

# THE BOOK OF JOB AND ITS MEANING <sup>1</sup>

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**T**HAT the book of Job is the supreme literary masterpiece in the Old Testament and one of the greatest creations of the world's literature is generally agreed.<sup>2</sup> An American Jewish scholar says: "Of the masterpieces which time has handed down, of the Biblical books in especial, it is the one which in every age is felt to be most modern."<sup>3</sup> Yet the most extraordinary

<sup>1</sup> A lecture delivered in the John Rylands Library on Wednesday, the 12th of February 1958. The following abbreviations are used in the notes below: *A.J.S.L.* = *American Journal of Semitic Languages*; *A.T.O.T.* = H. Gressmann, *Altorientalische Texte und Bilder zum Alten Testament*; *A.T.R.* = *Anglican Theological Review*; *B.A.S.O.R.* = *Bulletin of the American Schools of Oriental Research*; *D.B.* = Hastings's *Dictionary of the Bible*; *E.B.* = *Encyclopaedia Biblica*; *E.T.* = *Expository Times*; *F.u.F.* = *Forschungen und Fortschritte*; *H.T.R.* = *Harvard Theological Review*; *I.B.* = *Interpreter's Bible*; *J.B.L.* = *Journal of Biblical Literature*; *J.C.S.* = *Journal of Cuneiform Studies*; *J.E.* = *Jewish Encyclopedia*; *J.E.O.L.* = *Jaarbericht Ex Oriente Lux*; *J.R.* = *Journal of Religion*; *K.A.R.* = E. Ebeling, *Keilschrifttexte aus Assur religiösen Inhalts*; *K.A.T.* = Schrader, *Die Keilinschriften und das Alte Testament* (3rd edn., ed. by H. Zimmern and H. Winckler); *M.V.A.G.* = *Mitteilungen der Vorderasiatischen Gesellschaft*; *O.T.M.S.* = H. H. Rowley (ed. by), *The Old Testament and Modern Study*; *O.T.S.* = *Oudtestamentische Studiën*; *P.E.F.Q.S.* = *Palestine Exploration Fund Quarterly Statement*; *P.G.* = Migne, *Patrologia Graeca*; *P.S.B.A.* = *Proceedings of the Society of Biblical Archaeology*; *R.B.* = *Revue Biblique*; *R.G.G.* = *Die Religion in Geschichte und Gegenwart*; *R.H.P.R.* = *Revue d'Histoire et de Philosophie Religieuses*; *R.H.R.* = *Revue de l'Histoire des Religions*; *S.A.T.* = *Die Schriften des Alten Testaments in Auswahl*; *S.D.B.* = Pirot's *Supplement au Dictionnaire de la Bible*; *T.S.K.* = *Theologische Studien und Kritiken*; *Th.R.* = *Theologische Rundschau*; *V.T.* = *Vetus Testamentum*; *V.T. Supplements* = *Supplements to Vetus Testamentum*; *Z.A.W.* = *Zeitschrift für die alttestamentliche Wissenschaft*; *Z.D.M.G.* = *Zeitschrift der Deutschen Morgenländischen Gesellschaft*.

<sup>2</sup> Carlyle's words are often quoted: "one of the grandest things ever written with pen. . . . There is nothing written, I think, in the Bible or out of it, of equal literary merit" (*On Heroes*, Lecture 2, The New Universal Library edition, p. 67). Cf. also J. A. Froude, *The Book of Job*, 1854, p. 3: "Towering up alone, far away above all the poetry of the world." C. F. Kent (*The Growth and Contents of the O.T.*, 1926, p. 285) calls it "The Matterhorn of the Old Testament".

<sup>3</sup> Cf. M. Bittenwieser, *The Book of Job*, 1922, p. 3. Similarly T. H. Robinson, *Job and his Friends*, 1954, p. 124. Cf. also P. Humbert, *V.T. Supplements*, iii (Rowley Festschrift), 1955, 150 ff.

variety of view continues to be held about this book, and its many problems have found no agreed solution.<sup>1</sup> In the present lecture I have no intention to add to their number, or to review all the opinions that have been held. It is my purpose rather to make clear the nature of the critical problems that arise and to indicate which of the many solutions seems to me most likely to be right, and then to state my view of the significance of the book.

Much ink has been wasted in discussing the precise literary category into which it falls, and whether it is epic or drama.<sup>2</sup> It has been compared with the work of Homer,<sup>3</sup> or with the creations of the Greek dramatists,<sup>4</sup> Aeschylus,<sup>5</sup> Sophocles,<sup>6</sup> and Euripides,<sup>7</sup> or with the Dialogues of Plato.<sup>8</sup> In truth it is not to be classed with any of these. In the words of A. S. Peake "it is

<sup>1</sup> For a full review of recent literature on Job, cf. C. Kuhl, *Th.R.*, N.F., xxi (1953), 163 ff., 257 ff.

<sup>2</sup> Theodore Beza (*Job Expounded*, 1589?, Preface, pp. 3 ff.) regarded the book as a tragedy.

<sup>3</sup> Cf. J. Neyrand, *Etudes*, clxxiii (1922), 124 ff. W. M. L. de Wette cites some older writers who compared Job with the Homeric epics (*Introduction to the Old Testament*, Eng. trans. by T. Parker, ii (1843), 556 n.), but adds that this is altogether absurd. The works referred to are J. H. Stuss, *De Epopoeia Iobaea*, 1753; A. H. H. Lichtenstein, *Num liber Jobi cum Odyssea Homeri comparari possit?* 1773; C. D. Ilgen, *Iobi antiquissimi carminis hebraici natura atque virtutes*, 1789, and J. C. W. Augusti, *Grundriss einer historisch-kritischen Einleitung in's A.T.*, 1827, pp. 264, 266.

<sup>4</sup> Theodore of Mopsuestia held that it was modelled on the Greek dramas. Cf. the condemnation of his views by the Council of Constantinople, in Migne, *P.G.* lxxvi (1864), 697 f.

<sup>5</sup> Cf. M. Jastrow, *The Book of Job*, 1920, pp. 185 ff.; J. J. Slotki, *E.T.* xxxix (1927-8), 131 ff.; J. Lindblom, in *ΔΡΑΜΜΑ*, Martino P. Nilsson dedicatum (1939), pp. 280 ff.; H. G. May, *A.T.R.* xxxiv (1952), 240 ff.

<sup>6</sup> Cf. R. Lowth, *Lectures on the Sacred Poetry of the Hebrews*, Eng. trans. by G. Gregory, 1847, pp. 372 ff., esp. p. 380 for the rejection of this view.

<sup>7</sup> Cf. H. M. Kallen, *The Book of Job as a Greek Tragedy Restored*, 1918. For the severe review of this book by C. G. Montefiore, cf. *H.T.R.* xii (1919), 219 ff.

<sup>8</sup> Cf. K. Fries, *Das philosophische Gespräch von Hiob bis Plato*, 1904; O. Holtzmann, in B. Stade, *Geschichte des Volkes Israel*, ii (1888), 351. G. B. Gray (in Driver-Gray, *The Book of Job*, 1921, p. xxiv) says: "Between the dialogue of Job, consisting exclusively of long set speeches in poetical form, and the prose dialogues of Plato, with their closely knit analytical argument carried on by means of much quickly responsive conversation, the difference is so great that the probability that the Hebrew writer was influenced by those Greek literary models is so slight as to be negligible."

itself".<sup>1</sup> The genius of the author gave it its unique literary form as the means of expressing his profound message.

Before that message can be understood, however, it is necessary to examine the contents of the book, and to decide how far they derive from the author, or how far they existed before his time or have been added later. The general outline of the book is familiar. There is first of all a prose Prologue, in which Job is presented as a man of piety and of utter integrity of character, as well as a man of great prosperity. His piety is maliciously represented by the Satan as mere self-interest, an investment that yields high dividends in his prosperity. Permission is given by God to put him to the test, and by a series of swift blows he is bereft of his family and his possessions, but without forfeiting his integrity of character. When God twits the Satan with his discomfiture, his cynicism rises to the occasion and he is given permission to carry the test further and smite the person of Job himself. With a zest which might have graced a better cause,<sup>2</sup> he struck Job with a phenomenal and painful disease, which medical men have tried to identify by the varied symptoms which are mentioned in the course of the book.<sup>3</sup> It is commonly, though not universally, identified as some form of elephantiasis.<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Cf. *Job* (Century Bible), p. 45. R. H. Pfeiffer (*Introduction to the O.T.*, 1941, p. 684) well observes: "All general classifications fail to do justice to the overflowing abundance of its forms, moods, and thoughts: it is not exclusively lyric, nor epic, nor dramatic, nor didactic or reflective, unless the poem is cut down to fit a particular category. Even the more comprehensive characterizations, such as that of Friedr. Delitzsch (*Das Buch Hiob*, 1902, p. 15), 'a poem with dramatic movement and essential didactic tendency', or better still that of J. G. von Herder (*Vom Geist der Ebräischen Poesie*, i, 148), 'an epopee of mankind, a theodicy of God', fail to do justice to the scope of the work."

<sup>2</sup> J. F. Genung, *The Hebrew Literature of Wisdom in the Light of To-day*, 1906, p. 174, says: "He does indeed handle Job with exceeding severity; not, however, so much in the spirit which delights in unmotivated cruelty, as in the spirit of vivisection for scientific purposes."

<sup>3</sup> Cf. ii. 7 (inflamed eruptions), ii. 8 (violent itching), ii. 12 (shocking change of appearance), vii. 5 (maggots in the ulcers; on this verse cf. G. R. Driver, in *V.T. Supplements* iii (Rowley Festschrift), 1955, 73), vii. 14 (terrifying dreams), xvi. 16 (weeping eyes and loss of sight), xix. 17 (bad breath), xix. 20 (emaciation), xxx. 17 (erosion of the bones), xxx. 30 (blackening and falling off of the skin).

