And while he spoke, behold another came,  
     Who, terror-stricken, said ;—  
     “ The fire of God, falling from heav'n,  
     Hath burnt up the sheep !  
     All are consumed,  
     Yea, and thy servants too,  
     And I—I only—am escaped to tell !”

He scarce had finish'd, when another came,  
     Who, wailing, said ;—  
     “ In three strong bands made out,  
     Came the Chaldeans,—on the camels fell,—  
     And, merciless,  
     Have carried all away !  
 Yea ! and thy servants with the sword they slew,  
     And I—I only—am escaped to tell !”

And while he yet was speaking,  
 Lo ! there came another woful messenger,  
     Who said ;—  
     “ As in their eldest brother's house,  
     Thy sons and daughters of a feast partook,  
     Eating, and drinking wine, with joy and merriment,

Behold !  
A great wind from the wilderness,  
Smote the four corners of the house,  
And lo !  
On the young men it fell,  
And they are dead !  
And I—I only—am escaped to tell !”

Then Job, o'erwhelm'd, arose,—  
His mantle rent,—  
And with head shaved, upon the ground fell down,  
And prostrate worshipp'd ;  
Then,  
With rev'ence, said ;—  
“ As naked from my mother's womb I came,  
So naked must I needs go hence again.  
The Lord hath given,  
The Lord hath ta'en away,  
Blessed for ever be the Lord's great name !”

Thus,  
Patient in all this,  
Job,  
Neither sinn'd,  
Nor his Creator, God, with folly charged !

AGAIN there was a day, CAP. II.  
The sons of God came to present themselves before the Lord,  
And Satan likewise came among them too,  
E'en to present himself before the Lord !

Then said the Lord ;—  
 “Satan, whence comest thou ?”  
 Who answer'd thus ;—  
 “ From going to and fro,  
 And walking up and down in all the Earth.”  
 Then said the Lord again ;—  
 “ My servant, Job,  
 Hast thou consider'd,  
 That in all the earth none is like him ;  
 A perfect, upright man,  
 And one that feareth God, and evil shuns ;  
 Who his integrity,  
 Still holdeth fast,  
 Although without a cause thou movedst me,  
 Him to destroy ? ”  
 Then Satan to the Lord ;—  
 “ Lo ! skin for skin,  
 Yea, all that a man hath,  
 For precious life he willingly will give ;  
 But now,  
 Put forth Thy hand,  
 Touch bone and flesh,  
 And he will curse Thee to Thy very face ! ”  
 Then said the Lord to him ;—  
 “ Satan !  
 Behold,  
 He now is in thy hand,  
 But save his life.”

Then from the presence of the Lord went Satan forth,  
 And with most grievous boils smote Job,  
 From sole of foot unto his hoary crown.

Then Job,  
Rack'd with fierce pains,  
A pot-sherd took,  
His loathsome putrid sores withal to scrape,  
And midst the ashes,  
Lonely,  
Sat him down.

Then said his wife to him ;—  
“ Dost thou retain still thine integrity ?  
Curse God, and die.”  
But Job, replying, said to her ;—  
“ Oh, wife ! thou speakest as the foolish women speak ;  
Shall we receive good at the hand of God,  
And not receive the evil that He sends ? ”

Thus, in all this, Job, with his lips, sinn'd not.

---

Now, when Job's friends heard of his evil case,  
They all three came,  
Each from his own abode ;—  
From distant Teman, Eliphaz, its prince,  
With Bildad,  
Chief of ancient Shuah's tribe,  
And Zophar,  
Lord of rock-bound Naamah.  
For all with one accord agreed to come,  
To mourn with Job,  
And try to comfort him.



But when far off they lifted up their eyes,  
 And saw, but knew him not,  
     (Till they drew near)  
 Then lifting up their voice,  
     They wept aloud ;  
 And each his mantle rent,  
 And on his head, bowing to heav'n,  
     Sprinkled dust of woe.  
 So they sat down with him upon the ground,  
     Full sev'n days,  
     And sev'n weary nights,  
 And no one spake a single word to him,  
     For they all saw  
     His grief was very great !



CAP. III.

THEN open'd Job his mouth, and cursed his day,  
 And in his bitter anguish thus he spake ;—

“ Let that day perish wherein I was born,  
     And that night likewise,  
     In the which t'was said,  
 A man child is conceived and born to us !  
     Oh ! let that day be darkness ;  
 Let not God regard it from above ;  
     Let not the light upon it shine ;  
     Let darkness,  
 And the gloom of death's pale shadow,  
     Brand it for its own ;  
 Let a thick cloud for ever on it dwell ;  
 Let sudden blackness terrify its noon ;

Let awful darkness seize upon its night ;  
Let not that day be reckoned with the year ;  
Let all the months without it be complete ;  
Let solitude wear out its dreary night ;  
Let not a joyful sound be heard therein ;  
Let it be deem'd, of all days most accursed ;  
Let none but mournful cries ascend therefrom ;  
Let not its twilight be bedeck'd with stars ;  
Let it peer out for light, but dark, find none ;  
Let it ne'er view the radiance of the dawn ;

Because,  
That day,  
Closed not the door of life,  
And hid not sorrow from my aching eyes !

Why died I not as soon as I was born ?  
Why not, unconscious, then yield up the ghost ?  
Why was I fondled on my mother's lap ?  
Why was I cherish'd at her tender breast ?

For now,  
I should have lain quiet and still ;  
I should have slept,  
And should have been at rest,  
With mighty kings and rulers of the earth,  
Who built themselves grand solitary tombs ;  
Or with great princes,  
Shrined about in gold,  
Or housed in silver, richly scutcheon'd o'er.

Untimely born !  
Oh ! that I had not been !  
Oh ! that the grave had hid my infant form !

For there,  
The wicked from their troublings cease ;  
And there, in peace,  
The weary are at rest.  
There,  
The oppressor's voice and pris'ners' groan,  
Hush'd in the sleep of death,  
Are heard no more.  
There too, together lie, both small and great,  
And there the slave is, from his master, free !

Why,  
Nought but misery doth light reveal ;  
And why,  
Is life prolong'd to care-worn souls,  
Who long for death,  
Which lagging, will not come,  
Although they seek it with the zest of those,  
Who for hid treasures dig,  
And who rejoice,  
And are exceeding glad,  
When they can find their long-sought grave ?  
Why is it,  
That their way is thus obscured,  
. And why, by God, are they thus hedged around ?

I feed on indrawn sighs,  
Whilst from within, constant, well up deep groans ;  
For now,  
The thing I trembled at has struck me down,  
The fear I fear'd has overtaken me ;  
I cannot rest,

I have no quiet now,  
I'm never still,  
For storm to storm succeeds !”

---

THEN Eliphaz of Teman answered thus ;— CAP. IV.

“ Will it offend thee if we speak a word,  
For who from speaking can withhold himself ?  
Behold, O Job !  
Thou many didst instruct,  
And the weak-handed have from thee gain'd strength ;  
Thy words, the falling ones, did firm uphold,  
And thou hast been the stay of tott'ring age ;  
But now,  
Thou faintest when *thy* trouble comes ;  
Yea !  
When it touches *thee*,  
Thou art dismay'd !

Where now,  
Thy trust, and confidence, and hope,  
And to what purpose all thy righteous ways ?  
Remember now,  
Who perish'd innocent,  
Or were the righteous e'er cut off, I pray ?  
But—  
I have ever seen,  
That they who plough, and sow iniquity,  
Do reap the same ;  
They all do perish by the blast of God ;

Yea !

By His angry breath they are consumed !  
 For though they roar,  
 And raise their savage voice,  
 Louder than lions, or than lions' whelps,—  
 Their teeth are broken,  
 And their prey escaped, they pine for want,  
 And, as old lions, die,  
 And all their young are scatter'd far abroad.

But now,

A THING,

(Yet shrouded round about in mystery,—  
 With sounds therefrom, though still, that thrill'd mine ears,)

Once happen'd to me thus ;—  
 As restless, dream-perplex'd, one night I lay,  
 When sleep falls deepest on the eyes of men,  
 Sudden,

A trembling horror shook my bones,  
 And o'er my creeping flesh each hair stood up.

For lo !

Before my face, a Spirit pass'd.  
 I could not clear discern its shadowy form ;

But there,

Before mine eyes its presence stood.

Then,

Of low cadence,

Thus I heard

A VOICE ;—

' Can mortal man be justified with God ?  
 Can he appear, before his Maker, pure ?

Lo!  
Before God,  
Neither His Holy Ones,  
Nor e'en His Angels can with honour stand ;  
How much less earth-born man,  
Derived from dust,  
Dwelling in tenement of mortal clay,  
And who is crush'd all day, from morn to eve,  
As the poor flutt'ring moth, which none regard !  
Doth not the beauty of each fade alike ?  
Yea !  
Both alike they die,  
No skill can save !

Call now, O Job !  
Who will take up thy cause ;  
Or, to what Holy One wilt thou apply ?  
Oh, foolish man !  
Abate thy useless wrath,  
For wrath and envy slay the fools who use.  
For though,  
I've seen the foolish taking root,  
Yet,  
Sudden,  
I have seen his dwelling cursed ;  
His children, too,  
From safety far removed,  
I've seen oppress'd before the judgment seat,  
Without one single friend to take their part !  
I've also mark'd,  
Their hedges broken down,

CAP. V.

And their ripe corn ate up by hungry thieves,  
Whilst banded robbers all their substance spoil'd !

But,  
Troubles sore,  
And trials such as thine,  
Spring not,  
Chance sown,  
From the prolific soil.  
As sparks fly upward, man is born to woe !  
Seek therefore unto God ;

Yea !  
Unto Him,  
O Job !  
Commit thy cause ;  
For,  
Wondrous things,  
And marvels without number,  
Doeth He !  
He droppeth rain upon the thirsty land ;  
He gently watereth the gladden'd fields ;  
He raiseth up on high those that be low ;  
He is the comforter of all that mourn ;  
He disappoints the evil in their plans,  
Nor lets their hands perform their wicked wills ;  
In their own craftiness He takes the wise,  
And headlong overthrows vain, froward fools ;

*These,*  
Meet with darkness in the midst of day,  
*Those,*  
Grove at noon as in the midst of night ;  
He saves the poor from the sharp, sword-like tongue,

And from the heavy hand of mighty men ;

So,  
The poor hope,  
And evil shuts her mouth !

But now,  
Behold !  
How happy is the man whom God corrects ;  
Therefore,

Despise not thou,  
The chast'ning of the Lord ;

For,  
Though He wounds,  
Yet,

His own tender hand binds up the sore.  
Though many troubles press upon thy path,  
He will deliver thee amidst them all.  
Yea ! though they compass thee in sev'nfold rank,  
No ills shall touch thee to thy smallest hurt.

In famine,  
He shall ransom thee from death ;

In war,  
He shall preserve thee from the sword.  
Thou shalt be hidden from the sland'rous tongue,  
And when destruction comes thou shalt not fear ;

At Famine and Destruction,  
Thou shalt laugh.

Thou shalt not be afraid of savage beasts ;  
The vermin tribes shall be at peace with thee ;  
With thee, the stones themselves shall make a league ;  
Thy dwelling, thou shalt know to be secure ;  
Thy herds shall muster with unfailing count ;



Thy children, thou shalt see grow very great ;  
 Thy offspring shall increase as blades of grass ;  
 And thou shalt come unto thine honour'd grave,  
     Like a full shock of corn,  
     In ripe old age.

Be sure of this,  
 For we have search'd it out ;  
     And hear, we pray,  
 And know it for thy good ! ”

---

CAP. VI.

THEN Job to Eliphaz thus answer'ing, said ;—

“ Oh ! that my great calamities and griefs,  
     Together in the scale,  
     Were truly weigh'd !  
         For they,  
 In heavy number would exceed,  
     The sum of ocean sands,  
     Told grain by grain ;  
         But words,  
 All fail to tell my grievous woes.  
         For now,  
         *Within,*  
     My spirit is drunk up,  
 By poison'd darts from th' Almighty sent ;  
         *Without,*  
     His terrors in array besiege.

—Do asses bray beside the juicy grass,  
Or, in their fodder'd cribs do oxen low?  
Cannot unsav'ry meat be cured by salt,  
Or is there flavour in the white of eggs?  
But what can cure that loathing of my soul,  
That turns abhorrent from all food alike?

Oh! that I might have e'en this one request,—  
That God would grant me this,—  
My sole desire;  
That it would please Him to destroy me now;  
That He would loose His hand and cut me off;  
For *then*,—  
I should have rest;  
Yea *then*,—  
I would exult amidst my griefs;  
He should not spare,  
Nor would I hide me from His Holy One.

But,  
What my strength, that I should still hope on;  
Or,  
Wherefore still, should I prolong my life?  
For,  
Is my strength the strength of rock-hewn stones,  
Or,  
Is my wasting flesh like temper'd brass?  
Ah me! Alas!  
Is not my strength destroyed,  
And is not succour far beyond my reach?

Ah !  
 Shame on you,  
 Who proud, despise your friend,  
 And pitiless, forsake the fear of God ;  
 For you have dealt with me,  
 Deceitfully,  
 Like mountain streams,  
 That rapid pass away ;  
 Whose turgid torrents noisy brawl along,  
 When sudden gorged with melting ice and snow,  
 But which,  
 With drougthy summer heat,  
 Consume,  
 And altogether vanish out of sight.  
 Then,  
 When they turn them to their arid beds,  
 Ah, then,  
 The troops of Tema watch in vain ;  
 In vain,  
 The bands of Sheba anxious search,  
 Till weary, fainting,  
 And devoid of hope,  
 They turn confounded from the mocking course !  
 'Tis thus,  
 Your empty nothingness appears ;  
 Ye see my low estate,  
 And shrink with fear.

But,  
 Have I sought from you the smallest boon,  
 Or,  
 Of your substance have I askèd aught ;

Or,  
Have I said ;—  
' Redeem me from my foe,'  
Or,  
' Ransom me from his oppressive hand ?'