<sup>4</sup> Cf. the long dissertation on Job's disease which stands in the introduction to the commentary of A. Calmet (*Commentaire littéral sur tous les livres de l'A. et du N.T.*, iii (1724), 608-13). Job's malady is usually identified with "black leprosy"

In fact, it is as futile to try to give a scientific name to the disease as it is to linger over the theological problem of the presence of the Satan at the court of God. The author is merely setting the stage, and in his thought the disease of Job is the most terrible he can conceive.<sup>1</sup> Yet even this Job accepts with patience.

Then three friends arrive from afar to comfort him. Again it is useless to speculate how they had heard in their widely separated habitations of Job's affliction, or how they had contrived to arrive together. The artistry of the author was not concerned with such trivialities. For several days the friends sit beside Job, offering him no more than silent sympathy. Then Job breaks into a soliloquy, in which he bemoans his lot and laments that he was ever born. Each of the friends then speaks in turn, reproaching him with steadily increasing sharpness, and being answered one by one by Job. This is followed by a second cycle of speeches, and then by a third, which breaks down, however, before it reaches its end. All of these speeches are in superb poetry. Sometimes the friends reproach Job for the wild things he says in his distress, and Job bitingly replies that it is easy for the spectator to maintain his calm. But behind their speeches is the assumption that Job had brought his troubles on himself by some concealed wickedness, while Job repudiates such an idea with increasing passion. It is not that Job claims to

or tubercular leprosy. But E. Robin (in Pirot-Clamer, *La Sainte Bible*, iv (1949), 720) has some doubt about this, and Driver and Gray observe (op. cit. p. 24): "elephantiasis develops slowly . . . ; but the narrative almost certainly intends us to understand that Job was immediately smitten with intensely painful and loathsome symptoms, attacking every part of his body". As C. J. Ball (*The Book of Job*, 1922, p. 114) says: "There seems no reason why, if leprosy were meant, a popular story, which makes no pretence to poetical diction, should have preferred to describe this well-known scourge of the East by an ambiguous expression, instead of using the ordinary word." Dr. A. Macalister (in Hastings's *D.B.* iii (1900), 329 f.) identifies it with the Oriental sore, or Biskra button, while E. W. G. Masterman (*P.E.F.Q.S.* 1 (1918), 168) thinks this highly improbable and suggests that it was most probably "a very extensive erythema". Amongst other suggestions we may note that of G. N. Münch (*Die Zazaath (Lepra) der hebräischen Bibel* (Dermatologische Studien, No. 16), 1893, p. 143), that Job's complaint was chronic eczema. S. Terrien (*I.B.* iii (1954), 920) says a case might be made for the skin disorder known as *pemphigus foliaceus*.

<sup>1</sup> Cf. Driver and Gray, op. cit. pp. 24 f.: "the writer may or may not have had a single disease in mind throughout."

have been perfect ; what he maintains is that he has not been so heinous a sinner as to deserve such an unparalleled misfortune. The friends maintain the righteousness of God and recommend Job to repent of his sin and submit himself to God, when there may be hope of restoration for him. Stung by their reproaches he impugns the righteousness of God, but shares with the friends the thought that merit and fortune ought to be matched. At the same time he appeals to God to vindicate him before it is too late. He thus directs his appeal to God's better self, and turns from the God of his present experience to the God he has hitherto known. For both Job and his friends are persuaded that his misfortunes come from God.

Next we have chapter xxviii, a magnificent poem on the elusiveness of wisdom, which man despite all his achievements can never find for himself, leading up to the declaration that God alone knows where it is to be found, and that in reverence towards Him and obedience to His will man may attain it.

Following this we have Job's final soliloquy, in which he appeals again to God to answer him. Before this cry finds its response, however, a new person appears abruptly on the scene. This is Elihu, of whose appearance we are given no explanation. He makes four speeches one after the other, to none of which Job offers an answer, and then he vanishes from the scene as suddenly as he appeared. Now, however, God appears and answers Job in a speech from the whirlwind. He offers no explanation of Job's misfortunes, but parades before him in swift succession some of the wonders of creation which are beyond Job's understanding. At the end Job bows in humble submission before God and says he will complain no more. Yet barely has he opened his mouth when God breaks in and opens up on him again, this time mainly with two long descriptions of the monsters Behemoth and Leviathan. After Job has bowed in submission, this comes, as Peake observed, perilously near nagging.<sup>1</sup> Moreover, it must be confessed that this second divine speech does not equal in brilliance the first. When it is finished, Job resumes his speech of submission, and says : " I had heard of thee by the hearing of the ear ; But now mine eye

<sup>1</sup> Cf. *Job* (Century Bible), p. 332.

seeth thee, Wherefore I abhor myself, and repent in dust and ashes.”<sup>1</sup> This is the close of the poetical part of the book.

Finally we have a prose Epilogue, in which God condemns the three friends of Job and declares Job in the right. The friends are bidden to offer a sacrifice and to ask Job to pray for them ; and when he prays for his friends, he is accepted by God. His long trial is over, and his fortunes are restored and he lives happily ever after.

We need not spend time discussing whether the book can be read as literal history. Some older writers supposed that every speech was a true transcript of the words used in the debate.<sup>2</sup> Luther, while acknowledging its broad historicity was not prepared to accept it in detail as exact history.<sup>3</sup> So early as the fourth century A.D., Theodore of Mopsuestia recognized the existence of Job, but regarded this book as a slanderous fiction which ought not to be in the sacred Canon.<sup>4</sup> Today the view is general that Job is the name of an ancient worthy, and that there was a historical person behind the book, but that the book as we

<sup>1</sup> Job xlii. 5 f.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. F. Spanheim, *Opera*, ii (1703), 1 ff. ; A. Schultens, *Liber Jobi*, i, 1737, Preface, p. 33 ; J. H. Michaelis, *Adnotationes in Hagiog. V.T. libros*, ii (1720), 5 f. ; B. Kennicott, *Remarks on Select Passages in the O.T.*, 1787, p. 153 ; S. Lee, *The Book of the Patriarch Job*, 1837, pp. 6 ff.

<sup>3</sup> Cf. the passage cited by E. W. Hengstenberg, *Commentary on Ecclesiastes with other Treatises*, Eng. trans. by D. W. Simon, 1860, p. 317. Hengstenberg goes beyond Luther and denies that Job ever existed. He says : “ It was a great mistake when some, in order to do honour to the Scriptures, deemed themselves compelled to ascribe a purely historical character to this book ” (pp. 316 f.). He adds : “ If we regard him as an actual historical personage, we shift the boundary line separating the heathen world from the Church of God, and pronounce the redemptive means set up by God superfluous ” (p. 317). C. F. Keil (*Lehrbuch der historisch-kritischen Einleitung in die Schriften des A.Ts.*, 1873, pp. 383 f.) describes the book of Job as “ eine mit poetischer Freiheit durchgeführte Bearbeitung einer alten Sage ”.

<sup>4</sup> Theodore was condemned in A.D. 553 for holding these views. Cf. Migne, *P.G.* lxxvi (1864), 697 f. Already in the Babylonian Talmud (Baba Bathra, 15a) we find the view recorded that Job never lived and was never created, but was merely a parable (*māshāl*), and this view was adopted by Maimonides (cf. *Guide of the Perplexed*, III, xxii, Eng. trans. by M. Friedländer, iii (1885), 93). Cf. also Genesis Rabba, 57 end, where amongst the many Rabbinic speculations as to the period when Job lived, we find the view recorded that he never existed.

have it is the artistic creation of the author, who used the ancient figure of Job as the vehicle for his message.<sup>1</sup>

The first of the critical problems which confront us is that of the Elihu speeches. What part do they play in the plan of the book? Elihu appears, and speaks, and vanishes. No notice is taken of him by Job or by God, and in the Epilogue God commends Job and condemns Eliphaz, Bildad, and Zophar, but completely ignores Elihu. The Elihu speeches could therefore be dropped from the book without being missed, and without affecting its structure. On the other hand, the Elihu speeches pre-suppose the rest of the book, and indeed often pick up arguments from the speeches that precede. This strongly suggests that they do not belong to the original book and that they have been added afterwards, either by the original author<sup>2</sup> or by another.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Cf. H. Rongy, *Revue Ecclésiastique de Liège*, xxv (1933), 171: "L'auteur génial de Job a pu emprunter son héros à la tradition; mais il n'a pas eu la naïveté de prendre pour réels ses beaux récits. Il les a imaginés et arrangés pour introduire son autre fiction du dialogue poétique."

<sup>2</sup> So A. Kamphausen, *T.S.K.* xxxvi (1863), 810, and in Bunsen's *Bibelwerk*, i, iii (1865), 494; A. Merx, *Das Gedicht von Hiob*, 1871, pp. xvii, lxxxvii; E. Sellin, *Das Problem des Hiobbuches*, 1919, p. 28; G. H. Box, *Judaism in the Greek Period*, 1932, p. 123; R. Gordis, *Judaism*, iv (1955), 206; H. Junker, *Das Buch Job (Echter Bibel)*, 1951, p. 7. Cf. R. Cornely, *Introductionis Compendium*, i, 10th edn., rev. by A. Merk, 1929, pp. 467 f. J. Pedersen, *Israel I-II*, 1926, p. 531, says: "That the Elihu speeches do not form part of the original poem is probable for purely formal reasons; but as to their contents they fit so well into the general scheme that they are probably a rough draft made by the poet himself." On the other hand W. O. E. Oesterley and T. H. Robinson (*Introduction to the Books of the O.T.*, 1934, p. 174) feel these speeches would have been repudiated by the original poet. So also A. Lods, *Introduction à la littérature hébraïque et juive*, 1950, p. 677. E. König (*Das Buch Hiob*, 1929, p. 470) pronounces the view that these speeches were added by the author "eine unnatürliche Annahme".