But,  
Teach me now,  
And I will hold my tongue ;  
Cause me to know wherein it is I've err'd !  
True words,  
Well spoken,  
Are of mighty force,—  
But what the object of your keen reproofs ?  
Why,  
Simply to condemn the hasty words,  
Wrung from the lips of deep despairing grief,  
Which all,  
(Save you)  
Would deem mere idle wind ;  
But,  
For the which,  
Upon me destitute,  
Ye harshly fall,  
And overwhelm your friend !  
But let it now suffice ;  
Oh ! look on me,  
And judge if what I say be true or false.  
Forbear to mark iniquity for this ;  
Count not such words to be unrighteousness ;

For *this*,  
 Iniquity upon my tongue ?  
 Nay,  
 On my palate, *I* discern no wrong !

CAP. VII.     Though here a man should lead a bondsman's life,  
 And though his days should all be spent for hire ;

Yet,  
 The poor bondsman rests at eventide,  
 And then the hireling views his labour done ;

But,  
 I am made to suffer months of woe ;  
 My nights are full of weariness to me ;

I lay me down,

And say ;—

‘When shall I rise ?’

I count the minutes of each tedious hour,  
 And I am full of tossings to and fro,  
 Unto the dawning of the long-wished day !

My flesh is clothed with worms and clods of dust ;  
 My broken skin is full of loathsome sores ;

Swift as the weaver's shuttle,

So my days,

Speed rapid on, without one ray of hope !

O God, remember that my life's a breath !  
 Mine eye shall see its former good no more ;  
 The eye of him that sees me now,

Shall soon,

No more behold ;

For now,  
Thine eyes,  
Angry are fix'd on me,  
And I am not !  
As clouds dissolve and vanish from our view,  
So man departs,  
And in the grave is lost.  
No more,  
Shall he,  
His place accustom'd fill ;  
No more,  
Shall he,  
Unto his home return ;  
Therefore,  
I now,  
Will not restrain my prayer,  
But,  
In the anguish of my spirit, speak,  
And in my bitterness of soul, complain !  
Am I some tameless monster of the deep,  
That Thou,  
O God !  
Dost set a watch round me ?  
For when I say ;—  
' My bed shall comfort me,  
And my soft couch shall ease my sad complaint,'  
Ah, then !  
Thou scarest me with horrid dreams,  
And dreadful visions terrify my soul,  
So that, on Life, it fain would close the door,  
And yield to Death, this tenement of bones.

I loathe my life ;  
I would not always live ;  
Let me alone ;  
My days are vanity !  
For,  
What is man,  
That Thou should'st mark him out,  
And earnest pond'ring, set Thine heart on him ?  
That, wakeful,  
Thou should'st seek him out at dawn,  
And try him ev'ry moment of the day ?  
How long, O Lord !  
Before Thou wilt depart,  
And grant me but one moment of repose ?

Alas,  
O Lord,  
I own that I have sinn'd ;  
But,  
Great Preserver of the sons of men,  
Say,  
How can I regain Thy just regard ?  
Why,  
Am I made,  
The butt of Thy fierce darts ?  
Why,  
Am I made,  
A burden to myself ?  
Why,  
My transgressions dost Thou not o'erlook ?  
Why,  
Mine iniquities not take away ?

For,  
In the dust again I soon shall sleep,  
And Thou shalt seek me,  
But I shall not be!"

---

THEN Bildad, chief of Shuah, thus replied;— CAP. VIII.

“How long,  
O Job!  
Wilt thou repeat these things;  
How long,  
This whirlwind of thy words rush on?  
Dost thou,  
Thus think,  
God’s judgments to avert;  
Or thus,  
To turn th’ Almighty’s just decrees?  
For,  
Though thy children, for their secret sins,  
Or bold transgressions,  
He has cast away;  
Yet thou,  
If thou would’st seek the Lord betimes,  
And humbly supplicate the God of Might;  
If thou wert truly upright, just, and pure,  
Oh! surely now, He would awake for thee,  
And bless thy righteous home with prosp’rous smile!  
Though thy beginning might be very small,  
Yet increase vast should crown thy latter end!



For now,  
Enquire, I pray, of ages past,  
And search the precepts that our fathers stored ;  
(For we of yesterday, do nothing know,  
Because our days on earth are a mere shade)  
Yea,  
Let them speak to thee ;  
Let them instruct ;  
Let them impart to thee their treasured thoughts.

Can the tall reed,  
Grow save in miry soil ;  
Or,  
Without water,  
Can the rush spring up ?  
Nay,  
Mark how both, though green, and e'en uncut,  
Yet wither quick, whene'er their moisture's gone ;  
'Tis thus,  
With all from whom the Lord withdraws ;  
'Tis thus,  
The hypocrite finds hope decay !  
Whate'er he builds on shall be reft apart ;  
His trust shall perish as a spider's web ;  
His fragile house shall yield him no support ;  
Yea ! clutch it as he may—'twill not endure !  
Though,  
In the sunshine he is full of sap,  
And though his shoots luxuriant top the fence ;  
Though,  
Firm he wraps his roots round rocks below,  
And clings tenacious, to the sturdy wall ;

Yet,  
If the Lord should tear him from his place,  
Straight it denies him, with,—‘ I knew thee not.’

Thus end the empty joys of earth-born fools,  
Though earth prolific soon yields further crops !

But,  
God will not destroy the perfect man,  
Nor,  
To the evil will He give His help ;  
Hence,  
He with laughter yet may fill thy mouth,  
And thou with joyful lips may’st praise Him yet !  
Then,  
They that hate thee shall be clothed with shame,  
And their proud dwellings shall be brought to nought !”

---

THEN Job to Bildad thus replying, said ;—

CAP. IX.

“ I know all this ;  
But,  
Still the question comes ;—  
‘ How shall a man be justified with God ?’  
If he, in argument, contends with Him,  
He cannot, of a thousand, answer one !  
For,  
Who hath set himself against the Lord,  
And prosp’rous proved ?

For,  
 He is wise of heart,  
 Of mighty strength ;  
 Who,  
 With one angry word,  
 O'erturns great mountains, and all trace removes !  
 Who,  
 With one touch,  
 So shakes the solid earth,  
 That its strong pillars tremble to their base !  
 At Whose command,  
 Thick clouds, alike, conceal,  
 The rising Sun,  
 And brilliant hosts of Night !  
 Who bows alone the spreading firmament ;  
 Who metes out ocean-tide with measured tread ;  
 Who loads ripe Autumn on Arcturus' car ;  
 Who binds stern Winter with Orion's bands ;  
 Who bids the Pleiades deck blushing Spring,  
 And fills the Chambers of the South with fruit !  
 Whose works are very great,  
 Past finding out,  
 Yea, full of wonder, and beyond all count !  
 For lo !  
 He goeth by,  
 I see Him not,—  
 Nor yet perceive,  
 He passes on before.  
 Behold !  
 He takes away,—  
 Who can prevent ?  
 And who dare say to Him ;—' What doest Thou ?'

If God will not withdraw His angry grasp,  
The proudest helpers are of no avail !  
How small my chance then,  
Should I answer Him ;

Or,

In set speech,  
With *Him*,

Try out my cause !

Nay,

E'en if righteous,  
I would not reply,

But humbly supplicate my God and Judge !

Though,

To my summons,

He might deign t'appear,

What bonds could bind Him to regard my pleas ?

For now,

His scorching tempests char my frame ;  
He multiplies my wounds without a cause ;  
He will not suffer me to take my breath ;  
He fills me full of bitterness and woe !

If I appeal to strength,—

Is He not strong ?

Or,

If to judgment,—

Who dare hear my cause ?

If I attempt to justify myself,

From my own mouth I soon should stand condemn'd ;

If I pretend to call perfection mine,

My tongue itself would prove the false pretence !

Or,

If I say to Him ;—

‘ My soul is pure ! ’  
 ’Twould only show,  
 I did not know my soul,  
 Or lightly mark’d the workings of its life !

But I maintain this point,  
 (Deny who may)  
 That God destroys the good and bad alike !  
 When he lets loose some sudden Scourge to slay,  
 It laughs to scorn the cry of Innocence ;  
 The Earth seems given o’er to wicked men,  
 Its righteous Judges are as felons deem’d ;

Where is the man can say ;—

‘ This is not so ? ’

’Tis thus, alas, with me !

Ah !

Now my days,  
 Are swifter than the post, urged on with speed ;

They flee away ;

They know no rest nor good ;

Yea,

They are gone,

Quick,

As the fleetest ships,

Or,

As the eagle,

Hasting to its prey !

But,

If I say ;—

‘ I will forget my ills,

And hide my sorrows under cheerful smiles ;’

Ah ! then,  
I shudder at this worst of woes,  
That Thou,  
Dost not declare me innocent.  
Let me be guilty then !  
Why persevere ?  
For if I wash myself with molten snow,  
And make me whiter than its feathered flakes.  
Yet dost Thou plunge me in some pit—so foul—  
That I'm abhorrent to my very clothes !

Lo !  
God is not a man, to whom, as man,  
I can reply ;  
Nor,  
E'en betwixt us place,  
Some potent Arbiter to bind us both !  
But,  
Let Him take His scourge away from me,  
Let Him not terrify with constant fright,  
Then,  
Might I speak to Him,  
Unmoved by fear,  
Which, in this abject state, I cannot do !

My soul is weary of its loathèd life !  
I will indulge my grief without restraint,  
And vent my bitterness of soul uncheck'd !  
I now will say to God ;—  
' Condemn me not ;  
But,

CAP. X.

Show me why Thou dost contend with me.'  
Does it befit,  
That Thou should'st bring Thy handywork to nought,  
And on the counsels of the wicked shine ?  
Are Thine eyes evil ?  
Dost Thou see as men ?  
Are Thy days as the days of mortal man,  
Or,  
Thine years only, whilst his race endures,—  
That mine iniquities should fill Thy mind,  
And jealous, Thou shouldst search out all my sins ?

Thou know'st I am not wicked,  
And I know,—  
None can deliver from Thy fast-closed hands ;  
Those hands that fashion'd me with cunning skill,  
But which destroy me now with blow on blow !  
Remember,  
I beseech Thee,  
Lord,  
That Thou,  
From lifeless clay,  
Did'st mould my living form,  
And wilt Thou grind me into dust again ?  
Didst Thou not lave my embryon life with milk,  
And form my substance as the curdled cheese ?  
Hast Thou not clothed me, too, with skin and flesh,  
And fenced me round with sinew-knitted bones ?  
Didst Thou not favour me with health and strength,  
And by Thy visitings my soul refresh ?  
And yet,

Within the store-house of Thy heart,  
Deep hid from view,  
All these great ills were pent ;  
For,  
I do know,  
These ills are all from Thee !

Have I so wander'd in my sins from Thee,  
That Thou,  
Hast scored me off,  
As one,  
Quite lost ?  
Is mine iniquity so great,  
That Thou,  
Wilt not forgive ?  
Ah !  
Were I wicked,  
Woe unto me then ;  
And,  
Were I righteous,  
I'd ne'er lift my head !

Alas !  
I'm sore confused !  
Oh !  
Therefore now,  
With pity'ng eye,  
View mine afflicted state ;  
For lo,  
It does increase !  
Thou huntest me,  
As some fierce lion hunts a feeble prey ;



I quail beneath Thy fascinating glance,  
The while, with feline art, Thou plaguest me,  
Until Thy wrath, exceeding all its bounds,  
Makes havoc of me with resistless force !

Oh ! wherefore didst Thou let me see the light ?

Oh ! why,  
So soon as born,  
Cast out from sight,  
Did I not yield the ghost ?  
For then,  
As not,  
I should have been,  
And should have found my grave,  
Unscathed by knowledge of this weary world !

Are not my days on Earth almost run out ?

Cease then Thy strokes !  
Oh ! let me now alone,  
So,  
That some little comfort I may have,  
Before I go,  
Whence I shall ne'er return ;  
E'en,  
To that land of Darkness,  
Which lies hid beyond the gates of Death ;  
A land so dark,  
Darkness its very self seems empirod there ;  
Where Chaos lords it with the Shade of Death,  
And where, involved in gloom, e'en Light grows dark !"

---

THEN answer'd Zophar, the Naamathite ;— CAP. XI.

“Should not this wordy torrent have reply ?  
For thy vain prating should we deem thee just ?  
Or, for thy lies, should all men hold their peace ?

When thou dost mock,  
May no one cry, ‘For shame !’  
For thou hast said ;—  
‘In conduct I am pure,  
And I am clean before the eyes of God !’  
But oh ! that He would speak ;  
Oh ! that He’d plead,  
His cause against thee with His holy lips ;  
That He would show,  
From Wisdom’s secret page,  
The truthful record of thy sinful life !  
Then wouldst thou know,  
That He exacts of thee,  
Far less than thine iniquities deserve !

Canst thou,  
Vain man,  
By searching find out God,  
Or the Almighty’s full perfections know ?  
Transcendent,  
They o’ertop the heights of Heaven,—  
What canst thou do ?  
Profound,  
They’re deeper than the depths of Hell,—  
What canst thou know ?  
Their ample measures far o’erlap the land,  
And stretch beyond the bounds of broadest seas !

If God shuts up, or binds with galling chains,  
 And e'en to judgment brings,  
     Who can stay Him ?  
 He sees and knows the wickedness of men,  
 And will He not condemn their evil ways ?  
     Vain, empty man,  
     Thou wouldst be deem'd as wise ;—  
 As soon deem wise the new-born wild-ass colt !

        But,  
 If thou wouldst prepare thy seeking heart,  
 And spread thy hands in humble prayer to Him,  
     Oh ! then,  
     Put all iniquity away,  
 And let no wickedness be guest of thine ;  
     Then,  
 May'st thou lift thy face without one spot,  
 And stand before Him unabash'd by fear !  
     Then,  
     All thy mis'ry shalt thou soon forget,  
     Or note it faintly,  
     As a flood long pass'd.  
     As conqu'ring dawn,  
     With splendour shalt thou rise ;  
 Thy hoary age shall shine with noon-tide life ;  
     And thou shalt be secure,  
     And view with hope,  
 Thy teeming tillage spreading broad around.  
     No prowling evil shall make thee afraid ;  
     But thou shalt lie thee down,  
     And sleep in peace,  
 Whilst mighty chieftains shall pay suit to thee.

But mark !  
The eyes of wicked men shall fail ;  
Their hope shall perish like a dying breath ;  
And, blindly groping,  
They shall ne'er escape."

---

THEN Job, with taunting speech, thus answ'ring, said ;— CAP. XII

“ No doubt, but ye, the people are,  
So wise,  
Wisdom its very self shall die with you ;  
But,  
I am not without both heart and sense ;  
My range of knowledge, at least, equals yours ;  
For who knows not such things as these ye speak.

But,  
I am mock'd by friends,  
Who sneering say ;—  
' He calls on God ; let's see if He'll reply.'  
Thus are the just and upright laugh'd to scorn ;  
Yea !  
Now my feet seem sliding to the grave,  
I am despised in thought by you at ease,  
As some mean flick'ring lamp,  
Just dying out.

But, I repeat,  
The tents of wicked men are full of spoil.  
Yea,

They seem most secure,  
 And most abound,  
 Who most provoke the Lord !  
 Do not poor hunted beasts,  
 And birds,  
 That scarce dare call the air their own,  
 Proclaim this true ?  
 Do not e'en fishes tell of rifled seas ?  
 Learn, too, from ransack'd earth, the same sad tale ;  
 Whilst all we know,  
 Alas ! is this ;—  
 That God,  
 Who holds within His hands,  
 The life and breath of all mankind,  
 And ev'ry living thing,  
*Himself,*  
 Inscrutable,  
 Hath wrought all this.  
 Eh ! let your ears attentive con these words ;  
 Ah ! turn them o'er like meat upon your tongues ;  
 Then,  
 Though you may possess all ancient lore,  
 With understandings school'd by length of days,  
 Ye still will find,  
 God's wisdom, and God's strength,  
 And the deep counsels of His mind,  
 Far, far beyond your ken !  
 For lo !  
 He shutteth up,  
 And there is no escape ;  
 Or lo !  
 He breaketh down, and none can build ;

As when,  
To wit,  
He sealetH up the floods,  
And all is drought ;

Or,  
Lets them loose,  
And they o'erthrow the earth.

His strength and wisdom both are infinite ;  
The dupe and duper both alike are His ;  
He leads deep-witted counsellors astray,  
And makes wise judges to appear as fools ;  
He takes from kings their royal pow'r to bind,  
And girds their quaking loins with slav'ry's badge ;  
He leads great princes far from home, despoiled,  
And overthrows the mighty in their pride ;  
He makes persuasive eloquence grow dumb,  
And takes from sage experience all its weight ;  
He pours on princes floods of foul contempt,  
And wastes away the strength of foremost men ;  
He disenshrouds the darkest deeds of night,  
And clothes obscurity with brilliant light ;  
Proud nations are increased, and then destroyed,  
He widens out, and then contracts their bounds ;  
He takes away the hearts of chosen chiefs,  
And makes them wander in lone trackless wilds,  
Where, without light, they grope as in the dark,  
And stagger to and fro, like drunken men !

CAP. XIII.

How oft mine eyes have seen such things as these ;  
How oft mine ears have rung with these sad tales !

Both you and I,  
And I, not less than you,  
Alike have seen, and know these things, full well !

'Tis on such themes,  
I would address the Lord,  
To learn the reasons why He so ordains.

But,  
Ye forge lies,  
And argue falsely too ;  
Ye are physicians all devoid of worth !  
Oh, that ye would for ever hold your peace,  
For Wisdom then, perchance, might count you hers !  
But hear my arguments,  
These questions mark ;—  
Will ye defend the ways of God with lies,  
Or, with your fallacies, proclaim Him just ?  
Can ye, both flatter, and contend for Him ?  
How will it be when He shall find you out ;  
As now, your fellows, will ye dupe Him then ?  
Do ye not fear His lightning glance of truth,  
And dread, e'en now, your certain fearful doom ?  
If secretly ye let wrong motives sway,  
Ah ! then He'll scathe you with His just reproof ;  
Then,  
Dead as ashes,  
Shall your mem'ries die,  
Or,  
Formless, waste, as images of clay!

Nay !  
Hold your peace ;  
Oh ! let me now alone ;—  
For I will speak,  
Let come on me what may !

‘Why do I gnaw my flesh,  
And why, my life, thus hazard in my hand?’  
Because for this ;—

THOUGH GOD SHOULD SLAY ME, I WILL TRUST IN HIM !

For I shall yet uphold my innocence,  
And wrest salvation from His judgment seat,  
Where no mean hypocrites—like you—can come !

Yea !

Give attention now to what I say,  
And mark this declaration that I make ;—

‘ WITH UTMOST CARE,  
I HAVE REVIEW’D MY CAUSE,  
AND I FEEL SURE,  
I SHALL BE JUSTIFIED ! ’

Now,

Whosoe’er will plead against me,  
Come !

For think not,  
Silent,

I’ll yield up the ghost !

But now,  
O God !

Grant me but these two things,  
And then I will not hide myself from Thee ;

In mercy now,

Withdraw thy heavy hand,—

And let me not be scared by dread of Thee.

Then,

Call on me,

And I will answer Thee ;

Or,



Let me speak,  
 And answer Thou in turn ;—  
 Oh ! let me know the number of my sins,  
 And what iniquities Thou countest mine ;  
 Oh ! tell me wherefore Thou dost hide Thy face,  
 And why Thou holdest me Thine enemy ;  
 Say, why such whirlwind storms to crush a leaf,  
 Or why so eagerly pursue a straw ?  
 For Thou dost write against me bitter things ;  
 My youthful sins Thou bringest to my mind ;  
 Thou keenly watchest ev'ry step I take ;  
 Thou, too, dost tether me to heavy clogs,  
 And, not content, dost ankle-chain my feet !

Lo !  
 As some rotten thing,  
     So Man consumes ;  
     Or,  
     As a garment,  
 Eaten of the moth !  
     AH !  
 Man of woman born,  
     Is of few days ;  
     And those few days,  
 Are all with trouble fill'd !  
     Yea !  
 As some tender flow'r,  
     He's soon cut down ;  
     Or,  
 As a passing shadow,  
     Leaves no trace !

Why then,  
From all,  
Direct Thy gaze on me ;  
Or,  
Wherefore, one so frail, to judgment bring ?  
Dost Thou not know,  
That no one can produce,  
That which is pure,  
From foul impurity ?  
And,  
Seeing that,  
By Thee are fore-ordain'd,  
Man's day of birth,  
The number of his years,  
And bounds impossible for him to pass,—  
Avert Thy wrath,  
And let him have some rest,  
To ease the burden of life's hireling day !

As for a Tree,—  
If such should be cut down,  
There yet is hope it may shoot forth again,  
And that its tender branches may not die ;  
For though,  
Its stock may perish in the ground,  
And though,  
Its sapless roots may shrink with age,  
Yet,  
Through the scent of water,  
It will bud,  
And clothe itself anew with shadeful boughs ;

But,  
'As for Man,—  
He wastes away and dies ;  
His soul departs,  
And then,  
Oh ! where is he ?  
Gone, as a flood, that vanishes from view ;  
Part,  
Sunk below,  
Part,  
Wafted to the sky !  
Or, as,  
When hushed by calm,  
Proud waves subside,  
So,  
Man subsides,  
When hush'd to sleep by Death ;  
Nor shall he rise,  
Nor wake from sleep again,  
Till that last storm that sweeps the Heav'ns away !

Oh ! would that Thou wouldst hide me in the grave,  
That Thou wouldst harbour me in secret there,  
Till these fierce storms of wrath be passed away ;—

And then,  
In Thy set time,  
Remember me !

But,  
If I die ?  
Ah !  
Shall I live again ?

Yea!  
Without fear,  
I'll wait th' appointed time,  
Till,  
Death revoked,  
My glorious change shall come!  
Then,  
Thou shalt call,  
And I will answer Thee,  
For Thou wilt yearn towards Thy handywork!

But now,  
Thou numb'rest ev'ry step I take;  
Which of my sins escapes Thy watchful eye?  
Yea!

Thou dost store each evidence of guilt,  
As depositions,  
Bound secure, and seal'd.

As the huge mountain,  
Bit by bit, decays;  
As rocks by sudden force are overthrown;  
As water falling,  
Drop by drop, wears stone;  
As raging floods sweep soil and trees away;  
So,  
In like ways,  
Dost Thou destroy Man's hope!  
For,  
Thou dost harrass him at ev'ry step,  
Thou dost wear out his frame,  
And cast him off;

His Sons to honour come,  
 He knows it not ;  
 Nor does he know,  
 When they are brought to nought !  
 But here, upon him, shall his flesh have pain ;  
    Ah !  
 And within him here, his soul shall mourn !”

---

CAP. XV.            THEN Eliphaz of Tema answer'd thus ;—

“ Should one so wise, rage like a senseless storm,  
 Or, like the East wind, vent forth biting blasts ?  
    Yea !

Should he reason with mere idle talk,  
 Or with vain speeches, that can do no good ?  
 Thou'dst treat as nought the rev'ence due to God,  
 And sever prayer from all that gives it worth ;  
 Though choicely guarded by thy crafty tongue,  
 The teachings of thy mouth are blasphemous ;  
    Yea !

Thine own mouth condemns thee ;  
    'Tis not I,  
 But thine own lips that testify thy guilt !

Wast *thou*,  
    Of all,  
 The first man that was born ;  
    Or,  
 Wast thou form'd before the ancient hills ?

Hast *thou*,  
Sole heard the secret voice of God,  
And is all wisdom centred in thyself ?  
What dost thou know, that we know not as well ;  
What understandest thou that we do not ?  
Behold !  
With us,  
Are hoary headed men,  
And sages too,  
Much older than thy sire ;  
Oh ! tell us then what secret sin is thine,  
That thou so lackest God's consoling love !

Why doth thy heart so carry thee away ;  
What is it so perverts thy dazzled gaze,  
That thou dost turn thy spirit against God,  
And let such boastful words escape thy lips ?  
What is vain man that he should think he's pure,  
For is there one, of woman born, that's just ?

God puts no trust,  
E'en in His Holy Ones ;  
And to His sight,  
Not Heaven itself is pure ;  
How much less man,  
That filthy groveller,  
Who, lustful, drains iniquity to dregs !

But I will show to thee,  
If thou wilt hear,  
Those things which I have seen ;  
Yea ! I'll declare,  
The words wise men affirm,

That they were told,  
 From their great ancestors,  
 To whom alone,  
 The wide-spread earth was given,  
 And who ne'er saw,  
 A haughty stranger lord it in their midst !  
 These are their words ;—  
 ' The wicked man through all his life bears pain ;  
 The harsh oppressor ends his days obscure ;  
 A fearful sound is always in his ears ;  
 Destruction treads on his prosperity ;  
 Hopeless for him, e'en night yields no escape ;  
 For him the hungry sword lies hid in wait ;  
 He wanders forth to ask,—  
 ' Oh ! where is bread ?'  
 Dark days for ever seem in store for him ;  
 The anguish of his troubled mind breeds fear,  
 Which, awful, like a King arrayed for war,  
 With dreadful terror overwhelms his soul !  
 Madly, alone, he wages war with God,  
 And, arm'd with fancied strength,  
 Defies His might ;  
 Till,  
 Headlong rushing on,  
 He breaks his neck,  
 On the hard bosses that thick stud God's shield !  
 Such is his fate, who, impious, solely trusts,  
 In his stout looks,  
 Or,  
 Fat enveloped flanks !  
 Yea !  
 He shall dwell in desolation's haunts,

In houses void of human habitant,  
And which, already, totter to their fall !  
He neither shall be rich,  
Nor shall the wealth, he seems to have, remain ;  
Nor,  
Shall the fruit of his hard gains,  
Be handed down by him !  
He shall not rise from base obscurity ;  
His budding branches shall be scorch'd by flame,  
And, like a breath, so shall he pass away !'

Be not deceived ;  
Who trusts in vanity,—  
Shall vanity receive for recompense !  
Yea !  
It shall cut him off before his time ;  
His wither'd branch shall lose its verdant hue ;  
Unripe, he shall shake off like mildew'd grapes ;  
Or, he shall drop like blighted olive-buds !  
Thus,  
Banded hypocrites shall be destroy'd,  
And bribers' tents shall be consumed by fire,  
With all who mischief wickedly conceive,  
And all who foul iniquity bring forth,  
Or who, with evil hearts, devise deceit !'

---

THEN Job, replying, answered thus, and said ;— CAP. XVI.

“ How many times I've heard such things as these !



Ye comforters,  
 Of all,  
 Most comfortless !  
 If,  
 As you say,  
 Vain words should have an end,  
 Why then so boldly answer me with them ?  
 If so inclined,  
 I, too,  
 Could speak as you ;  
 Yea !

If *your* soul now stood in *my* soul's stead,  
 I, too, could heap against you words like these,  
 And I, like you, could shake my head with scorn.  
 But, far from this,  
 My mouth should lend you strength,  
 And grief-assuaging words should move my lips !

But if I speak,  
 My grief is not assuaged ;  
 And if I'm silent,  
 What relief have I ?

For then I'm wearied by this Eliphaz !  
 His sland'rous tongue drives all my friends away ;  
 Base—he condemns me for my shrivell'd skin,  
 And the gaunt leanness that lays bare my bones !  
 With savage hate he rends me in his wrath ;  
 He gnashes on me with his deep-fang'd teeth,  
 And sharply sets his cruel eyes on me !  
 They all have jeer'd me with their ribald jests,  
 And smitten on my cheek reproachfully ;

Yea !  
One and all, they seek to do me harm.  
Lo !  
God has given me o'er to wicked men,  
To the ungodly He's deliver'd me.  
I was at ease,  
But He has riv'n me through ;  
With vice-like grasp He's seized me by the neck,  
And shaken me to pieces—paralyzed ;  
And then,  
Fast bound,  
He sets me as the mark,  
For all His archers,  
Gather'd thick around.  
Devoid of pity,  
Then,  
He cleaves my reins,  
And pours my quiv'ring vitals on the ground ;  
With crashing blows He hews me limb from limb,  
And runs me through with all His giant force !