<sup>3</sup> Some writers have analysed the Elihu speeches into the work of more than one hand. So Helen H. Nichols, *A.J.S.L.* xxvii (1910-11), 97 ff. (cf. G. A. Barton, *J.B.L.* xxx (1911), 68), and M. Jastrow, *op. cit.* pp. 77 ff. W. A. Irwin, *J.R.* xvii (1937), 36 ff., prefers Jastrow's analysis to that of Miss Nichols, and regards the Elihu speeches as a series of comments on the dialogue by a number of writers between 400 and 100 B.C. A. Lods, *Histoire de la littérature hébraïque et juive*, 1950, p. 683, sharply rejects such views, saying: "C'est, nous semble-t-il, discréditer les méthodes de la critique que de statuer ainsi, comme à plaisir, et contre toute vraisemblance, une multitude d'auteurs ayant même style et exprimant des idées toutes voisines, et cela pour rendre compte de quelques vétilles de rédaction qui peuvent s'expliquer autrement."

This conclusion is reinforced by considerations of style. S. R. Driver characterized the style of the Elihu speeches as "prolix, laboured, and sometimes tautologous", and noted that "the power and brilliancy which are so conspicuous in the poem generally are sensibly missing".<sup>1</sup> Similarly Bittenwieser says the style here is "pompous and diffuse, with much empty repetition, in marked contrast to the Job dialogues, which are meaty, compact, and concise. Of the seventy-two verses which make up the interpolation, thirty, or almost half, are taken up with a tiresome and vainglorious introduction."<sup>2</sup>

While it is the widely held view that these speeches are a later interpolation,<sup>3</sup> a few scholars of distinction have not adopted it. Budde<sup>4</sup> and Cornill<sup>5</sup> both defended the authenticity of the Elihu speeches and maintained that in them we have the climax

<sup>1</sup> Cf. *Introduction to the Literature of the Old Testament*, 9th edn., 1913, p. 429. With this compare the judgement of J. T. Marshall, *Job and his Comforters*, p. 6, where the Elihu speeches are said to be "on an immeasurably higher plane than the Dialogue". For a careful study of the language and style of the Elihu speeches, cf. Driver-Gray, *op. cit.* pp. xli ff., and W. E. Staples, *The Speeches of Elihu* (University of Toronto Studies, Philological Series, No. 8), 1925, pp. 19 ff. J. Herz, *Wissenschaftliche Zeitschrift der Karl-Marx-Universität Leipzig*, iii (1953-4), 107 ff., finds the Elihu speeches to be distinct from the dialogue on stylistic grounds.

<sup>2</sup> *Op. cit.* p. 85.

<sup>3</sup> This view is found already in J. G. Eichhorn, *Einleitung in das A.T.*, 3rd edn., iii (1803), 597 f., and W. M. L. de Wette, *op. cit.* pp. 558 ff. Amongst recent Roman Catholic authors who have followed this view are to be found A. van Hoonacker (*R.B.* xii (1903), 161 ff.), P. Dhorme (*op. cit.* pp. lxxvii ff.), J. Goettsberger (*Einleitung in das A.T.*, 1928, p. 227), E. J. Kissane (*The Book of Job*, 1939, p. xl), E. F. Sutcliffe (*A Catholic Commentary on Holy Scripture*, 1953, p. 418). It is also shared by so conservative a writer as E. König, *op. cit.* pp. 466 ff. N. H. Tur-Sinai (*The Book of Job*, 1957, pp. xxxviii f.) expresses the view that whereas most of the book was composed in Aramaic and translated into Hebrew, the Elihu speeches were composed in Hebrew by a disciple of Ezekiel.

<sup>4</sup> Cf. *Beiträge zur Kritik des Buches Hiob*, 1876, pp. 65 ff., and *Das Buch Hiob*, 2nd edn., 1913, pp. xxiv ff. This view was quite common amongst older writers, after the rejection of the Elihu speeches had been advocated; cf. e.g. E. F. C. Rosenmüller, *Scholia in V.T.*, Pars V, 1806, 756 ff., F. W. C. Umbreit, *Das Buch Hiob*, 1832, pp. xxv ff. n., J. G. Stickel, *Das Buch Hiob*, 1842, pp. 224 ff.; G. Wildeboer, *Die Literatur des A.Ts.*, German trans. by F. Risch, 1905, pp. 380 f., 382 ff.

<sup>5</sup> Cf. *Introduction to the Canonical Books of the O.T.*, Eng. trans. by G. H. Box, 1907, pp. 426 ff.



of the book.<sup>1</sup> Here alone, they said, does the author offer a solution of the problem of suffering, with which the book deals ; and surely he must have had some solution to offer.<sup>2</sup> But Elihu's solution is that suffering is disciplinary, to purge the heart of pride, which was Job's sin.<sup>3</sup> Unhappily for this view, the reason for Job's suffering was not that his heart might be purged of pride. The reader is clearly told in the Prologue that the reason for Job's suffering was the cynical accusation of the Satan. Yahweh had already declared him to be a man of piety and of true wholeness of character. It is true that in the argument with his friends Job exposes himself to the charge of self-righteousness and spiritual pride by the vehemence of his maintenance of his innocence. But this can offer no explanation of his sufferings, since it was something to which he gave way after his misfortunes came upon him. He was afflicted, as the reader is told quite clearly in the Prologue, not for his chastening, but to vindicate God's trust in him. It has been suggested that God lightly abandoned Job to the tender mercies of the Satan.<sup>4</sup> It is improbable that this is what the author meant to convey, and more likely that in his thought Job was supremely honoured by God, in that God had staked Himself on his unfailing integrity. Nor did Job let God down. For despite all his complaint, Job never for one moment regrets his integrity of character.<sup>5</sup> Hence the

<sup>1</sup> Other recent writers who retain the Elihu speeches for the original book are W. S. Bruce, *The Wisdom Literature of the O.T.*, 1928, pp. 22 f. ; Kallen, *op. cit.* pp. 31 ff. ; L. Dennefeld, *Introduction à l'A.T.*, 1935, p. 121, and *R.B.* xlvi (1939), 163 ff. ; P. Szczygiel, *Das Buch Job*, 1931, pp. 24 ff. ; B. D. Eerdmans, *Studies in Job*, 1939, pp. 16 f. ; J. H. Kroeze, *O.T.S.* ii (1943), 156 ff. ; A. M. Dubarle, *Les Sages d'Israël*, 1946, pp. 84 ff. ; J. E. Steinmueller, *A Companion to Scripture Studies*, ii (2nd edn.), 1944, 167 ; P. Humbert, *V.T. Supplements* iii (Rowley Festschrift, 1955), 150.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. Cornill, *op. cit.* p. 426. Pedersen, *op. cit.* p. 531, observes : " It is strange that the interpreters should have taken these speeches as the valid expression of the views of the author, though the big words are clearly charged with irony ; if so, the speeches of the friends would also have to be taken as the serious opinion of the author."

<sup>3</sup> This thought is already found in the first speech of Eliphaz, Job v. 17 ff.

<sup>4</sup> Cf. B. Duhm, *Das Buch Hiob*, 1897, p. 8 ; " Mit einer Schnelligkeit und Kaltblütigkeit . . . geht Jahwe auf die Anregung des Satans ein."

<sup>5</sup> Cf. Gray, in Driver-Gray, *op. cit.* p. lv : " Job nowhere regrets his previous service of God, and never demands the restoration of the previous rewards ; what he does seek is God Himself, God unchanged, still his friend—on his side,

solution of Elihu, whatever may be said of its spiritual value, is irrelevant to the book. If the author had a solution to offer, it must be presumed that it was relevant to the situation he had himself created. Moreover, if the Elihu speeches were the climax of the work, the author might have been expected to integrate Elihu into his plan, to introduce him to his readers, or even to let him be commended by God in the Epilogue. Yet, strangely enough, it is Job who is commended in the Epilogue, yet who is sharply rebuked by Elihu. It is surely incredible that the author of the Elihu speeches can have composed the Epilogue. We shall, however, have to consider below the view that the Prologue or the Epilogue or both come from a hand other than the author's.<sup>1</sup>

The view has been taken that the book once ended with the Elihu speeches, and the speeches of God and the consequent submission of Job, together with the Epilogue, were all additions.<sup>2</sup> This is hard to believe. For in that case the book lacks plan and finish, and the brilliant creator of the dialogue must have been an incompetent architect. The handing over of Job to the Satan is the last word of God, who is not remotely interested in the fate of the man to whose piety He had paid such tribute, and Job's appeal to God is without response. Job is left in the Satan's hand, and a solution irrelevant to the problem is all the reader is left with. Nor is it clear how it can be supposed that a later writer, with the Elihu speeches before him, added the Epilogue

unestranged from him, and not, as the theory assures him He has now become, his enemy."

<sup>1</sup> This is not, however, the view of those who retain the Elihu speeches. Cornill says: "Without the Prologue the whole of the following speeches would remain suspended in the air, the reader would be entirely at a loss as to how he ought to take Job's constant asseverations of innocence, and might even at last feel tempted to side with the friends against Job" (op. cit. p. 423). He also regards the Epilogue as indispensable to the book (ibid.).

<sup>2</sup> A. van Hoonacker, *R.B.* xii (1903), 165, suggested that the book may have ended with chapter xxxi, thus rejecting the Elihu speeches, the divine speeches and the Epilogue. W. A. Irwin, *J.R.* xvii (1937), 45 f., argued that the divine speeches were added after the Elihu speeches, which were themselves a later addition to the original work. L. W. Batten, *A.T.R.* xv (1933), 126 f., supposed that originally all that stood after chapter xxxi was xlii. 7-9, which he believed to be older than the Prologue, while xlii. 12-17 he thought to be closely related to the Prologue.

without referring to Elihu. It would seem wiser, with most scholars, to let Elihu go and to credit the author with more wholeness of purpose and plan.

The next serious problem is the relation of the prose Prologue and Epilogue to the poetic dialogue.<sup>1</sup> Here various views have been adopted. Some have supposed that the Prologue and Epilogue are older than the dialogue, and that the author took them over from some existing literary source, and composed the dialogue to wrestle with his problem.<sup>2</sup> Others have held that while there was an older popular story of an ancient worthy who was suddenly smitten with spectacular misfortune, the author of our book composed the Prologue and Epilogue as the setting for the dialogue.<sup>3</sup> Yet others have held that the Prologue and Epilogue are a later addition to the book, and that the dialogue preceded them.<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1</sup> On this question cf. G. Fohrer, *V.T.* vi (1956), 249 ff.

<sup>2</sup> So J. Wellhausen, *Jahrbücher für deutsche Theologie*, xvi (1871), 555; K. Budde, *Das Buch Hiob*, pp. xiii f.; M. Vernes, *R.H.R.* i (1880), 232; T. K. Cheyne, *Job and Solomon*, 1887, pp. 66 f., and *E.B.* ii (1901), 2467 f.; D. B. Macdonald, *J.B.L.* xiv (1895), 63 ff., and *A.J.S.L.* xiv (1897-8), 137 ff.; F. Delitzsch, *Das Buch Hiob*, 1902, p. 13; B. Duhm, op. cit. pp. vii f.; C. Siegfried, *J.E.* vii (1907), 195; P. Volz, *S.A.T.* III, ii (1911), 2; C. Steuernagel, *Einleitung in das A.T.*, 1912, p. 694; L. Gautier, *Introduction à l'A.T.*, 2nd edn., ii (1914), 98 f.; P. Bertie, *Le poème de Job*, 1929, p. 15; G. H. Box, op. cit. p. 120; Oesterley and Robinson, *Introduction*, p. 173; A. Lods, *La Bible du Centenaire*, iii (1947), p. xi, and *Histoire de la littérature hébraïque et juive*, 1950, 671 ff.; A. M. Dubarle, *Les Sages d'Israël*, 1946, p. 67.

<sup>3</sup> So Gray, in Driver-Gray, op. cit. p. xxxviii; P. Dhorme, *Le Livre de Job*, 1926, p. lxxvii; H. Ranston, *The O.T. Wisdom Books and their Teaching*, 1930, pp. 114, 172; J. E. McFadyen, *Introduction to the O.T.*, 1932, p. 314; G. Hölscher, *Das Buch Hiob*, 1937, p. 4; H. Wheeler Robinson, *The O.T. : its Making and Meaning*, 1937, pp. 153 f.; F. James, *Personalities of the O.T.*, 1947, p. 194; A. Bentzen, *Introduction to the O.T.*, 2nd edn., ii (1952), p. 175 ("the postulated differences between the narrative and the dialogue are not strong enough to account for a separation").

<sup>4</sup> So A. Schultens, *Liber Jobi*, i (1737), Preface, p. 34; S. Lee, op. cit. pp. 36 f.; G. Studer, *Jahrbücher für protestantische Theologie*, i (1875), 706 ff.; K. Kautzsch, *Das sogenannte Volksbuch von Hiob*, 1900, pp. 69, 88. R. Simon, *Histoire critique du Vieux Testament*, 2nd edn., 1685, p. 30, rejected the Prologue, as also does E. König, op. cit. pp. 462 ff. On the other hand Buttenwieser retained the Prologue and rejected the Epilogue (op. cit. pp. 65, 67), and so K. Fullerton, *Z.A.W.* xlii (1924), 116 ff., and L. Finkelstein, *The Pharisees*, i (1938), 235. W. B. Stevenson, *The Poem of Job*, 1947, pp. 21 ff., holds that the poetic work once opened with Job iii. 2, and that the Prologue and Epilogue were later joined

It seems to me difficult to suppose that the Prologue and Epilogue are later than the dialogue.<sup>1</sup> For without the Prologue we have no setting for the dialogue.<sup>2</sup> We are not told who the three friends are, or what the dialogue is all about. That Job is suffering is clear from the dialogue, but that he has been a man of exemplary piety who was suddenly plunged into dire calamity and pain would not be clear to any reader. Indeed, W. B. Stevenson, who took this view of the origin of the book, denies that Job's sufferings were due to disease, and ascribes them to persecution.<sup>3</sup> Instead of finding Job to be the hero of the book, he thinks he was a rebel against God, who was given wise counsel by the friends.<sup>4</sup> In that case the Prologue and Epilogue would be completely irrelevant to the dialogue.

The dialogue surely requires some introduction,<sup>5</sup> and without it the book is a torso. On the other hand, there is no reason to suppose that it once had a different beginning and ending, but that the present Prologue and Epilogue have been substituted for them.<sup>6</sup> No trace of a different setting for the dialogue has

to it from an independent prose work, in which something else stood between the Prologue and Epilogue; cf. also Pedersen, *op. cit.* p. 531 ("there is no natural context between the poem and the prologue-epilogue, so it seems most probable that they are independent productions"). B. D. Eerdmans, *Studies in Job*, 1939, p. 5, declares the Prologue and Epilogue to be later than the dialogue.

<sup>1</sup> Cf. D. B. Macdonald, *J.B.L.* xiv (1895), 63: "Without the prologue, the poem itself would be as unintelligible as the second part of *Faust* without the first. Some introduction is absolutely necessary, and if this present prologue is a later addition, it must have been put in the place of something else that was cut away to make room for it. But of this there cannot be a fragment of proof, and it does not help in any way towards a solution of the problem of the poem." Similarly A. Lods, *La Bible du Centenaire*, iii, p. xii, says it is incredible that the Prologue was added later. Cf. S. Davidson, *Introduction to the O.T.*, ii (1863), 202; F. Bleek, *Introduction to the O.T.*, Eng. trans. by G. H. VENABLES, ii (1894), 280; C. Steuernagel, *Einleitung in das A.T.*, 1912, p. 694; and S. L. Terrien, *I.B.* iii (1954), 887.

<sup>2</sup> G. Studer, *Das Buch Hiob*, 1881, pp. 20 ff., thought chapters xxix f. were the original introduction to the poem. A. B. Davidson (*The Book of Job*, 1884, p. xxix n.) observed, with reference to Studer's view: "One of the latest writers on the book has found it necessary to amputate every limb from the poem, leaving it a mere trunk, consisting of ch. iii-xxxi, and even this trunk is so misshapen that its shoulders are found in the region of its bowels."

<sup>3</sup> Cf. *op. cit.* pp. 31 ff.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.* pp. 26, 45, 54.

<sup>5</sup> Cf. W. Baumgartner, in *O.T.M.S.*, p. 217: "How is one to conceive of the dialogue without the framework?"

<sup>6</sup> N. H. Tur-Sinai (*The Book of Job*, 1957, p. 31) holds that the present

survived, and it would be hard to invent anything more appropriate than what we now have. But even if our ingenuity could suggest something more appropriate, that would be no evidence that our invention was really a restoration of the original book.<sup>1</sup> We should need to explain why it was that our supposed introduction was replaced by something less appropriate, and how it was that the inferior so effectively ousted the superior that no trace of it has survived. Or if we should suppose that the original introduction was inferior to the present Prologue, and on that account was replaced, we should need to explain why it was that the brilliant author of the dialogue was unsuccessful in composing a suitable setting for his story.<sup>2</sup> The position here is totally unlike that in relation to the Elihu speeches, which can be omitted without affecting in any way the structure of the book.

Prologue and Epilogue are younger than the dialogue, but that they may have replaced a lost older framework.

<sup>1</sup> T. K. Cheyne, *Jewish Religious Life after the Exile*, 1898, p. 161, makes the contrary assumption, that the poetic part of the book, iii. 1-xlii. 7, has replaced a short prose section which he imaginatively reconstructs as follows: "And these three men, moved at the sight of Job's grief, broke out into lamentations, and withheld not passionate complaints of the injustice of God. They said: "Is there knowledge in the Most High? And does God judge righteous judgment? But Job was sore displeased, and reproveth them, saying, Bitter is the pain which racks me, but more bitter still are the words which ye speak. . . . And at the end of a season, God came to Eliphaz in a dream and said, My wrath is kindled against thee and thy two friends, because ye have not spoken of Me that which is right, as My servant Job has." This is approved by F. Buhl, in *Vom A.T.* (Marti Festschrift), 1925, p. 58. Cf. also D. B. Macdonald, *J.B.L.* xiv (1895), 63 ff.: "Job in the original story had taken God's part, while the friends had followed more or less implicitly the course of Job's wife in our prologue." Cf. also J. Lindblom, *La composition du livre de Job*, 1945, p. 11. This is mere modern fiction, for which no shred of evidence is, or can be, adduced. It is more profitable to seek to understand the masterpiece which has come down to us than to compose inferior works which we could devise, whose non-survival would have been so well merited. E. G. Kraeling, *Review of Religion*, x (1946), 427, says: "It seems intrinsically unlikely and unthinkable that a folktale should have introduced three visitors with no other function than to accuse the God of Job in a few words." Cf. S. Spiegel, in *Louis Ginzberg Memorial Volume*, 1945, p. 325.

<sup>2</sup> B. Duhm (*Das Buch Hiob*, 1897, p. vii) and Oesterley and Robinson (*Introduction to the Books of the O.T.*, 1934, p. 173) think the friends already figure in the older book, while P. Volz (*S.A.T.* III, ii (1911), 2 f. n.) thinks the author of the poetic part of the work added them. P. Bertie (op. cit. pp. 15, 95) thinks they were imported by the author of the dialogue later than the introduction of Job's complaint, iii, xxix-xxxii.

It is true that in the dialogue there is no reference to the explanation of Job's sufferings that has been given in the Prologue. But how could there be? Job and his friends would not need to be told of his former state or of his present misfortunes. Of the reason for his sufferings they could not, in the nature of the case, know, and as little could they guess. They had not been present in the heavenly court, and could not know that Job's sufferings were due to the Satan's cynical imputations against his single-minded piety. If there had been any reference to this in the dialogue, the author would have given himself away as a writer with little skill.