But,  
Though I've sewn harsh sackcloth on my skin,  
And though my horn is in the dust defiled ;

Yea !  
Though my face with weeping's foully blear'd,  
And though my eyelids wear the shade of Death ;  
'Tis not because injustice stains my hands,  
Nor yet because my prayer's no longer pure !

For,  
Hear, O Earth !  
Hide not my fever'd blood,

Nor let my piteous groans give place to rest,  
 Till the just records of High Heav'n shall prove,  
 (For they're my witness)  
 That I speak the truth !

Though friends may scorn me,  
 Still, my tearful eyes,  
 Sincere,  
 Shall pour to God this earnest prayer,—  
 That I might plead with Him,  
 E'en face to face,  
 As, with his neighbour,  
 Man may plead with man !  
 For my few years are drawing to their close ;  
 I soon shall go whence I shall ne'er return ;  
 My breath's departing,  
 All my days are done,  
 And now already is my grave prepared !

CAP. XVII.

But,  
 Do these mockers think to go with me,  
 And there continue to offend my sight ?  
 Oh !  
 Who will make a cov'nant with me now,  
 And give me surety—Thou wilt not permit ;  
 For,  
 There's no charity in their cold hearts,  
 Nor can they rise above mere grov'ling sense !

I'll waste no flatt'ry on such friends as these,  
 Who'd let one's children wait for one kind look,  
 Until their suppliant eyes grew dim with age !

As music, once,  
My name thrill'd all who heard ;  
They've made it now a bye-word,  
Scorn'd of all !  
And this,  
When sorrow dims my sunken eyes,  
And all my limbs are wasted to a shade !

Good men will doubtless wonder at me now ;

But,  
At the last,  
Triumphant, they shall see,  
The innocent o'ercome the hypocrite.

Then,  
Re-assured,  
The righteous shall hold on,  
And the clean-handed shall renew their strength.

But as for you,  
False friends,  
Ho ! hence, begone ;—  
For there 's no comfort to be found with you !

But now,  
My purposes and cherish'd thoughts,  
All, all are broken off ;  
My day is past ;  
Its shorten'd eve fast fades to changeless night !  
Why wait I here ?  
The grave 's my fitting home,  
And there already is my couch prepared !  
Come, then, Corruption,  
Thou my father art .

And thou, too,  
 Gnawing Worm,  
 Thou soon shalt claim,  
 Kindred far closer than a mother's tie,  
 Or than a sister's near relationship !  
 But,  
 Where is Hope ?—  
 Oh ! find it for me now,  
 And bid it go with me down yon dark pit,  
 So I may rest, not hopeless, in the dust !”

CAP. XVIII. THEN answer'd Bildad, chief of Shuah's tribe :—

“ When wilt thou make an end of these vain words ?  
 Be calm, O Job !  
 And listen while we speak.  
 Why dost thou count us as unreas'ning brutes,  
 Or,  
 Scorn us as the vile,  
 Of no repute ?  
 Why madly rend thy soul with senseless rage ?  
 Shall God forsake all earth for thee alone,  
 Or root up mountains just to suit thy whims ?  
 Nay, rather shall the bad man's light be quench'd,  
 Till of its fire no glim'ring spark be left.  
 His gloomy tent shall be all dark within ;  
 His beacon watch-fire shall not gleam without ;  
 His boldest steps shall wear a shackled gait ;  
 His counsels, ill devised, shall cast him down ;

His feet shall be entangled in a net ;  
His heedless ways shall lead him into snares ;  
His heel shall be fast pinion'd by the gin ;  
His neck shall not escape the trapper's noose ;  
Decoys shall lure him to their secret dens ;  
The treach'rous pitfall shall beset his path ;  
Terrors on ev'ry side shall startle him,  
And drive him, restless, to his weary feet !  
The pangs of hunger shall eat up his strength ;  
    For ever at his side,  
    Destruction lurks,  
With fangs a-whet to fasten on his flesh !  
    Firstborn of Death,  
    It shall consume his force,  
And sap all vigour from his skin-clothed frame !  
    The King of Terrors, too,  
    Shall come with it,  
And shall abide with him,  
    A dreadful guest,  
    For aye reminding him,  
    ' This is not thine ! ' .  
Sulphureous hail shall desolate his house ;  
His wither'd roots shall be dried up beneath ;  
His spreading branch shall be cut off above ;  
His memory, too, shall perish from the earth,  
Nor shall his name be mentioned in the street ;  
He shall be goaded on both day and night,  
And chased by ev'ry one from all the world !  
    No son,  
    Nor relative,  
Shall he have left,  
    In all his tribe ;

His house shall be extinct.  
 Posterity shall wonder at his day,  
 As those of his own day were horror-struck !

Such,  
 Are the cursed abodes of wicked men,—  
 And here,  
 The place of him that knows not God !

CAP. XIX. THEN Job, replying, answer'd thus, and said ;—

“ How long,  
 Will ye thus aggravate my soul,  
 And break me into pieces with your words ?  
 How oft the times,  
 You've hurl'd reproach at me,  
 And, shameless, treated me as one unknown.  
 But,  
 If indeed I've err'd,  
 Remember this ;—  
 Mine error yet remains conceal'd from me ;  
 Or,  
 If ye still would magnify yourselves,  
 And yet reproach me for my bitter woes,  
 Now know,  
 That God Himself has cast me down,  
 And compass'd me around with these sad toils !

Behold,  
 I cry of wrong,

But am not heard ;  
I cry aloud,  
But judgment is withheld !  
'Tis God,  
Has made my way impassable,  
And caused deep darkness to o'ershade my path ;  
'Tis He,  
Hath stripp'd the glory from my brow,  
And taken from my head its jewell'd crown ;  
'Tis He,  
Has cut me off on ev'ry side !  
I'm almost gone ;  
My hope is rooted out ;  
Against me now,  
He's kindled His fierce wrath !  
He reckons me as number'd with His foes ;  
His armies gather round me, troop by troop ;  
They raise their circling lines on all sides round,  
And camp about my solitary tent ;  
He hath removed my brethren far from me,  
And all my neighbours have estranged themselves ;  
My nearest kindred—they have fail'd me now ;  
And I'm forgotten by familiar friends.  
E'en they that dwell in mine own house,  
My maids—  
They even count me as a stranger now.  
Yea !  
I am one,  
As quite unknown to them ;  
I call'd my servant, but he answer'd not,  
Although I begg'd him with persuasive lips ;  
My voice seems like a stranger's to my wife,



Although I urge the mem'ry of our babes !

By little children I am now despised ;

Yea !

When I rise to speak, they jeer my words.

I am abhorr'd by all my nearest friends ;

Those most I loved have turn'd against me now ;

My fleshless bones cleave to my shrivell'd skin,

And I am only just escaped from death,

As by the skin enamelling my teeth.

Oh ! ye my friends, have pity on me now !

Touch'd by the hand of God,

Oh ! pity me !

For why,

As God,

Should ye, too, torture me,

And grudge me e'en these remnants of my flesh ?

But oh !

That these my words were written down ;

Oh !

That they were inscribed on tablets now ;

That they were graven,

With an iron pen,

On lasting lead,

Or on some rock for aye !

---

' I SURELY KNOW THAT MY REDEEMER LIVES,  
AND THAT HE WILL APPEAR ON EARTH AT LAST;  
AND THOUGH THIS FRAME OF MINE SHALL BE DISSOLVED,  
I SHALL HEREAFTER IN MY FLESH SEE GOD ;

YEA !

I SHALL SEE HIM FOR MY VERY SELF,  
AND SHALL BEHOLD HIM WITH THESE EYES OF MINE !'

---

Oh ! how my heart within me burns for this !

Ah !

Then you'll say ;—

‘ Why did we vex him so ?

For were there not the germs of truth in him ? ’

I warn you, then,

Oh ! now, beware the sword,—

That sword that punishes malicious wrath,

Or it shall teach you what a judgment is ! ”



THEN answered Zophar, the Naamathite ;— CAP. XX.

“ Though calm I bear with all thy harsh rebukes,  
My hurry'ng thoughts oblige me to reply ;  
And hence it is, my spirit urges me,  
With all its force, to answer thee at once.

Know'st not of old,  
Since man was placed on earth,  
How short the triumph of the wicked is ?  
How,  
In a moment,  
All the fleeting joys of the base hypocrite,  
Quick fade away ?  
For though his glory flush the dome of Heav'n,  
And though his head soar far above the clouds,  
Yet,  
Shall he perish,  
As rejected mire ;

And they shall ask,  
 Who knew him,  
 'Where is he?'  
 Yea!  
 Like a dream,  
 So shall he pass away;  
 He shall be sought,  
 But shall no more be found,  
 Than some pale vision of the ghostful night!  
 The eye that saw,  
 Shall see him ne'er again,  
 Nor shall his place behold him any more.  
 His children shall be fain to please the poor;  
 Their hands shall render back his ill-got spoils;  
 His bones, still rankling from his youthful lusts,  
 Shall serve him but as crutches to his grave.  
 Though wickedness shall seem most sweet to him,  
 And though he wrap it round about his tongue,  
 Yea!  
 Though he spare it and forsake it not,  
 But keep it still within his lustful mouth,  
 Yet,  
 In his bowels,  
 Shall it change corrupt,  
 Into the very gall of deadly asps!  
 Though greedily he's swallow'd riches down,  
 Yet shall he vomit them all up again;  
 For,  
 God Himself,  
 Shall cast them out from him!  
 He shall suck in the poison of the asp,  
 Yea! he shall die -- slain by the viper's tongue;

He ne'er shall see the river's bounteous floods,  
Nor yet the luscious streams of honied milk ;  
Though he shall labour, yet he shall not eat,  
Nor shall his merchandize yield cause for joy ;

Because,

He hath oppress'd the friendless poor,  
And hath, with violence, usurped the house,  
On which he spent no labour of his own !

For this,

He ne'er shall feel at ease within,  
Nor shall his soul's desire be saved for him ;

Nor shall there be,

Of all his house,

One left,

To serve his table,

Or,

Defend his goods !

When most exalted, he shall be in straits ;  
Foreclosing misery shall weigh him down ;  
For food, he shall be fill'd with burning pains,  
And fiery vengeance shall rain down on him !

In vain he flees the iron-headed shaft,

Which strikes him through,

Urged from the bow of steel :

Then,

Deftly drawn,

And instant piercing him,

The glitt'ring sword comes reeking from his gall,  
Whilst Death's last terrors seize his quivering frame !

Horror on horror is in store for him ;

He shall consume as with some smould'ring fire ;  
It shall go ill with all within his house ;  
The Heavens above shall bring his guilt to light,  
And Earth below against him witness bear ;  
The increase of his house shall cease to be,  
And all his substance, too, shall melt away !

Such,  
Is the portion of the wicked man ;  
Yea !  
Such his heritage,  
Decreed of God !”

---

CAP XXI.      THEN Job replying, answer'd thus, and said ;—

“ Once more, attentive, hear me speak, I pray,  
And then, perchance, ye may retract your words ;  
Or, at the least, with patience suffer me,  
And after then, if not convinced, mock on !

But,  
As for me,  
Why now appeal to man ?  
For,  
If I do,  
How is my spirit eased ?  
Yet,  
Mark me now,  
Astonished though you be,

And silent, lay your hand upon your mouth ;  
    Although,  
    I feel almost afraid to think,  
Such trembling weakness holds my flesh in bonds !

    But,  
    Now I ask ;—  
    Why do the wicked live,  
    Yea,  
    Become old,  
    And grow to mighty pow'r ?  
Their children are establish'd in their sight,  
And they behold their children's children too ;  
Their houses seem to be all free from fear,  
Nor are they smitten by the rod of God ;  
Their bull engendereth, and faileth not,  
Their cow brings forth, and casteth not her calf ;  
They send their infants forth like flocks of lambs ;  
Their merry children dance with agile step ;  
They take the timbrel and the harp with them,  
And listen to the joy-inspiring lute ;  
They spend their days in pleasure to the last,  
Then, in a moment, to their graves go down !

    'Tis hence,  
    They say to God ;—  
    ' Depart from us,  
    For why,  
    Should *we* desire  
    To know Thy ways ?  
    Who's th' Almighty ?  
    Why should *we* serve Him ?

And what our profit if we pray to Him ?

    But lo,

        Their profit is not due to them,

        Nor do I advocate their evil thoughts.

How often is their brilliant light put out ;

How oft destruction overtakes their steps ;

    For,

        When in anger,

        God deals sorrows out,

They're blown away, as stubble by the wind,

Or scattered, like mere chaff before a storm !

    And then,

        Behold,

        How,

        Farther in His wrath,

God visits on their heirs the ills they've done !

    Thus,

        God rewards them,

        And they know it, too ;

    For,

        Here they see destruction creeping on,

        And drink beforehand the Almighty's wrath !

        What charms,

        Thenceforward,

        Can their homes afford,

When in mid-life their hopes are thus destroyed ?

    But,

        Do *you* claim,

        To teach the mind of God ?

He judges from a point beyond your ken !

    One dies at ease,

In the full prime of life,  
His strength intact,  
And supple all his joints ;  
Another dies,  
With anguish-burden'd soul,  
And who, whilst living, never tasted joy !  
They, both alike, descend into the dust,  
And, both alike, are cover'd o'er with worms !

But,  
I know all your thoughts,  
And,  
How your hearts,  
Are fill'd with wrong imaginings of me !  
For,  
Ye do say ;—  
' Where 's that oppressor's house ?  
Yea !  
Where the dwelling of that wicked man ?'  
But,  
Learn from those who 've done their pilgrimage,  
And from the records they have left behind ;  
How,  
All the wicked,  
Are reserved for doom,  
Until that day—that awful day of wrath—  
When all shall stand arraign'd before their Judge !