Not a few writers have charged him with contradicting in the dialogue what is said in the Prologue, and have found here an indication of a different hand.<sup>1</sup> In xix. 17 Job is thought to refer to his sons as still living, whereas in the Prologue they had all been killed.<sup>2</sup> Actually in the dialogue there are two passages which seem to recognize that Job's sons were dead (viii. 4 and xxix. 5), so that if there were a lapse in xix. 17, it would not show that the dialogue came from a different hand from the Prologue. In fact, however, the expression in xix. 17 is an unusual one if the reference is to Job's children. For the phrase used here is "the children of my womb". The reference could be to the womb of Job's wife, which might be regarded as belonging to him; but it could equally be to the womb of his mother, regarded as his because from it he emerged.<sup>3</sup> Both R.V. and R.S.V. understand the verse in the latter sense.

There are certain differences between the dialogue and its setting, however, to which appeal has been made for the view that the Prologue and Epilogue were taken over from an existing source. Notable amongst these is the fact that whereas the divine name Yahweh stands frequently in the Prologue and Epilogue, it is studiously avoided in the dialogue, where we find El thirty-three times, Eloah thirty-three times, and Shaddai

<sup>1</sup> Cf. Oesterley-Robinson, *Introduction*, p. 172: "The whole conception of religion is different." On the other hand Hölscher (op. cit. p. 4) says the differences between the poem and its framework have been greatly exaggerated.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. Duhm, op. cit. p. 100; Cheyne, *E.B.* ii. 2467.

<sup>3</sup> Cf. Buttenwieser, op. cit. pp. 24 ff. Cf. Job iii. 10, where Job says "my womb" when he means his mother's.

twenty-four times.<sup>1</sup> It is surprising that so much has been built on this. The dialogue consists of speeches put into the mouth of Job's three foreign friends and of Job in reply to them. It is not unnatural that the friends should use more general Semitic terms for God, and should not be represented as worshippers of the God of the Jews, or that Job in speaking to them should use these more general terms. Once in the dialogue we find the name Yahweh,<sup>2</sup> and it is often supposed that here the author slipped, or that a copyist has introduced the name in error.<sup>3</sup> It is to be noted, however, that even here it is on the lips of Job that we find the name and in the Prologue Job is presented as a worshipper of Yahweh. He is said to be from the land of Uz, and though this cannot be identified, it is likely that it was a foreign land, and Job was not therefore a Jew.<sup>4</sup> Nevertheless, he is declared to be one who revered Yahweh,<sup>5</sup> whereas the

<sup>1</sup> For an analysis of the occurrences of the divine names, cf. Gray, in Driver-Gray, op. cit. p. xxxv.

<sup>2</sup> Job xii. 9.

<sup>3</sup> So, e.g. Peake, op. cit. p. 135; Strahan, op. cit. p. 118; Dhorme, op. cit. p. 157. J. Steinmann, *Le livre de Job*, 1955, pp. 243 f., rejects xii. 7-10 as a gloss, and says that the presence of the name Yahweh would alone be sufficient to indicate a gloss. Ball, op. cit. p. 212, on the contrary, says: "It is surely significant that the poet . . . should here, and here only, introduce the special name of the God of Israel. In so doing he not only betrays his own nationality. He also reveals his purpose of comforting his people during a period of national calamity."

<sup>4</sup> Pfeiffer (op. cit. p. 682; cf. *Z.A.W.* xlv (N.F. iii, 1926), 17 ff.) thinks the author's thought and language are Edomite. Similarly J. Lindblom (*La composition du livre de Job*, 1945, pp. 3 ff.) thinks the original work was Edomite. Cf. Gray in Driver-Gray, op. cit. pp. xxvii ff. Dhorme (*R.B.*, N.S. viii (1911), pp. 102 ff.) connects rather with the Hauran, and so G. A. Barton, *J.B.L.* xxxi (1912), 63 ff. Cf. Gray, loc. cit. p. xxx. Eissfeldt, *Z.D.M.G.* civ (1954), 109, 116, connects Job with Şafā, though he does not exclude the possibility that the author of Job lived in Palestine (*Einleitung*, 2nd. edn., p. 578). P. Humbert (*Recherches sur les sources égyptiennes de la littérature sapientiale d'Israël*, 1929, pp. 75 ff.) thinks the home of the author was Egypt. Cf. R. Marcus, *Review of Religion*, xiii (1949), 9 ff., where, however, the author observes that Humbert is too confident about the Egyptian origin of some passages in Job (p. 9 n.). F. H. Foster, (*A.J.S.L.* xlix (1932-3), 21 ff.) argues that the work was a translation from Arabic, while J. P. Naish (*Expositor*, 9th series, iii (1925), 34 ff., 94 ff.) thinks Job was a Babylonian Jew early in the Persian period.

<sup>5</sup> The divine name Yahweh is found on the lips of Job only in the expression of resignation in i. 21. In the opening verse we are told that Job feared God, but that God is to be identified with Yahweh is apparent from i. 8, where Yahweh declares that Job is one who served Him.

friends are nowhere so represented. It should be added that in the author's rubrics introducing the speeches of Yahweh and Job's answers, the divine name is again found ; so that if we hold the Prologue and Epilogue to be older than the dialogue on this ground, we should need to suppose that these introductions to speeches stood also in the older book. We certainly cannot charge the author with inconsistency on this ground if he composed both setting and dialogue.

That there was an older tradition of a good man who suffered there is little reason to doubt, and our author probably took over this tradition to base his book on it. In the book of Ezekiel there are references to Job as a conspicuously righteous man,<sup>1</sup> and since these references almost certainly antedate the present book of Job they bear witness to an old tradition about a Job, who may well be the person around whom our author built his work.

Moreover, the theme of a righteous sufferer need not be presumed to be an original one with the author of our book. That the righteous may suffer must have been observed by men from ancient times, and the theme has figured in the literature of many countries.<sup>2</sup> Many writers have cited certain Babylonian texts,<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Ezek. xiv. 14, 20.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. my *Submission in Suffering and other Essays*, 1951, where I survey thought on this subject in many religions. Cf. also E. F. Sutcliffe, *Providence and Suffering in O. and N.T.*, 1955, pp. 1 ff. ; J. J. Stamm, *J.E.O.L.* No. 9, 1944, pp. 99 ff., and *Das Leiden des Unschuldigen in Babylon und Israel*, 1946. On Egyptian texts that have been cited, cf. Bittenwieser, op. cit. pp. 11 f. ; K. Fries, op. cit. pp. 12 ff. ; P. Humbert, *Recherches sur les sources égyptiennes de la littérature sapientale d'Israël*, 1929, pp. 75 ff. ; J. Steinmann, *Le livre de Job*, 1955, pp. 25 ff. For the text containing the dialogue of a man with his own soul, cf. J. A. Wilson in J. B. Pritchard (ed. by), *Ancient Near Eastern Texts relating to the O.T.*, 1950, pp. 405 ff. ; H. Ranke, in Gressmann, *A.T.O.T.*, 2nd edn., 1926, pp. 25 ff. ; B. van der Walle, *Chronique d'Égypte*, xiv, 1939, pp. 312 ff. ; A. Hermann, *O.L.Z.* xlii (1939), 345 ff. ; A. de Buck, *Kernmomenten*, 1947, pp. 19 ff. Cf. also J. Paulus, "Le thème du Juste Souffrant dans la pensée grecque et hébraïque", in *R.H.R.* cxxi (1940), 18 ff.

<sup>3</sup> One text, called "A Pessimistic Dialogue between a Master and his Servant" is translated by Pfeiffer, in J. B. Pritchard (ed. by), *Ancient Near Eastern Texts relating to the O.T.*, 1950, pp. 437 f. For the Akkadian text, cf. G. Reisner, *Sumerisch-babylonische Hymnen*, 1896, Anhang, No. vi, p. 143 ; E. Ebeling, *K.A.R.* i, no. 96, 170 ff., and *M.V.A.G.* xxiii, no. 2, 1919, 83 f. Translations, partial translations, and discussions (with or without Akkadian text in transcription) of this text may be found in G. B. Gray, *E.T.* xxxi (1919-20), 440 ff. ;



and especially one commonly referred to as the "Babylonian Job",<sup>1</sup> which in some respects offers a parallel to the book of Job.<sup>2</sup> Here the sufferer is a pious king, who is stricken by disease, mocked by his friends, and ultimately restored. So far there are elements parallel to the book of Job. More fundamental, however, are the differences.<sup>3</sup> The Babylonian sufferer

Ebeling, *M.V.A.G.*, loc. cit. pp. 54 ff., and in H. Gressmann, *A.T.O.T.* 2nd edn., 1926, pp. 284 ff.; S. Langdon, *Babylonian Wisdom*, 1923, pp. 67 ff.; B. Meissner, *Babylonien und Assyrien*, ii (1925), 432 ff.; T. Jacobsen, in *The Intellectual Adventure of Ancient Man*, 1946, pp. 216 ff.; J. J. Stamm, *Das Leiden des Unschuldigen in Babylon und Israel*, pp. 14 ff.; E. A. Speiser, *J.C.S.* viii (1954), 98 ff.; E. F. Sutcliffe, op. cit. 1955, pp. 34 ff. For the study of another Akkadian text, cf. P. Dhorme, *R.B.* xxxii (1923), 5 ff. (reprinted in *Recueil Edouard Dhorme*, 1951, pp. 655 ff.). Recently S. N. Kramer has published (*V.T. Supplements*, iii (Rowley Festschrift, 1955), 170 ff.) a Sumerian text with some affinities with the Job story; cf. also H. Schmökel, *F.u.F.* xxx (1956), 74 ff.

<sup>1</sup> For a translation, cf. Pfeiffer, in Pritchard, op. cit. pp. 434 ff. Several copies of fragments of this text have been found. For the Akkadian text, cf. H. C. Rawlinson, *The Cuneiform Inscriptions of Western Asia*, iv (2nd edn., 1891), no. 60; V. Scheil, *Une saison de fouilles à Sippar*, 1902, p. 105, no. 37; R. Campbell Thompson, *P.S.B.A.* xxxii (1910), 18 ff.; S. Landersdorfer, *Eine babylonische Quelle für das Buch Job?* 1911, pp. 14 ff. (translation pp. 21 ff.); E. Ebeling, *K.A.R.* i (1919), nos. 10, 11, 108, 175, pp. 14, 15, 187, 319, ii, (Heft 8, 1923), no. 326, pp. 272 f. Other translations, partial translations and discussions (some with Akkadian text in transcription) may be found in H. Zimmern, in Schrader-Zimmern-Winckler, *K.A.T.* (3rd edn., 1903), pp. 385 ff., and *Babylonische Hymnen und Gebete in Auswahl*, 1905 (*Alte Orient* vii, no. 3), pp. 28 ff.; M. Jastrow, *J.B.L.* xxv (1906), 135 ff., and *Die Religion Babyloniens und Assyriens*, ii (1912), 120 ff.; P. Dhorme, *Choix de Textes Religieux Assyro-Babyloniens*, 1907, pp. 372 ff.; F. Martin, *Journal asiatique*, 10th series, xvi (1910), 75 ff.; R. W. Rogers, *Cuneiform Parallels to the O.T.*, 1912, pp. 164 ff.; C. J. Ball, op. cit. p. 9 ff.; Gray, *E.T.* xxxi (1919-20), 442, and in Driver-Gray, op. cit. pp. xxxi ff.; Langdon, op. cit. pp. 35 ff.; W. L. Wardle, *Israel and Babylon*, 1925, pp. 87 ff.; Ebeling in Gressmann, op. cit. pp. 273 ff.; J. Plessis in Pirot's *S.D.B.* i (1928), 824 ff.; T. Jacobsen, loc. cit. pp. 212 ff.; J. J. Stamm, op. cit. pp. 17 ff.; J. Nougayrol, *R.B.* lix (1952), 239 ff.; Sutcliffe, op. cit. pp. 27 ff. A part of this text was translated in A. H. Sayce, *The Religion of the Ancient Babylonians* (Hibbert Lectures), 1887, pp. 535 ff., but of this translation M. Jastrow, *J.B.L.* xxv (1906), 141 n., says: "The translation is antiquated, and only a very few lines of it are correct."

<sup>2</sup> M. Jastrow, *The Book of Job*, p. 48, refers to a similar Indian tale. Cf. also A. and M. Hanson, *The Book of Job*, 1953, p. 9; also A. Lods, *R.H.P.R.* xiv (1934), 527 ff., and *Histoire de la littérature hébraïque et juive*, pp. 691 f.; S. L. Terrien, *I.B.*, iii (1954), 879.

<sup>3</sup> M. Jastrow, *J.B.L.* xxv (1906), 188, suggests that the Babylonian text and the book of Job both derived from a common original.

cries to God for relief from his miseries, as many another in all ages has done. He is quite unaware what he can have done to deserve his troubles, but he is ready to believe that in some unremembered or unconscious way he must have offended against the deity and brought them on himself. This stands in contrast to Job, who consistently maintains that his misfortunes were not brought on him by himself. His innocence is proclaimed in the Prologue, and protested by Job throughout. Hence, as Battenwieser says, the Babylonian story "lacks all those essential points that give the Job story its distinct character".<sup>1</sup> Further, the book of Job, as will be said later, is far more than a cry against God or an appeal to God. It carries a religious message which will be sought in vain in the Babylonian text.<sup>2</sup>

It seems most likely, therefore, that while the author of our book did not create the figure of Job as a righteous sufferer, he used this figure as the vehicle of his message, and wrote the Prologue as the introduction to his dialogue, setting the stage for the debate and introducing the three friends, and also explaining to the reader the reason for Job's suffering, since it was necessary to his purpose that he should do this, as will appear. As C. F. Aked perceived, the Prologue "is only the *machinery* of the drama, the author's way of getting his characters upon the stage and into action".<sup>3</sup> Oesterley and Robinson say that McFadyen and Kautzsch "stand almost alone in ascribing the framework to the poet himself".<sup>4</sup> Actually other names could also be cited,<sup>5</sup> and I would add mine to the list.

We must not ignore some objections which have been raised

<sup>1</sup> Op. cit. p. 10. Similarly Dhorme, *Le livre de Job*, p. lxxxvi, says: "La comparaison entre le thème de ce poème et celui du livre de Job prouve jusqu'à l'évidence que le livre de Job est indépendant de la composition babylonienne." Cf. also Landersdorfer, op. cit. p. 138. Cf. Ball, op. cit. p. 8: "We might as well expect to find Shakespeare as we know him in the pages of Holinshed or Plutarch, or in the plays of Plautus and Seneca, or in the dramas and romances of his Italian contemporaries, as to find the direct source of this extraordinary product of Israel's genius in Babylonian or any other older literature." R. Marcus, *Review of Religion*, xiii (1949), 12 f., observes that "the author of the Hebrew Wisdom book has touched depths of thought and feeling much more profound than those revealed in the Babylonian poem".

<sup>2</sup> For a comparison between the two texts, cf. J. Plessis, loc. cit. cols. 826 ff.

<sup>3</sup> Cf. *The Divine Drama of Job*, 1913, p. 18.

<sup>4</sup> Cf. *Introduction*, p. 173 n.

<sup>5</sup> Cf. above, p. 177, n. 3.

against the Epilogue, however. By some writers this is thought to mar the book, and to give away the whole case to the friends. For in the Epilogue Job's prosperity is restored. Here, then, we find that merit leads to prosperity, precisely as the friends had maintained it always does, and as Job had felt it should. We must remember that every writer is limited by the form he adopts. The author of the book of Job had written the Prologue as the setting for his dialogue, and he was artist enough not to forget it. To have ended the book without the Epilogue would have been to leave it unfinished. In the Prologue Job was delivered into the hands of the Satan to be tested. He had stood the test and had not been found wanting. It is sometimes pointed out that in the divine speech Job is severely condemned, and that this stands in contrast to the commendation in the Epilogue and indicates diversity of authorship.<sup>1</sup> But the condemnation and the commendation are not on the same issue.<sup>2</sup> Job is condemned for presuming to pass judgement on things beyond his understanding, and for the rash things he had said after his misfortunes had come upon him. He is not condemned on the issue on which he is being tried. The wild things he had uttered to his friends were not the cause of his sufferings.<sup>3</sup> Nowhere does he express the slightest regret for his integrity of character, or renounce the uprightness of his way. The Satan had cast doubt on the disinterestedness of his piety, and on this issue he had been proved wrong and Job had been vindicated. It would have been intolerable to leave him still in the hands of the Satan. No longer would this have been the test of Job, but mere malice and vindictiveness. A human court which left a defendant to languish in gaol after a verdict of acquittal would be denounced as unjust. Job was acquitted, and therefore he must be delivered from his misfortunes, since they are the form his trial takes.<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Cf. e.g. K. Fullerton, *Z.A.W.* xlii (N.F. i, 1924), 127.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. Gray, in *Driver-Gray*, op. cit. p. lix.

<sup>3</sup> In the course of the debate Job says many things which were doubtless thought blasphemous by the friends, as they have been by later readers. But, as K. Fullerton (*Z.A.W.* xlii (N.F. i), 119) observes, the God whom Job rejects is no real God, but the phantom God created by the dogma of the friends.

<sup>4</sup> Cf. Davidson-Lanchester, *The Book of Job*, 1918, p. xli: "If the drama be the trial of the righteous, the author must bring it to some conclusion."

The Epilogue was not demanded by the message of the book ; but it was demanded by its form. The trial was over and the case against Job had been proved to be empty. The Epilogue is merely the author's way of indicating this and rounding off his book.<sup>1</sup>

There is no time here to examine some individual varieties of the view that rejects the Prologue and Epilogue. E. G. Kraeling rejects as secondary most of the Prologue, viz. i.1-ii.10, but retains ii.11-13, and believes that the Epilogue comes from the same hand as ii.11-13, save that xlii.10-17 form a makeshift conclusion which probably came from the author of i.1-ii.10.<sup>2</sup> This at least recognizes that the restoration of the prosperity was demanded by the Prologue, but it fails to explain why the original introduction should have disappeared. The book cannot be supposed to have begun abruptly with ii.11-13, and we are back at the point we have already considered. J. Lindblom published a stimulating work in Swedish<sup>3</sup> and a shorter one in French,<sup>4</sup> propounding highly original views. While finding the Prologue and Epilogue to be older than the dialogue, he postulates a somewhat complex history for the Prologue and Epilogue. He maintains that originally there was an Edomite form of these, in which neither Job's wife nor the Satan figured,<sup>5</sup> but that a later Israelite editor brought these in and substituted a new ending for the original one. Still later the

<sup>1</sup> It is often remarked that the Satan finds no mention in the Epilogue, and supposed that this indicates some lapse on the author's part, but the scene of the Epilogue is not in heaven, and if God had mentioned the Satan in his judgement He would have had to indicate to Job the cause of his sufferings. Yet this was precisely what could not be revealed if the book was to retain its value for men who must suffer in the dark. The author of the book was more clear-sighted than his critics.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. *The Book of the Ways of God*, pp. 167, 175. Kraeling also further substantially reduces the book by rejecting xxix-xxxi (pp. 111 ff.), as well as the Elihu speeches (pp. 125 ff.) and one divine speech (pp. 143 ff.).

<sup>3</sup> Cf. *Boken om Job och hans lidande*, 1940.

<sup>4</sup> Cf. *La composition du livre de Job*, 1945.

<sup>5</sup> Other scholars who have thought the Satan passages to be secondary include Kautzsch, op. cit. p. 88 ; Jastrow, *The Book of Job*, pp. 52 ff. ; L. W. Batten, *A.T.R.* xv (1933), 127 ; L. Finkelstein, op. cit. i (1938), 235 ; Pfeiffer, *Introduction*, p. 669. On the other hand, Hölscher, *Das Buch Hiob*, pp. 2 f., says it is wrong to delete the Satan.