For,  
Who can here expose the bad man's deeds,  
Or,  
Who repay him for the wrong he 's done ?



Nay,  
With what pomp he 's carried to the grave,  
And in the tomb lies quiet, undisturb'd,  
Whilst sweet the valley's clods are deck'd for him !  
Thus,  
It has been with all who 've gone before,  
And so shall be with myriads after him !  
  
How vain the comfort, then, ye offer me,  
When all your arguments are based on lies !”

---

CAP. XXII.

THEN Eliphaz of Tema thus replied ;—

“ How can a man yield profit unto God,  
As man, by wisdom, profiteth himself ?  
Is it a pleasure,  
To Almighty God,  
That thou art righteous ?  
Is it gain to Him,  
That thou dost perfect make,  
Thy erring ways ?  
Will He reprove thee out of fear of thee,  
Or enter with thee into judgment bonds ?  
Is not thy wickedness grown very great,  
And thine iniquity,  
Lo,  
Infinite ?  
For,  
Thou hast ta'en thy brother's pledge for nought ;

Thou 'st stripp'd the almost naked of their clothes ;  
Thou hast not given water to the faint,  
And from the hungry thou hast kept back bread ;  
Thou 'st let the mighty, wrongful, seize the land,  
Whilst widows, empty, thou hast sent away,  
And cruel crush'd the orphan's upraised arms !

'Tis hence,

These toils are round about thee now ;

'Tis hence,

Thou'rt troubled with these sudden fears ;

Hence,

Darkness blinds thee,

That thou canst not see ;

And hence,

Thou art o'erwhelmed with these great floods !

'Is not God far above the Highest Heav'n ?  
Looks He not down upon the loftiest stars ?'

And then,

Thou sayest thus ;—

'How doth He know ?

How can He judge through all this dusky space ?  
Thick clouds so clothe Him that He cannot see ;  
Far off He wanders on the verge of Heav'n !'

But,

Hast thou well observed,

From ancient times,

The way that wicked men have always trod,

E'en those who, on a sudden, were cut off,

(A flood o'erwhelming their secure abodes)

How they had said to God ;—

‘ Depart from us ! ’

And ;—

‘ What could the Almighty do for them ? ’

Although ’twas He who fill’d their homes with good !

Now,

I don’t advocate their evil thoughts ;

But,

With the righteous,

View their doom with joy ;

And,

With the innocent,

Laugh such to scorn !

We mark their substance totally destroy’d,

Its very remnants e’en,

Consum’d by fire !

But now, O Job ! acquaint thyself with God,

Then thou shalt be at peace ;

Yea ! so, great good shall come to thee !

Accept,

(I pray thee now)

The healthful law of His own gracious lips,

And in thy heart lay up His truthful words !

For,

If thou turnest to Almighty God,

Then,

Shalt thou be built up ;

Then,

Shalt thou drive,

Injurious evil, from thy dwelling, far ;

Then,

Shalt thou lay up gold,  
Heap'd up as dust ;  
Yea !  
Gold of Ophir,  
E'en as brook-worn stones !  
Then,  
The Almighty shall be thy defence,  
And silver in abundance shalt thou have ;  
Then,  
Shalt thou feel delight in God the Lord,  
And unto Him with pleasure lift thy face ;  
Then,  
Shalt thou offer up thy pray'r to God,  
And God shall hear,  
And thou shalt pay thy vows !  
Thy purposes shall be assured to thee,  
And light divine shall shine upon thy ways ;  
Then,  
To thy down-cast,  
Shalt thou say ;—  
' Arise !  
Thou shalt exalt the man of lowly mind,  
And for thy sake the guilty shall be saved ,  
Yea !  
Through thy virtue,  
Shall they be preserved !”

---

THEN Job replied to Eliphaz, and said ;—

CAP. XXIII.

“How bitter is my ever-present grief ;  
Its load is heavier than my groans can tell,  
    But oh !  
        That as you say ;—  
        ‘I might find God !’  
Oh ! that I could approach His judgment seat,  
And humbly there submit my cause to Him ;  
    Ah ! then,  
        I’d fill my mouth with arguments,  
        And hear the answer He would give to me,  
And understand what He would have me know.  
    Would He,  
        (Think you)  
Outplead me with His pow’r ?  
    I tell you, nay,  
        But He would strengthen me.  
Oh ! that the righteous could but plead with Him,  
For then I should have quittance from my Judge !

    But,  
        If I go before,  
        He is not there ;—  
        And if behind,  
I cannot trace Him out ;—  
    If to the left,  
Amidst His wondrous works,  
    He is not to be seen ;—  
        Or to the right,  
        E’en there obscure,  
    He is conceal’d from me !

But,  
I'm persuaded He approves my steps,  
And,  
At the last,  
When He's done trying me,  
I shall come forth,  
As gold,  
Well purified !  
My feet have kept His steps ;  
I've held His way ;  
I've not declined ;  
Nor,  
Have I turnèd back  
From the commandments of His holy lips,  
Whilst,  
As my chiefest end, I've stor'd His words !

When God has fix'd His mind,  
Who can turn Him ?  
Lo !  
Whatsoe'er it pleases Him,  
He does.  
He brings to pass the lot appointed me,  
By countless means,  
Exhaustless as Himself.  
'Tis hence His presence terrifies me so ;  
Yea !  
When I think on Him,  
I'm filled with fear.  
God hath subdued the courage of my heart,—

Yea !  
The Almighty hath sore troubled me ;  
    And yet,  
    Mid all this gloom,  
    I'm not cut off,  
Nor has He wrapp'd my face in Death's dark shroud !

CAP. XXIV.

BUT  
    Seeing that,  
All times are one alike to th' Almighty,  
    How happens it,  
    That those who know Him best,  
    See least of His bright days ?  
    Their landmarks are removed,—  
    Whilst robbers come,  
    With violence,  
    And carry off their flocks,  
    And feed thereon.  
    They take the orphan's ass,  
And, for a pledge, the widow's ox purloin ;  
    The needy man no justice can obtain,  
And all the poor together hide themselves,  
    Or,  
    Like wild asses in the wilderness,  
    Rising betimes,  
    They wander forth,  
    To seek some casual prey,  
    (A most precarious task)  
Wherewith to feed, their children and themselves,  
    In the wild desert.  
Their rip'ning corn is taken from their fields ;

Their vines are robb'd,  
        By wicked men,  
Just as the grapes are ripe.  
    Naked they lodge,  
    No clothing covers them,  
They've no protection from the biting cold ;  
They're wetted through by sudden mountain storms,  
And, void of shelter, they embrace the rock !

        But,  
They who pluck the orphan from the breast,  
And they who take a pledge from poverty ;  
        Yea!  
They who cause the naked to want clothes,  
And from the famish'd filch their only sheaf ;  
Who make them press out oil through noon-tide heat,  
And tread the wine-press when o'ercome with thirst ;  
Who, by oppression, make whole cities groan,  
And wring out agony from tortured souls ;—  
The crimes of *these* God scarcely seems to note !

        Yet,  
Mark how all such men abhor the day ;  
        They dare not face its rays, ,  
        Nor walk therein !  
        When dawn arises,  
        Then,  
        The murderer,  
Slinks from the victim of his ruthless deed !  
        By night,  
They skulk about, like furtive thieves ;



Their eye, adult'rous, waits for even-tide ;  
                     They say ;—  
     ‘ I sha’n’t be known ;—I am disguised !’  
 They dig through houses in the dead of night,  
 Which, in the daytime, they have secret mark’d ;  
                     They dare not face the day ;  
                     To them,  
                     Fair morn,  
 Is horrid as the very shade of Death !  
                     And,  
                     To be known,  
                     Fills them with mortal dread !  
 A curse o’ertakes them swiftly on the sea,  
 And on the land their portion too is cursed,  
 And they ne’er tread the vineyards’ pleasant paths !

                    E’en,  
                     As snow waters,  
 By the drought and heat,  
                     Are quick consumed,  
                     So,  
                     Sinners by the grave.  
 Their very mothers shall forget their names ;  
 The worm shall revel in their rotting flesh ;  
 Oblivion shall enshroud their memories ;  
                     Yea !  
                     Mid their wickedness,  
                     They’re broken off,  
 Like the scathed branches of some stricken tree !

                    With mean, unmanly spite,

They ill entreat,  
Poor childless women, and poor widows too !  
But,  
Though they draw support from mighty men,  
And,  
When they rise, though none are sure of life,  
And though,  
They seem to dwell secure from harm,  
And proudly rest upon their great allies ;  
Yet,  
With what anxious eyes they mark their ways !  
They are exalted for a little while,  
But,  
Soon they 're gone,  
And all to nothing brought ;  
Yea !  
E'en as others,  
They are all removed—  
Sharply cut off—like topmost ears of corn

Now,  
Who'll contend that I don't speak the truth,  
Or prove that what I say has no sound base !"

---

THEN answer'd Bildad, Shuah's chief, and said ;— CAP. XXV.

“ Fear and dominion are alone with God !  
In peace He reigns o'er loftiest spheres supreme.  
His armies, too, are they not countless hosts ?

Yea ! upon whom doth not His gaze alight ?  
 How, then, can man be justified with God,  
 Or who be clean that is of woman born ?

Behold the moon !

To Him,

It shineth not,

And in His sight the stars e'en are not pure !

How much less man,

Who is a worm at best,—

Yea ! or the son of man, a worm at last !”



CAP. XXVI. THEN Job replied to Bildad thus, and said ;—

“How hast thou help'd the man devoid of strength,  
 Or how upheld the weakness of his arm ?  
 How hast thou counsell'd one to folly prone,  
 Or how unfolded wisdom's page to him ?  
 For whose advantage, these, thy crude remarks,  
 And whose the spirit that inspired thee ?

The Shades beneath,

And the huge Monsters of the gloomy deep,

Tremble alike at Him !

Bared to His view lie Sheol's shadowy plains,

And, all undomed, the bottomless abyss !

He canopies the North o'er empty space,

And upon nothing balances the Earth !

He gathers up great floods in His thick clouds,

And yet they are not rent beneath the load !

Behind a tapestry of woven mists,  
He hides the burnish'd facets of His throne !  
Within their bounds, He coops the oceans up,  
Which, ambient, lave the skirts of Dawn and Eve !

At His rebuke,  
The pillars of high heav'n,  
Tremble with awe !  
By His Almighty pow'r,  
He stills the sea ;

Yea !

Its proud surging waves,  
By His commanding Will,  
Are smitten down !

And whilst His Spirit garnishes the sky,  
His cunning hand the crooked serpent forms !

Then,  
Pond'ring o'er His works within these bounds,  
Reflect,  
How little can be heard of Him,  
Excepting,  
When His deep toned thunder rolls,  
And then,  
How little can be understood !”

THEN Job his parable continued thus ;—

CAP. XXVII.

“ Though God Almighty will not hear my cause,  
And though He's vex'd my soul,  
Yet,  
As He lives,  
And all the while my breath remains in me,

And whilst His Spirit in my nostrils dwells,  
    So long,  
    My lips shall not speak wickedness,  
Nor shall my tongue give utt'rance to deceit.  
    For,  
    God forbid,  
    That I should give you cause,  
To justify the things you 've said of me !  
    Nay,  
    Mine integrity,  
    Until I die,  
    I will hold fast ;  
    I will not let it go ;  
My heart shall not reproach me while I live !

    But,  
These mine enemies,  
    *They—*  
    Are the bad ;  
    And,  
    Mine accusers,  
    *They—*  
    The sinners are ;  
    Who,  
Though they may have gain'd all this world's goods,  
    Yet,  
When the Lord shall take away their souls,  
Where, then, the hope of such vain hypocrites ?  
Then, will God hear them when their trouble comes ;  
Will they find joy in the Almighty, then ;  
Then, will they call with confidence on God ?

But now,  
I'll teach you the designs of God !  
Yea !  
I'll unfold to you His secret plans,  
Though you have seen them ofttimes for yourselves ;  
And yet,  
Vain fools,  
Ye babble on like this ;—  
' This is the portion of the wicked man,  
Yea !  
This the heritage bestow'd by God,  
On all oppressors of their fellow-men,  
And which they surely shall receive from Him !  
Their children multiply but for the sword,  
Nor shall they e'er be satisfied with bread ;  
They shall be buried, to the last, in Death,  
Not e'en their widows shall be left to weep !  
Though they should heap up silver as the dust,  
And raiment should prepare, like heaps of dirt,—  
They may prepare,  
But mark ;—  
The just alone,  
The raiment shall put on,  
And only those,  
Shall share the silver,  
Who are innocent !  
He builds his house with the mere moth's frail skill,  
Or like a watchman's temporary booth !  
At death,  
Though rich,  
He has no sepulture !  
E'en in the twinkling of an eye he's gone ;

Terrors take hold of him like raging floods ;  
 He's stolen off by tempest in the night ;  
     Yea !  
         He departs,  
             Borne off by the Simoom,  
 Or headlong hurl'd by fierce Euroclydon,  
 Which overthrows him with unsparing force !  
 He fain would flee from its terrific grasp,  
 But clapping still its thund'rous hands at him,  
 It drives him, with fierce hissings, from his place !'

CAP. XXVIII.—MAN knows where silver branches out its veins,  
 And where rich lodes of finest gold are hid ;  
 He raises iron from beneath the earth,  
 And smelts out copper from the sparry ore ;  
 He brings primeval darkness to an end,  
 Minutely searching out its secret haunts,  
 Its gloomy caverns, and its death-like shades ;  
 He opens out deep, never-failing springs,  
 Derived from floods long since dried up and gone,  
 O'er which the foot of man now dry-shod treads ;  
 He makes the earth, obedient, yield him food,  
 And draws his fuel from its fiery stores ;  
 He sees the place where sapphires gem its rocks,  
 And where they 're spangled o'er with dust of gold ;  
 He knows of paths, beyond the eagle's flight,  
 And which the vulture's eye hath ne'er survey'd,—  
 Untrodden by the foot of lions' whelps,  
 And along which old lions have not pass'd ;  
 He grapples e'en with adamant itself ;  
 He overturns huge mountains by their roots ;

He cuts out water-ways amongst the rocks,  
And curbs the fury of impetuous floods ;  
Nothing escapes his ever-prying gaze,  
    And whatso'er is hid,  
    He brings to light !  
    But where,  
    Oh tell !  
Is Wisdom to be found ;  
And Understanding—  
    Where the place of it ?  
Its sterling worth is all unknown to man,  
It is not to be found in all the Earth !  
    ' 'Tis not in me,'  
    So say the deeps below ;—  
    ' Nor yet in me,'  
    The restless waves reply !  
It cannot be obtained for heaps of gold,  
Nor can its price be weigh'd in silver coin ;  
    Not all the gold of Ophir,  
    With rare gems,  
Of onyx and of sapphire equal it ;  
    Not gold with brilliants set,  
    Nor gilded urns,  
Though chased with wondrous skill, can purchase it ;  
    Coral and pearls,—  
    But wherefore mention them ?  
For Wisdom far exceeds the ruby's price ;  
    Not Ethiop's topaz,  
    Flushed with living green,  
And set in gold, is barter for its worth  
    Then,  
    ' Whence comes Wisdom ? '



Yea !  
 I ask once more,  
 And Understanding—  
 ‘ Where the place of it ?’  
 For see,  
 ’Tis hid from ev’ry living eye,  
 Yea !  
 Far beyond the utmost flight of birds !  
 Death and Destruction,  
 (They alone reply),  
 ‘ Once faint we heard the echo of its voice !’  
 But God,  
 Yea ! God alone,  
 Full grasps its course ;  
 He only knows its secret dwelling place !  
 When He set out the limits of the earth,  
 And brought to light its gorgeous canopy ;  
 When he prepared the balance for the winds,  
 And weighed the ocean with His measuring hand ;  
 When He decreed the laws that govern rain,  
 And struck out thunder’s path with lightning flash ;  
 Then,  
 Did He know,  
 And make it manifest !  
 And,  
 When He had prepared and search’d it out,  
 Then,  
 He reveal’d thus much of it to man ;—  
 ‘ BEHOLD !  
 TRUE WISDOM IS TO FEAR THE LORD,  
 AND UNDERSTANDING  
 TO ESCHEW ALL ILL !’”

THEN Job continued further thus, and said ;-- CAP. XXIX.

“ Oh ! that it were with me as in times past !  
As in the days when God protected me ;  
As when His glory shone about my head ;  
As when I walk'd through darkness by His light ;  
E'en as I was in days of early youth,  
When God abode a guest within my tent ;  
When the Almighty was for aye with me ;  
When all my children round about me stood ;  
As when my feet were laved, each step, with cream,  
And the rock pour'd me out rich streams of oil !

When,  
Through the city,  
To the gate I went,  
And when in public I assumed my seat,  
Then,  
All the young who saw me,  
Shrank abash'd ;  
Then,  
All the agèd rose,  
And rev'rent stood !  
Princes kept silence,  
(With hand laid on mouth),  
And nobles,  
E'en the proudest,  
Held their peace,  
With tongues fast cleaving to their mouth's dry roof !  
Then,  
The ear bless'd me when it heard my voice,

The eye that saw me held me in respect !

Because,

I rescued all the poor that cried,

The fatherless,

And him who 'd none to help !

Then,

On my head,

The heartfelt blessings fell,

Of him,

Who else expected,

Only death.

I caused the widow's heart to sing for joy ;

I robed myself about with righteousness,

And decked my diadem with just decrees !

Ah !

Then I was,

As eyes unto the blind,

Feet to the lame,

A father to the poor.

What cause I knew not, that I searchèd out ;

I broke the grinding jaws of wicked men,

And plucked the spoil from mid their rav'ning teeth !

I said ;—

‘ I now shall die in this my nest,

My days shall multiply as grains of sand !’

My spreading root suck'd moisture from deep springs,

And all night long the dew fell on my branch ;

My glory ever was increased to me,

And in my hand, my bow abode in strength !

Then,

All men, eager, waited for my words,

And silent listen'd,

By my counsel sway'd ;  
After my speech,  
Then,  
No one further spoke,  
For they were all convinc'd by what I said.  
Anxious,  
They waited for me as for rain,  
As for the latter rain, call'd loud for me.  
Then,  
If I laugh'd at them,  
They were ashamed,—  
But *me*,  
They ne'er put out of countenance.  
I chose their way for them ;  
I sat as Chief ;  
I ruled as King o'er all their armèd men,  
And was prime comforter to all that mourn'd !

But now,  
I 'm scoff'd at with derisive sneers,  
By those who are far younger than myself ;  
By those,  
Whose fathers I would have disdain'd,  
To set amongst the watch-dogs of my flock ;  
By those,  
Who ne'er had strength of hand to work,  
Victims in youth of premature old age,  
Lone, famish'd effigies of pining want ;  
Who,  
But as yesterday,  
With hasty step,

Fled to the desolate waste wilderness ;  
 Who gather'd mallows there amidst the thorns,  
 And grubb'd up furze-roots for their scanty food !

Rogues,

Banish'd from the face of honest men,  
 (The cry of 'thief' still ringing in their ears),  
 To seek a lodging in some rock-bound gorge,

In some old pit,

Or in some mountain cave ;

Who made the bush resound with senseless talk,  
 Huddled together 'neath the briar's shade.

Children of fools,

Yea !

Sons of nameless sires,

The very basest scum of all the earth,—

Of such as *these*,

I'm now the jest and song ;

Yea !

Such avoid me, and abhor me now,  
 Not e'en forbearing in my face to spit !

Yea ! now,

Because,

God hath unloosed my cord,

And sore afflicted me,

They seem to think,

They also may unbridle all restraint.

Striplings usurp the place I occupied ;

They rudely push my feet from under me ;

They try to injure me in ev'ry way ;

They rough my path ;

They publish all my woes ;

And no one helps me in opposing them.

Yea !  
As a deluge,  
So,  
They onward rush ;  
With surging tumult they bear down on me,  
And dash against me with o'erwhelming force !

With hounding terrors now my soul's pursued,  
As the East wind pursues the fading cloud,

Yea !  
And my soul seems now almost dissolved ;  
Affliction holds me in its grasp by day,  
At night my bones are rack'd with piercing pains,  
Whilst palsy lets my sinews have no rest ;  
I'm clotted o'er with matter from my sores ;  
My dress, thus saturate, seems glued to me !  
Cast off by God, as on some miry heap,  
I seem to be mere dust and ashes now !

I cry to Thee,  
But lo !  
Thou dost not hear ;  
I prayerful stand,  
But Thou dost not regard ;  
Thou hast become most cruel to me now ;  
Thou art opposed to me with Thy strong hand ;  
The air is fœtid with my putrid flesh ;  
My substance is borne off upon the wind ;  
I feel that Thou art bringing me to Death,  
E'en to that home prepared for all who live !  
But,  
In the grave,

No more shall I be vex'd,—  
E'en though they clamour in my tomb itself !

Did I not weep for him that was in pain ?  
Was not my soul afflicted for the poor ?

But,

When I look'd for good,

Then,

Evil came !

And when I look'd for light,

There darkness stood !

My bowels melted,

Yea !

I took no rest,

When times of sorrow claim'd my sympathy !

E'en,

After sundown,

Urged by heartfelt grief,

I roused the congregation with my cries !

Yet now,

Of jackals, I'm the brother deemed,

Or fit companion for wild ostriches !

My skin is charr'd ;

My bones are burnt with heat ;

My harp is given o'er to mournful strains,

And plaintive notes breathe only from my lute !

CAP. XXXI.

I made a binding cov'nant with my eyes,

Lest, lightly, they should look upon a maid ;

For what the portion God awards for this ;

What their inheritance from God Most High ?

Does not destruction overtake the lewd,  
And a strange doom attend on the impure ?  
Does not He see my ways, and count my steps ?

If I have walk'd with careless levity,  
Or if my foot hath hasted to deceive ;—

Then,

Let me in the balance now be weigh'd,  
That God may judge of mine integrity !

If e'er my steps have turn'd from the right way,  
Or if my heart hath walk'd by sight alone ;  
If e'er my hands with bribes have been defiled ;—

Then,

Let me sow, and let another reap,

Yea !

Let my produce all be rooted up !

If e'er my heart by woman's been deceived,  
If at my neighbour's door I've lain in wait ;—

Then

Let my wife be slave to other men ;

Yea !

And let others treat her as their own !

For this is one of the most heinous crimes,

One to be punish'd by the magistrate ;—

Yea !

'Tis a fire that utterly consumes,  
And which alone would bring my wealth to nought !

If ever I've despised my servants' cause,  
When, man or maid, they claim'd their rights of me



What shall I do, when God is roused for them ;  
 What shall I say when He holds His assize ?

Yea !

Did not He, who made me, make them too ;  
 Were we not fashion'd, in the womb, alike ?

If I've withheld their wages from the poor,  
 Or if I've caused the widow's eyes to fail ;  
 If e'er I've eaten my scant meal alone,  
 And have not shared it with the fatherless ;—

(Nay !

From their youth they were brought up by me,  
 As by a father ;

From my earliest years,

The widow,

I have guided by my hand !)

If I've seen any starved for want of clothes,  
 Or any poor unshelter'd from the cold ;  
 If I've not caused his loins to bless my name,  
 And have not clothed him from my sheep's warm fleece ;  
 If, when I sat Chief Ruler in the gate,  
 I've raised my hand against the fatherless ;—

Then,

Let my arm fall from its shoulder blade,

Yea !

From its channell'd socket let it drop !  
 For God's consuming wrath was aye my dread,  
 Nor could I so, His Majesty, forget !

If I have set my heart on shining Gold,  
 Or said to brass ; 'Thou art my confidence ;'  
 If I've rejoiced because my Wealth was great,

Or e'en because my hand had gotten much ;  
If, when I've seen the golden Sun shine out,  
Or watch'd the Moon walk on in silver light,  
My heart hath e'er been secretly enticed,  
Or if my mouth hath kiss'd my hand to them ;—  
This were an evil for the Judge to mark,  
For I should have denied the God above !

If, parch'd with thirst, my fields have gaped on me,  
Or if their furrows, all undrain'd, have wept ;  
If, without payment, I have ate their fruits,  
Or from my tenants drawn a piteous sigh ;—

Then,

Let rank thistles grow instead of wheat,  
And, e'en for barley, let foul weeds spring up !

If I've rejoiced,  
When my most hated foe has met his doom ;  
If I've exultant stood,  
When cruel evil has o'ertaken him ;  
If I've allow'd my hasty tongue to sin,  
By calling down a curse upon his soul ;  
If e'er the servants in my house have said ;—

' Give us more food,'

And were not satisfied ;

If in the street I've let the stranger lodge,  
And did not welcome trav'lers to my house ;  
If I, like Adam, my transgression cloak'd,

Or in my bosom hid iniquity ;

If of the people, I have stood in awe,  
Or if I've feared the scorn of families ;—

Then,



For they all were older than himself ;  
But when he saw,  
Not one of all the three could answer Job,  
His wrath was roused ;  
And so, thus answ'ring, spake,  
Elihu,  
Son of Barachel of Buz ;—

“ I am but young, and ye are very old !  
Hence, fill'd with awe, I durst not shew my mind :

I said ;—

‘ Lo, days should speak,  
And multitude of years should wisdom teach !’

But lo, in man there is a Spirit ;

Yea !

Inspired by God,  
The gift of understanding dwells in him !  
Old men, alone, are not at all times wise,  
Nor do the aged, only, grasp the truth !

'Twas hence I said ;—

‘ Now hearken to my words,  
Whilst mine opinion I unfold to you !’

Behold !

I waited whilst you argued on ;  
Mine ear attentive conn'd your reasons o'er ;  
Whilst ye were searching up and down for words,  
I gave close heed to you ;

And yet, behold,

There was not one of you could answer Job,  
Nor any able to refute his words !

So,

Do not vaunt that you have found the truth ;  
 'Tis God alone, not man, has thrust him down !

Now, I'm not prejudiced by what he's said,  
 Nor will I answer him as you have done !”

---

THEN were they all amazed, nor answered more ;  
 They ceased to speak ;  
 So,  
 Having paused awhile,  
 (For still they stood, and answer'd not, nor spake,)  
 He said ;—

“ I NOW will answer on my part myself ;  
 Yea !  
 Mine opinion I'll unfold to you.  
 My burthen'd spirit is full charged with words ;  
 My soul within,  
 (Like newly bottled wine that hath no vent)  
 Is ready to burst forth ;  
 Yea ! I will speak ;  
 Yea ! now, with parting lips, I'll answer you,  
 So I may breathe once more.  
 This sole, I pray you, let me flatter none,  
 Nor pay undue respect to any man ;  
 For were I prone to flatter,  
 (Which I'm not)  
 My Maker soon would move me from my place !

Wherefore, O Job !

CAP. XXXIII.

I pray thee hear me now ;  
Yea! condescend to listen to my words ;  
For now I've ventured to unseal my lips,  
And now my tongue hath spoken in my mouth,  
I'll utter none but heartfelt honest words ;  
Unsullied truth alone shall pass my lips,

For,

By the Spirit of Almighty God,  
I, too, was made, and by His breath I live !

If, when I've spoken, you would answer me,  
Stand up, I pray, and, in set speech, reply.

Behold !

I am, according to thy wish,  
One in God's stead,  
Yet form'd, like thee, of clay ;  
Thou shalt not stand in awe-struck dread of me,  
Nor shall my hand press heavily on thee !

Now, thou hast spoken, in my hearing, thus ;  
I've heard your voice proclaim such words as these ;--

' I'm clean ;

Without transgression ;

Innocent ;

I am not tainted with iniquity ;  
But lo! against me, God occasion seeks ;  
He ever counts me as His enemy ;  
He binds my feet about with heavy clogs,  
And scans, suspicious, ev'ry step I take.'