Edomite ending came back in an amended form to stand beside the other.<sup>1</sup> I have already said that I am not persuaded that the Prologue and Epilogue are from an earlier hand than the dialogue, and I find it difficult to believe that if they had been they could have had so complicated a history.

We may next look at the third cycle of speeches, which, as has been said, tails off. In chapter xxii Eliphaz opens this cycle, as he had opened the others. Job replies in chapters xxiii f. Then Bildad speaks in chapter xxv, and Job replies in chapter xxvi. Chapter xxvii appears to be a further speech of Job's, introduced by the unusual formula "And Job again took up his parable and said". Zophar disappears altogether from this cycle. It has been suggested that this is deliberate on the part of the author, to suggest that the friends had run out of arguments.<sup>2</sup> It is to be observed, however, that there are some indications of disorder in the text in this cycle. In chapter xxiv there is material which does not seem to fit the lips of Job, and which some scholars have held to be misplaced. Again, in chapter xxvi, which contains Job's reply to Bildad, there is much that is inappropriate to Job, but which would accord better with the

<sup>1</sup> Op. cit. pp. 3 ff. Jastrow (loc. cit.) finds four epilogues, xlii. 10-17, xlii. 7-9, xl. 1-14, xlii. 1-6. McFadyen, *Introduction*, p. 314, rejects xlii.10-17. K. Fullerton, *Z.A.W.* xlii (N.F. i, 1924), 126 ff., thinks xlii. 7-9 a gloss by one who sympathized with the positions taken by the author in the dialogue, while xlii. 1-6, 10-17 came from a single hand, who placed xlii. 7-9 where it is. Dhorme (op. cit. p. lxxvi) speaks scornfully of the "fantaisies" of Fullerton, and observes that his "machiavélisme est plutôt le fait du critique que de l'auteur du livre de Job". Cf. also A. Alt, *Z.A.W.* lv (N.F. xiv, 1937), 265 ff., for another analysis, according to which xlii. 11-17 is the oldest part of the Epilogue. Alt thought these verses originally connected with i. 14-17. Against such views W. E. Staples, *The Speeches of Elihu*, 1925, p. 7, maintains the unity of the epilogue.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. A. Schultens, *Le livre de Job*, French trans. by E. de Joncourt, J. Sacrelaire, and J. Allamand, 1748, Argument, p. 6: "A l'égard de Tsophar, il se fait quand son tour de parler revient, soit qu'il n'ait rien à ajouter à ce qui a été dit, ou qu'il soit convaincu de la justice de la cause de Job" (cf. *Liber Jobi*, ii (1737), 729: "Vel convictus itaque, vel conterritus Tsopharus, quem tertius nunc orbis certaminum tangebatur, silet"). Cf. also H. Möller, *Sinn und Aufbau des Buches Hiob*, 1955, p. 63. K. Fullerton, *Z.A.W.* xlii (N.F. i, 1924, 121) says: "To explain this, as is usually done, as if it were intended to illustrate the gradual drying up of the Friends' powers of argumentation is most mechanical and quite unworthy of an author who shows the psychological insight displayed in the previous part of the Dialogue."

views of the friends, and the same is true of chapter xxvii. In this latter chapter it is common to find traces of a lost speech of Zophar's.<sup>1</sup> While the reconstructions of scholars differ considerably in detail,<sup>2</sup> there is a wide agreement that probably originally the third cycle of speeches was complete, but that part

<sup>1</sup> B. Kennicott, *V.T. Hebraicum cum variis lectionibus*, ii (1780), *Dissertatio Generalis*, p. 155, and *Remarks on Select Passages in the O.T.*, 1787, pp. 169 ff., held xxvii. 11-23 to be Zophar's and McFadyen (op. cit. p. 316) attributed to Zophar xxvii. 7-23. Some authors reject as secondary xxvii. 7-23 (so Fohrer, *Das Buch Hiob*, 1948, p. 89, who also rejects xxiv. 1-8, 10-23; Volz, *S.A.T.* III, ii (1911), 27), or xxvii. 11-23 (so König, op. cit. pp. 271 f.), or xxvii. 13-23 (so H. Strack, *Einleitung in das A.T.*, 5th edn., 1898, p. 136). Marshall, on the other hand, retains xxvii. 7-23, and finds here Job's retraction (op. cit. p. 11). W. T. Davison (in Hastings's *D.B.* ii (1899), 666) holds that xxvii. 7-23 are out of place, whether they are to be regarded as part of a speech of Bildad or Zophar or not, but otherwise he rejects only xxviii and the Elihu speeches.

<sup>2</sup> The reconstructions that have been proposed are innumerable. A few examples must here suffice. B. Kennicott (op. cit. ii, *Dissertatio Generalis*, p. 115) assigns xxv to Bildad, xxvi. 1-xxvii. 12 to Job, xxvii. 13-23 to Zophar, and xxviii ff. to Job; M. H. Stuhlmann (*Hiob: ein religiöses Gedicht*, 1804, pp. 148 ff.) assigns xxv and xxviii to Bildad, xxvi. 1-xxvii. 10 to Job, xxvii. 11-23 to Zophar, and xxix ff. to Job; E. Reuss (*Die Geschichte der Heiligen Schriften A.T.s.*, 2nd. edn., 1890, p. 309) assigns xxv and xxvi. 5-14 to Bildad, xxvi. 1-4 and xxvii. 2-23 to Job, with xxviii as unoriginal; G. Bickell (*Das Buch Job*, 1894, pp. 43 ff.) assigns xxv. 1-3, xxvi. 12 f., 14 c, xxv. 4-6 to Bildad, xxvi. 2, 4, xxvii. 2, 4-6, 11 f., xxviii. 1-3, 9-11, 20-28 to Job, xxvii. 7-10, 14-20 to Zophar, xxix ff. to Job; Duhm (op. cit. pp. 120 ff.) assigns xxvi. 1-4, xxv. 2-6, xxvi. 5 f., 11-14 to Bildad, xxvii. 1-6, 12 to Job, xxvii. 7-11, 13-23 to Zophar, xxix ff. to Job, with xxviii as unoriginal; C. Siegfried (*J.E.* vii (1907), 198 f.) assigns xxv, xxvi. 5-14 to Bildad, xxvi. 1-4, xxvii. 2-6, xxix ff. to Job, with xxvii. 7, -xxviii. 28 as unoriginal; L. Laue (*Die Composition des Buches Hiob*, 1895, pp. 75, 90) assigns xxvii. 13-23 to Bildad, xxvi. 1-3, ix. 2-24 to Job, xxviii to Zophar, xii to Job, and deletes xxv as unoriginal; G. A. Barton (*J.B.L.* xxx (1911), 70 ff.) assigns xxiv. 1-4, 9-16, 23, 25 to Job, xxv. 1-6, xxiv. 17 f., 5-8, xxx. 3-8, xxiv. 21 f., 19 f., 24 to Bildad, xxvi to Job, xxvii. 7-11, 13-23 to Zophar, xxvii. 1-6, 12, xxix. 2-25, xxx. 1 f., 9-31 to Job, with xxviii as unoriginal; Gray (in Driver-Gray, op. cit. p. 1) xxiii, xxiv (except xxiii. 8 f. and xxiv. 13-17 and parts of 18-24) to Job, xxv (? and xxvi) to Bildad, xxvii. 2-6, 11 f., to Job, xxvii. 7-10, 13-23 to Zophar (?); P. Dhorme (op. cit. pp. 312 ff.; followed by H. Rongy, *Revue Ecclésiastique de Liège*, xxv (1933), 97 f.; cf. also Dhorme, *R.B.* xxxiii (1924), 343 ff., and S. L. Terrien, *I.B.*, iii (1954), 888) assigns xxiii, xxiv. 1-17, 25 to Job, xxv. 1-6, xxvi. 5-14 to Bildad, xxvi. 1-4, xxvii. 2-12 to Job, xxvii. 13, xxiv. 18-24, xxvii. 14-23 to Zophar, xxix ff. to Job; F. Buhl (in *Vom A.T.* (Marti Festschrift), 1925, p. 52) regards xxiv-xxviii as a conglomeration of fragments of varied origin (with this cf. F. Baumgärtel, *Der Hiobdialog*, 1933, p. 156, where the third cycle is described as "ein Trümmerfeld, in dem sich niemand mehr zurecht findet"); E. J. Kissane (*The Book of Job*, pp. 163 ff.) assigns xxvi. 1-4, xxvii. 7-23 to Bildad, xxix-xxxi to Job, xxv, xxvi. 5-14 to

has been lost, and what has survived is not in its original order.<sup>1</sup> It would be out of place here to discuss the reconstructions in detail, and in any case they do not substantially affect our understanding of the nature and purpose of the book.

We may turn next to the speeches of Yahweh. Some scholars have rejected these altogether,<sup>2</sup> and it has been argued that the author of the Elihu speeches could not have known them, or he

Zophar, xxvii. 1-6, xxxi to Job ; Pfeiffer (op. cit. pp. 663 f., 671) assigns xxiii. xxiv. 1-12, 25, to Job, xxv. 1, xxvii. 7-10, 16-23 to Bildad, xxvi. 1-4, xxvii. 11 f., xxv. 2-6, xxvi. 5-14 to Job, xxvii. 13, xxiv. 21-24, 18-20, xxvii. 14 f. to Zophar, xxvii. 1-6, xxix. ff. to Job ; Lefèvre (in *S.D.B.* iv. 1078 f.) assigns xxiii. 1-xxiv. 17 to Job, xxvi. 5-14, xxv. 2-6 to Bildad, xxvi. 2-4, xxvii. 2-12 to Job, xxvii. 13-23, xxiv. 18-23 to Zophar ; R. Tournay (*R.B.* lxiv (1957), 321 ff.) holds that xxiv. 18-25 should be transferred to follow Zophar's speech xxvii. 13-23, and that xxv. 2-xxvi. 4 should follow xxvi. 5-14, which then belongs to Bildad's third speech ; H. W. Hertzberg (in *Festschrift Alfred Bertholet*, 1950, pp. 238 ff.) assigns xxiii. 13-24, xxv. 2-6 to Bildad, xxvi. 1-4, xxvii. 11 f., xxvi. 5-14, xxvii. 2-6 to Job, and, xxvii. 7-10, 13-23 to Zophar. While there is a substantial measure of agreement, amongst some of these the measure of disagreement is significant of the difficulty of any reconstruction. Marshall (op. cit. p. 72) attributes xxv. 2-6, xxvi. 5-14 to Zophar. For further discussions of this cycle cf. C. Kuhl, *Th.R.*, N.F. xxi (1953), 277 ff.