Behold, O Job, in this thou art not just ;  
 God, I reply, is greater far than man !  
 Then why against Him dost thou ceaseless strive ?  
 For He gives no account of what He does ;  
 Yet oft He speaks, though man perceiveth not ;  
 He speaks in dreams and visions of the night,  
 When deepest sleep subdues man's weary frame,  
 And when in slumber on his bed he lies.

'Tis then,  
 He openeth the ears of men,  
 Impressing truth upon their waxen ports !  
 Yea ! thus,  
 He turns him from his settled aims,  
 And weaves confusion round his proudest schemes.

'Tis thus,  
 He keeps him from the yawning pit,  
 And saves his life from the devouring sword.

Anon,  
 With pain he's chasten'd on his bed,  
 And all his bones are rack'd with agony.

Ah ! then,  
 His soul, not bread alone abhors,  
 But turns with loathing from the daintiest food.

His flesh,  
 All shrunk away, dissolves from view,  
 Whilst his gaunt bones, that were not seen, stick out !

His soul,  
 Draws near the grave, so that his life,  
 To Death's grim myrmidons seems given o'er !  
 Yet then, e'en then,  
 If one should come to him,  
 One of a thousand,

An Interpreter,  
One who can teach him what his duty is,

Then,—

Full of grace,  
God shows Himself,

And says ;—

‘ Deliver him from going to the pit,  
For an atonement I have found for him.’  
Then shall his flesh be fresher than a child’s,  
The days of youth shall seem come back to him ;  
Then shall he pray to God, and God shall hear !  
Yea ! he shall see His face with heav’nly joy,  
For His own righteousness He’ll give to him !  
Then shall he boldly look around, and say ;—  
‘ Though I have sinn’d, and turn’d aside from right,  
Yet God hath not requited me for this ;  
My soul He hath deliver’d from the pit,  
And caused my life once more to see the light !’

How oft God works such things as these with man,  
Bringing his soul back from the darksome pit,  
And re-illumining it with living light !

Mark well, O Job ! and hearken to me now ;  
Nay, hold thy peace, I say, for I will speak !

Yet, if thou art inclined to answer me,  
(Though I desire to justify thee)

Speak !

If not, then listen on, and hold thy peace,  
So I may teach thee what true wisdom is !”



CAP. XXXIV.    THEN furthermore Elihu answered thus ;—

“ Now hear my words, ye wise !  
Give heed to me, ye that have knowledge,  
For the ear tries words, as the mouth tasteth meat ;  
Let us elect sound wisdom for our guide,  
So we may know, amongst ourselves,  
What really is the truth !

Now Job hath said ;—  
‘ I am a righteous man ;  
God hath withheld the justice due to me !  
Shall I be false to that which is my right ?  
Though void of sin, nathless, I’m cast for death !’

Where is the man like Job,  
Who, with large draughts, drinks scorn, like water,  
The while in company,  
With the base workers of iniquity,  
He paces on,  
And with the wicked walks ?  
Nay, he hath also said ;—  
‘ It profits nought,  
That one should be at loving peace with God !’

Oh ! therefore hearken unto me, ye wise !  
Do not impute unrighteousness to God,  
Nay, nor iniquity to God the Lord ;  
As a man does, so shall God do to him,  
Yea ! each shall find according to his ways.  
No, surely !—God will not do wickedly,

Nor will th' Almighty from strict justice swerve !  
    To whom is He beholden,  
    For His rule o'er all the earth ?  
    Who gave the world to Him ?  
If He should so desire to deal with man,  
And gather to Himself his soul and breath,  
May not He, instant, cause all flesh to die,  
And into dust again dissolve mankind ?

    If thou hast understanding,  
    Then mark this,  
And hearken to the voice of these my words ;—  
    Can he do right, (I ask), who hateth right ?  
    Darest thou thus condemn the One most just ?  
    Is it befitting to a King to say ;—  
    ' Lo, thou art wicked ;'  
    Or to Princes e'en ;—  
    ' Ye are ungodly.'  
    Then,  
    How much less to Him,  
    Who,  
    Nor accepts the person of a prince,  
Nor e'en the rich, more than the poor, regards !  
    For are not all alike his handiwork ?  
    Yea ! in a moment, both alike, they die !  
    For as,  
    Sore troubled at the noon of night,  
    The people pass away,  
    So,  
    Without hand,  
The mighty are removed from their high state !  
    God's eyes are over all the works of man ;

He marketh all their steps ;  
     There's no dark spot,  
     Not e'en the shade of death,  
 Where they who work iniquity may hide.  
     God needs no time to draw his case,  
 When man judicially would challenge Him !  
 He breaks the mighty into pieces utterly,  
     Past searching out,  
 And in their places, He sets others up !  
     He knoweth all their work ;  
     He hurls them down ;  
         Now,  
         In the night,  
     And so they are destroy'd ;  
         Or now,  
     As felons in full blaze of day,  
 And in the sight of all, He cuts them off.  
         Because,  
     They turn'd from following after Him,  
     And gave no heed to any of His ways ;  
         But,  
     Caused the poor to cry aloud to Him,  
 And the afflicted, whose sad wail He hears !

When He gives quiet, who can trouble make ?  
 Or who behold Him when He hides His face,  
     Either from nations,  
     Or from some bad man,  
 Lest wicked he should reign and snare the mass ?

Now surely it were well to say to God ;—  
     ' I'm rightly punish'd ;

I'll offend no more ;  
Teach me wherein I do not see aright,  
That so, henceforth, I may avoid all wrong !'  
Though, think not that He'll recompense thy ills,  
According only to thy wayward will.

But, say now,  
Whether you'll accept or not,  
What I advise !  
'Tis not for me to speak,  
But tell us what you have determined on.

Let men of understanding judge my words,  
And you—as wise—oh ! listen to me now ;  
For Job hath spoken speeches void of truth,  
Yea ! words that have no wisdom in their range !

Hence,  
I desire that he may now be tried,  
E'en to the end ;  
Because that his replies,  
Are only such as wicked men would make !  
Yea ! he would add rebellion to his sin,  
And in our midst,  
E'en now,  
Would clap his hands,  
As though his words had vanquish'd God Himself !”

ELIHU spake moreover thus, and said ;—

CAP. XXXV.

“Thinkest thou *this*, that thou hast said, is right ;—  
' My righteousness is greater far than God's !’

And in thy reas'ning thou hast ask'd as well ;—  
 'Of what advantage will it be to me,  
 Or what my profit, if my sin be purged?'

I'll answer thee,  
 And thy companions too !  
 Look to the heavens, and see,  
 Behold the clouds that in it's azure float,  
 And then bethink,  
 How, if thou sinnest, can'st thou injure God ?  
 If thine iniquities be multiplied,  
 Can it affect Him,  
 And to what extent ?  
 If thou art righteous,  
 What do'st thou give Him,  
 Or from thy hand, pray, what can He receive ?  
 Thy wickedness is felt by men like thee,  
 As, by thy goodness, thou may'st profit them !  
 Under oppression's rule, men cry aloud,  
 And groan by reason of the tyrant's arm,  
 Yet no one saith ;—  
 'Where is my Maker,—God,  
 Who,  
 In the night watch, giveth songs of joy,  
 Who teacheth us far more than savage beasts,  
 And makes us wiser than the soaring birds ?'  
 'Tis true they cry, but none gives heed to them,  
 For 'tis the cry of men on vengeance bent,  
 The cry of such, God will not listen to,  
 Nor will th' Almighty give it His regard !

But now,

Thou sayest that thou can'st obtain,  
Judgments alone, but favors none, from Him !  
Yet trust in Him, I say—  
The reason, why He has not waited on Job's angry cry,  
Nor seemed to notice his extremity,  
Is this—  
The cries of Job, like those, are vain,  
And his long prayers are on presumption based !”

CAP. XXXVI.

ELIHU further thus proceeding, said ;—

“ Suffer me yet, I pray, a little more,  
And I will show to thee, on God's behalf,  
What I have yet to say.  
Sweeping the range of all that can be known,  
I'll now set forth the truth and justice of my Maker God !  
My words shall not be false ;  
Thou hast to do with one who meaneth right.

Lo ! God is mighty, yet despiseth none ;  
In strength and wisdom vast, omnipotent !  
He spareth not the lives of wicked men ;  
He giveth justice to the destitute ;  
His fav'ring eyes are ever on the good ;  
He places them upon the throne of kings—  
He firmly seats them, and exalts them high !  
But if in galling fetters they be bound,  
Or holden with affliction's painful cords,  
He shows them all that they have done amiss,  
And where they have exceeded in their sins ;  
He opens too their ear to discipline,

And from iniquity compels them back.  
Then, if repentant, they submit to Him,  
Henceforth prosperity attends their days,  
And all their years in pleasure roll along ;  
But if, still hardened, they will not obey,  
                          Then,  
Shall they perish by th' Almighty's sword ;  
                          Yea !  
They shall die, abandoned and obscure,  
For hypocrites in heart heap wrath on wrath ;  
                          Yea !  
Tho' He binds them, they are stubborn still,  
And, grov'ling to the last, in youth they die !

He sets the poor from their afflictions free,  
Mid their oppressions He gives ear to them ;  
                          And even so,  
He would have brought thee out from these sad straits,  
                          Into a broad expanse,  
Where pinching poverty should be unknown,  
And where thy table should be well supplied.

But thou art filling up the bad man's doom ;  
Justice and judgment seize thee as their due !  
O fear His wrath, lest He should cut thee off ;  
Then a great ransom will not ransom thee !  
                          Will He esteem thy riches ?  
                          Nay, not gold,  
Nor all the forces of thy vaunted strength.

Ah !

Wish not for that night,  
When from thy place and people,  
Thou shalt cease.  
Take heed—beware ;  
O never harbour such iniquity !  
In preference to affliction, choose not this,  
But bear in mind God's pow'r to raise thee up !  
Who teaches, pray, like Him ?  
Who may lay down the course that He may take ?  
Or who may say to Him,  
' O God, Thou hast wrought wrongfully ? '

Now call to mind, and magnify His works,  
Which all men everywhere can plainly see !  
Lo ! God is very great, past searching out,  
Nor can we tell the number of His years.  
He gathers up the tiny globes of mist,  
Which float as vapour,  
Or,  
Condensed to rain,  
Descend in torrents from the bursting clouds,  
And in abundance, for mankind, distill.  
Can any understand the beetling cloud,  
The tabernacle where His thunder dwells,  
And whence His light'nings flash,  
From darkness,  
Dense as that which shrouds the ocean's lowest depths ?  
He judgeth nations by the means of these,  
And by their means He giveth food to spare !  
From the dark cloud He bringeth forth a light,



CAP. XXXVII.

And then His thunder loud proclaims for Him,  
 What magazines of wrath He holds in store !  
 'Tis this that agitates my trembling heart,  
 That makes it reel, and totter on it's seat.  
 O listen to the thunder of His voice,  
 Those awful tones that issue from His mouth !  
 His lightning flash illumines the vault of Heaven,  
 And lights up Earth—e'en to it's utmost bounds ;  
 And then anon, oh ! hear the roaring sound,  
 The thunder of His glorious Majesty,  
 Which long reverberates with peal on peal ;  
 God thunders marvellously with His voice  
 He does great things beyond our utmost ken !  
     Now, to the snow, He saith ;—  
         ' O'erspread the Earth ;'  
 To drizzling show'rs, as well, and mighty rains.  
 He sealetH up the busy hand of man,  
 That all may know the wonders of His works.  
 The savage beasts then hie them to their dens,  
 Or in thick coverts, dormant, hide themselves.  
 Out of the South His scorching whirlwind comes,  
 And from the North, cold, icy, cutting blasts.  
 God's breath is fringed around with rimy frost,  
 Wild wastes of waters are congeal'd by it.  
 Worn out with weeping, thick clouds waste away,  
     And melt into a brilliant fleecy sheen.  
     Again they turn about as He directs,  
         So they may do,  
         Whatever He commands,  
 Throughout the world—o'er all the earth below !  
     One time,  
     He sends them forth to scourge mankind,

Then at another,  
For His drougthy wilds,  
And then, again, with mercy they are fraught!

Yet, hear me more I pray, O Job!  
Now stand, and contemplate the wondrous works of God!

Say,  
Dost thou know when God so order'd it,  
That in His clouds the painted bow should shine ;  
Dost thou know how He balances the clouds,  
Of all His wondrous works—most wonderful ?  
Why are thy garments warm,  
When o'er the earth,  
The south wind sultry blows ?  
Hast thou, with Him, spread out the azure sky,  
Whose firm concave,  
Glows like a mirror of hard-polished steel ?

Pray teach us now what we should say to Him,  
When He's arrayed in robes so dark as these !  
Say who will tell Him that I wish to speak,  
For would not such a one be swallowed up ?  
And when the brilliant sun shines cloudless forth,  
And the dry, passing breeze has cleared the air,  
And when fair weather from the North springs up,  
How, then, address God's awful majesty ?

Almighty God !—  
We cannot find Him out ;  
In power and judgment, both, most glorious ;  
Of justice full and inexhaustible ;

Not used to wound,  
Hence,  
Men should fear His name,  
For, He rejects, the proud of heart, alone !”

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CAP XXXVIII

THEN, from amidst the whirlwind,  
THUS—  
THE LORD HIMSELF,  
Replied to Job ;—

“SAY,  
Who is this,  
That darkens counsel with vain, empty words ?  
Now,  
Like a man stand up,  
And gird thy loins ;  
For,  
I will question thee, and answer thou.

When the foundations of the earth I laid,  
Pray,  
Where wast thou ?  
Declare,  
If thou can'st tell who fixed the limits of it ;  
Dost thou know ?  
Say, who stretched out thereon, the meted line ;  
Its sockets, whereupon are they sunk down ;  
Who placed thereon the topmost corner stone,  
When all the morning stars together sang,

And all the sons of God shouted for joy ?

Who within bounds pent up the new born sea,  
When first, as from the womb, it issued forth ;  
When with a mist I clothed its heaving form,  
And in thick darkness swathed it round about ?  
When I exactly measured out its bounds,  
And set about it doors and bars, and said ;—  
' Hereto,—but hold, no farther,—shalt thou come,  
And here shall thy proud surging waves be stayed ?'

Hast thou, within thy days, bid Morn arise,  
Or shewn the Day-spring its appointed place,  
That it might lift its roseate wings o'er earth,  
To drive the wicked from their dark designs ?  
For when Earth yields to my embossing seal,  
And stands reclothed, as with illumed device,  
Then all the wicked, instant, hide themselves,  
Their arms restrained, as though with palsy struck !

Hast thou descended to the ocean's springs,  
Or hast thou wandered through its gloomy depths ;  
Have Sheol's gates been pushed aside for thee,  
Or hast thou seen the shadowy doors of Death ;  
Hast thou surveyed the wide expanse of earth,  
Or can'st thou for one grain of it account ?

Where is the primal source of glorious Light,  
And, as for Darkness, whereabouts its seat ?  
Can'st thou mark out the limits of its bounds,  
Or track the pathway to its murky home ;  
Know'st it, because thy birth preceded it,

Or that the number of thy years is great ?

Hast thou gone through my magazines of snow,  
Or hast thou seen my ordnance stores of hail,  
Which I've reserved against the day of woe,  
The day of battle, and for times of war ?

How is the lightning made to play its part,  
To scatter sudden tempests o'er the earth ?  
Who formed the vortex for the water spout ;  
Who for the thunder bolt prepared a path ?  
Who makes it rain o'er lands untrod by man,  
E'en o'er wild deserts, uninhabited,—  
To satisfy void, desolate, waste plains,  
That there the tender herb may spring and bud ?

Who is the parent of the gentle rain,  
Or who begot the drops of misty dew ?  
Out of whose womb came forth the glassy ice ?  
Who gendereth the hoar frost, heavenly pure,  
When all the brooks are hidden as with stone,  
And when the deep itself is frozen o'er ?

Say,—

Can'st thou bind the influences sweet of Pleiades,  
Or loose Orion's bands ?  
Can'st thou in season lead the Zodiac forth,  
Or can'st thou guide Arcturus with his sons ?  
Know'st thou the laws by which the heavens are ruled,  
Or can'st thou compass even those of earth ;  
Can'st thou with potent voice compel the clouds,  
That torrents in abundance may pour down ;

Or can'st thou call forth lightnings at thy will,  
To come to thee and say ;—  
' Lo ! here we are ?'

Pray, who hath skill intuitive for this,  
Or innate knowledge equal to this feat ;  
Who can lead forth the clouds in marshalled ranks,  
When all the soil seems hardened to a rock ;  
Or who can stay the bottles of the sky,  
When the tough clods have melted into slime ?

For the old lion wilt thou hunt the prey,  
To satisfy the cravings of his young,  
When they crouch hungry in their rocky dens,  
Or, waiting in the covert, hidden lie ?

Who for the croaking raven food provides,  
When her hoarse young ones raise their cry to God,  
Or when they wander forth for lack of food ?

Know'st thou the time when the wild goats bring forth, CAP. XXXIX.  
Or when the hinds do calve—pray, can'st thou mark ;  
Can'st thou count up the months that they fulfil,  
Or knowest thou the time when they bring forth ?  
They bow themselves, and so bring forth their young,  
And quick forget the burden of their griefs ;  
Well fed with corn, their young ones grow apace,  
And soon go forth, ne'er to return again !

Who hath sent forth the roving wild ass, free,  
Or who remitted him from servitude ?

Whose home I've made the boundless wilderness,  
 And the unfruitful marsh his dwelling place !  
 He scorns the tumult of the busy town,  
 And to the driver's cry he gives no heed ;  
 But seeks for pasture on the mountain sides,  
 Where nothing green escapes his searching gaze.

Will the Rhinoceros serve thee, I pray,  
 Or can'st thou make him in thy crib abide ;  
 Him, can'st thou bind to plough the clods for thee,  
 Or make him draw the harrow o'er thy fields ;  
 Him, wilt thou trust because his strength is great,  
 Or wilt thou leave thy labour to his skill ;  
 Wilt thou believe that he'll bring home thy grain,  
 Or gather in the harvest to thy barn ?

Hast thou alike spread out the Falcon's wings,  
 Or decked the Ostrich with her fluttering plumes ?  
 She leaves her eggs upon the open plain,  
 Trusting the sand for vivifying warmth ;  
 Forgetful—that man's foot may tread on them,  
 Or that they may be broken by wild beasts !  
 She has no feeling for her callow young,  
 But leaves them all, her simple labour o'er,  
 Without concern, as though they were not hers,—  
 For God hath given her no sense of care,  
 Yea ! hath withheld from her all wisdom's light !  
 But when she raiseth up herself for flight,  
 Then, horse and rider, both alike, she scorns !

Hast thou his mettle, on the horse, bestowed ?  
 Hast thou endued his neck with majesty,

Or hast thou nerved him for his agile spring ?  
His nostrils, glory rayed, snort terrors forth ;  
He paws the valley with exultant strength ;  
He rushes on to meet the armèd foe ;  
    He mocks at fear ;  
    He cannot be appalled ;  
Nor will he from the sword, unsheathed, turn back !  
    With pendant quiver rattling on his flanks,  
    With glittering spear,  
    And with emblazoned shield,  
Space disappears before his furious charge !  
    He frets impatient for the bugle's note,  
He saith amongst the trumpets, ' Ah ! ' ' Aha !  
    Far off he smells the battle ;  
    Far perceives,—  
The thunders of the captains and the shouts !

Doth the hawk fly by skill derived from thee,  
Or at thy bidding southward stretch her wings ?  
Doth the fierce eagle mount at thy command,  
And make her nest aloft, on some high crag,  
    Or on some inaccessible steep rock ?  
    See there she dwells ;  
    Yea ! there she makes her home ;  
    Thence watches for her prey,  
Which her keen eye sights far,— far off ;  
    Her young then feast on blood,  
For where the slain are, there will she be found !

Behold now Behemoth,  
Which eateth grass e'en as the ox,  
And which I made with thee !



How great the strength which his deep loins possess  
 How vast the force centered round his groins ;  
 How firmly bound the sinews of his thighs ;  
 His tail, he sways like some stout cedar tree ;  
 His tusks are strong, e'en as if made of brass,  
 And his huge bones as blent from iron bars !  
 He is the chief of all the works of God,  
 Right lordly bearer of the Almighty's sword !

Both mountain ranges,  
 And the spreading plains where cattle careless stray,  
 Provide him food.

Beneath the lotus in the shade he rests,  
 Or in the reedy coverts of the fens,  
 At home, alike, beneath the shady grove,  
 Or 'mid the willows bordering the brook.  
 He's not to be disturbed by raging streams,  
 And views, e'en Jordan's swelling flood unmoved ;  
 Can he be taken open-eyed, I ask,  
 Or led a captive by his cord-pierced nose ?

CAP. XLI.

Can'st with a hook draw out Leviathan,  
 Or with a thong, ingenious, bind his tongue ;  
 Pray can'st thou pass a snaffle through his snout,  
 Or, with a hedge-stake, can'st thou bore his jaws ?  
 Will he submissive seek to do thy will,  
 Or will he whinny softly at thy call ;  
 Will he a lasting cov'nant make with thee,  
 Or can'st thou coax him o'er to be thy slave ?  
 As some tame bird wilt thou make game with him,  
 Or wilt thou deck him for thy maiden's sport ?  
 Wilt thou and thy companions feast on him,  
 Or wilt thou at the shambles part his joints ;

With barbèd irons can'st thou fill his skin,  
Or with a fish-spear can'st thou pierce his skull ?  
If thou attemptest this, strike home at once,  
The first blow miss'd, all hope of him is vain :  
For is there one alive, with nerve enough,  
To meet unparalys'd his wrathful glare ?  
But if none dare, him, as their foe to meet,—

Who will be able before Me to stand ;

Who can stay Me ;

To whom need I account ?

For all that's under the whole heav'n is mine !

I'm not to be confounded at his limbs,  
Nor at the strength and structure of his frame.  
Pray who will show the way to harness him,  
Or who will force the doors of his grim face,  
All studded round with teeth—so terrible ?  
He prides himself upon his scales—impervious,  
Fast lock'd together, and all closely seal'd,  
Each close to each, no air can come between,  
For, each to each, are all so closely bound,  
And held so fast, they can't be drawn apart !  
His snort gives out a flash of sparkling light ;  
His eyes are like the eyelids of the morn ;  
Like burning lamps they glow above his jaws,  
Whilst out of them dart sparks of living fire !

Smoke issues from his nostrils,

Like the smoke,

That from a cauldron rises,

When it seethes.

His breath enkindles coals ;

Devouring flame out of his mouth proceeds,

And in his neck, a strength resides,

Not to be overmatch'd :  
 Destruction leaps before him mad for joy ;  
 The muscles of his flesh are interlaced,  
 So firmly bound, they cannot be undone ;  
 His heart is like a stone of closest grain,  
 Yea ! like the nether millstone, gritty hard.  
 When he is roused the mighty are afraid,  
 And, terror-stricken, take themselves to flight.  
 The sword makes no impression on his flanks,  
 Nor spear, nor, dart upon his coat of mail ;—  
     Iron he counts as straw,  
     As touchwood, brass ;  
 The close-shot arrow cannot make him flee ;  
 Slung stones, to him, are as mere wind-toss'd motes ;  
 He thinks no more of darts than broken reeds ;  
 The shaking of the spear he treats with scorn ;  
 He lies at ease upon the jutting rock,  
 Or on the mud bank leaves his sharp impress ;  
 He makes the deep to boil as some huge pot,  
 And gives a musky odour to whole seas ;  
 A lambent sheen so silvers o'er his wake,  
 That one would think the deep to be grown hoar !  
     On earth,—  
     His like is nowhere to be found,  
     A creature altogether void of fear,  
     Alike,  
     The terror of all lofty ones,  
 And king supreme o'er all the sons of pride !”

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THEN Job, replying to the Lord, thus spake ;— CAP. XLII.  
(v. 1 to 6.)

“I now acknowledge Thou can’st all things do,  
And nought can stay the intents of Thy will !

‘ Who’s this that without knowledge counsel hides ?’  
Alas ! O Lord !

I do confess, that I have spoken, in deep ignorance,  
Of things beyond my ken—too wonderful for me !

And pardon me as well in that I said ;—

‘ I will demand of Thee—straight answer me.’

For hitherto, O Lord ! I’ve heard of Thee,—

By the frail medium of report alone,—

But now, that I have seen Thee with mine eye,

Henceforth I loathe myself,

And humbly prone,—

In dust and ashes, Lord, I now repent !”



THE Lord then further answer’d Job, and said ;— CAP. XL  
(v. 1 to 14.)

“ Now it may be,  
That one who’d argue with Almighty God,  
Would teach Him too, as well !

Hence,

Let him answer, who reproveth God !”

THEN Job, replying, said unto the Lord :—

“Lo ! I am vile !  
 What shall I answer Thee ?  
 I can but lay my hand upon my mouth ;  
 I've said already all that I can say ;  
 Without repeating, I can add no more !”



THEN from the whirlwind thus the Lord replied ;—

“Now, like a man, stand up and gird thy loins ;  
 For,  
 I will question thee, and answer thou !  
 ME,  
 In thy righteousness, wilt thou condemn ?—  
 Hast thou an arm, omnipotent, like God,  
 Or canst thou thunder with a voice like His ?  
 Now,  
 Deck thyself with pow'r and Majesty ;  
 With glory now, and beauty, robe thyself !  
 Behold the proud,—  
 Abase them ev'ry one ;  
 Yea ! circumvent them all, and bring them low ;  
 Trample the wicked down e'en in their homes ;  
 Huddle them altogether in the dust,  
 And bind their faces in the secret grave !  
 Then,  
 I may possibly confess to thee,

That,  
By thine own right hand,  
Thou may'st be sav'd !”

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AND so it was,— CAP XLII  
(v. 7 to end)  
That after that the Lord had spoken thus to Job,  
The Lord then said to Eliphaz, the Temanite :—

“ My wrath is kindled against thee,  
And thy two friends,  
In that ye have not spoken right of Me,  
Not having spoken as my servant Job !  
Therefore,  
Now seven bullocks take,  
And seven rams,  
And forthwith go ye to my servant Job,  
And a burnt-off'ring offer for yourselves ;  
And then, my servant Job shall pray for you,  
For him will I accept ;  
E'en lest, I now, according to your folly deal with you,  
In that ye have not spoken right of Me,  
Not having spoken as my servant Job !”

So Eliphaz,  
The Prince of Tema,  
Went,  
With Bildad,  
Chief of ancient Shuah's tribe  
And Zophar,

Lord of rock-bound Naamah,  
 And did according as the Lord had said.  
 The Lord his God also accepted Job,  
 And the captivity of Job He turn'd,  
 When for his friends he pray'd.

Also,  
 The Lord bestow'd on Job,  
 Twice what he had before !

Then all Job's brethren and his sisters came,  
 And they of his acquaintance formerly,  
 And in his house did all eat bread with him ;  
 And they bemoan'd with him,  
 O'er all the ills the Lord had brought on him,  
 And him consoled ;

And each a piece of money gave to him,  
 And ev'ry one an earring, too, of gold !  
 So the Lord bless'd the latter end of Job,  
 Much more than the beginning ;

For he had,  
 Six thousand camels,  
 Fourteen thousand sheep,  
 A thousand yoke of stalwart oxen too,  
 And a full thousand of she-asses sleek !  
 And there were born unto him seven sons,  
 And daughters three ;

Of whom,  
 He nam'd the first Jemima,  
 The next he nam'd Kezia,  
 And the third he nam'd Keren the Bountiful !  
 And none in all the land were found so fair,

As Job's three daughters !

And,

An inheritance he gave to them amongst their brethren.

And after this,

Job liv'd an hundred years and forty,

And his sons, and grandsons saw,

Until his generations number'd four !

So, being old, and full of years, Job died !



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