<sup>1</sup> W. A. Irwin, *J.R.* xvii (1937), 40 ff., thinks the author of the Elihu speeches had the complete third cycle before him, and so suggests that we may use the Elihu speeches to reconstruct its contents. K. Fullerton, *Z.A.W.* xlii (N.F. i, 1924), thinks chapters xxi-xxxii have been tampered with in dogmatic interests.

<sup>2</sup> Gray was earlier inclined to reject both speeches ; cf. *Critical Introduction to the O.T.*, 1913, p. 523. Later, however, he retained the first speech more decisively ; cf. Driver-Gray, op. cit. p. lxiii. For a defence of the retention of the first speech, cf. M. Burrows, *J.B.L.* xlvii (1928), 117 ff. Marshall (op. cit. p. 6) rejected these speeches as on an immeasurably higher plane than the dialogue. They were rejected also by Staples, op. cit. pp. 11 f., O. S. Rankin, *Israel's Wisdom Literature*, 1936, p. 93, and earlier by M. Vernes, *R.H.R.* i (1880), 232 ; while Hölscher (op. cit. p. 55) holds that it is wrong to delete them. For other writers who reject both divine speeches see p. 176 n. 2. C. Kuhl thinks the original work recorded a theophany, but without the divine speeches ; cf. *Th.R.*, N.F. xxi (1953), 271 (but cf. *Entstehung des A.Ts.*, 265, where the first speech is accepted and the second rejected). D. B. Macdonald, *J.B.L.* xiv (1895), 69, held that the divine speeches were composed "at an earlier point in the poet's own development, before the problem had assumed for him the complexity and difficulty which it did later". On the other hand, Sellin, *Introduction to the O.T.*, Eng. trans. by W. Montgomery, 1923, pp. 207 ff., thinks they were added later by the author. More recently Macdonald, *The Hebrew Literary Genius*, 1933, pp. 28 ff., assigns the divine speeches to another poet, whose attitude to life was quite different from the author's, and speaks of "the impudence of the argument" of these speeches (p. 29).

would not have inserted his solution of the problem. This does not seem cogent, since without some speech of Yahweh the structure of the book falls to pieces. As has been said, the Elihu speeches can be omitted without affecting the rest of the book. It is less easy to imagine that the book originally ended with chapter xxxi, or with chapter xxxvii, after the Elihu speeches had been added. The speech of Yahweh is the appropriate answer to Job's closing soliloquy, leading to Job's submission and so preparing for the dropping of the curtain in the Epilogue.

As the book now stands, however, there are two speeches by Yahweh. We have already noted that the second is inferior to the first in conception and in brilliance,<sup>1</sup> and after Job has bowed in submission to God a second speech is uncalled for, since it adds nothing essentially new, but merely continues in an inferior way what the first speech had said. Hence the second speech is widely rejected as secondary.<sup>2</sup> This, once more, does not affect

<sup>1</sup> On the first speech cf. Driver, *Introduction*, p. 427: "The first speech of Jehovah transcends all other descriptions of the wonders of creation or the greatness of the Creator, which are to be found either in the Bible or elsewhere." Similarly Peake, *op. cit.* p. 43: "The whole of Yahweh's speech is a sustained effort of the highest genius, unsurpassed in the world's literature." Lods, *Histoire de la littérature hébraïque et juive*, 1950, pp. 678 f. says: "Les discours de Yahvé, au point de vue littéraire, sont au moins égaux, en magnificence, en virtuosité verbale, en richesse d'images, aux plus belles pages du dialogue; ils ont, du reste, exactement le même style. Il est difficile de croire qu'il se soit trouvé un second poète d'une pareille envergure pour retoucher l'œuvre du premier." Cornill took a less appreciative view of the speech and in the second edition of his *Einleitung in das A.T.* (p. 232), described it as one of "unparalleled brutality, which is usually palliated and styled divine irony, but which, under such circumstances and conditions should much rather be termed devilish scorn" (translation of R. H. Strahan, *The Book of Job*, 1913, p. 14; this edition of Cornill has not been accessible to the present writer). In the later editions (3rd edn., p. 237; 5th edn., 1905, p. 265 = Eng. trans., 1907, p. 427) this language is toned down. H. Ewald (*The Book of Job*, Eng. trans. by J. F. Smith, 1882, p. 294) says "the most suitable manner for these divine speeches is that of irony, which combines with concealed severity and calm superiority the effective and benevolent incisiveness of a higher insight".

<sup>2</sup> The sections of the second speech dealing with Behemoth and Leviathan were rejected by Ewald, *op. cit.* pp. 319 ff.; Dillmann, *op. cit.* pp. 339 f.; Cheyne, *E.B.* ii (1901), 2483; and many others, including recently J. J. Weber, *Le livre de Job, l'Écclésiastique*, 1947, p. 15; C. Kuhl, *Die Entstehung des A.Ts.*, 1953, p. 265; Eissfeldt, *Einleitung*, 2nd edn., p. 562. Budde (*Das Buch Hiob*, 1913, pp. 254 ff.) retains xl. 15- xli. 3 (E.V. 11). Eissfeldt, *Einleitung in das A.T.*, 1934, p. 509, said: "Das eine spätere Hand, dem die beiden Gedichte hierher zu passen



our interpretation of the book as a whole.<sup>1</sup> It has the advantage that it brings together Job's words in xl. 4 f. and xlii. 2-6, thus yielding a single speech of submission.

The poem on wisdom in chapter xxviii is commonly held not to have belonged to this book originally.<sup>2</sup> As it stands it is apparently in the mouth of Job, but it does not fit into the speech he appears to be making, and it is not a reply to the arguments of the previous speaker. But if, as has already been said, part of the preceding chapter is really Zophar's missing speech, then chapter xxviii would follow straight after this, without introduction. Yet it is no more appropriate to Zophar than to Job. The chapter is, indeed, complete in itself. It is a magnificent poem, worthy of the genius of the author of Job, and possibly composed by him,<sup>3</sup> though scarcely for its present place.<sup>4</sup> Its

schienen, sie eingefügt hat, ist verständlich; dem ursprünglichen Dichter ist es aber schwerlich zuzutrauen, dass er sein Werk mit derartigen Gedichten, die mit seiner eigentlichen Absicht nichts zu tun haben, sondern nur verdunkeln, belastet hätte." This passage does not stand in the second edition. J. Herz, *Wissenschaftliche Zeitschrift der Karl-Marx-Universität Leipzig*, iii (1953-4), 111 f., differentiates between the two speeches on stylistic grounds. Behemoth is usually identified with the hippopotamus and Leviathan with the crocodile, but B. D. Eerdmans, *Studies in Job*, 1939, pp. 27 ff., held that Behemoth is the dolphin, while G. R. Driver, in *Studi orientalistici* (Levi della Vida Festschrift), i, 1956, identifies Behemoth with the crocodile and Leviathan with the whale. G. Haas, *B.A.S.O.R.* no. 132, December 1953, pp. 30 ff., draws attention to evidence that the hippopotamus was found in the Israelite coastal area in the Iron Age.

<sup>1</sup> There are many scholars who retain both the divine speeches. So A. Lefèvre, in Pirot's *S.D.B.* iv (1949), 1081; H. W. Hertzberg, in *Festschrift Alfred Bertholet*, 1950, pp. 253 ff.; Lods, *op. cit.* pp. 678 f.

<sup>2</sup> This chapter is almost universally rejected as secondary, but Junker (*op. cit.* p. 54) retains it and likens it to the chorus in a Greek tragedy. See also below, p. 192, n. 3. It is rejected by Goettsberger, *op. cit.* pp. 226 f. as not integral to the original book; so also by E. J. Kissane, *The Book of Job*, 1939, p. xiii, and E. F. Sutcliffe, *A Catholic Commentary on Holy Scripture*, 1953, p. 418.

<sup>3</sup> So Dhorme, *op. cit.* p. lxxvi; J. Chaine and A. Robert in Robert-Tricot, *Initiation Biblique*, 3rd edn., 1954, p. 181; Pfeiffer, *op. cit.* p. 671; Lods, *Histoire de la littérature héb. et juive*, p. 680. W. Baumgartner, however, will not allow that it is by the same author, though he recognizes a certain affinity of spirit (*O.T.M.S.*, p. 219). H. Duesberg, *Les scribes inspirés*, ii (1939), 156, calls this chapter "petit bloc erratique, situé probablement hors de sa place, mais qui donne le dernier mot du livre".

<sup>4</sup> A. Lefèvre, in Pirot's *S.D.B.* iv (1949), 1079, defends the retention of this chapter, holding that it marks a pause, indicating that the dialogue is at an end. Similarly E. Brennecke, in Alleman and Flack, *Old Testament Commentary*, 1948,

burden is that in humble reverence towards God and obedience to His will man's truest wisdom is to be found. But this is the position Job reaches after the divine speech, and if he had reached it himself before the Lord spoke, there would have been little reason for the speech of God.<sup>1</sup> We may add that his final soliloquy, in which he cries out once more against God, seems also surprising after this chapter. We may therefore with high probability regard it as a secondary element of the book, even though it is greatly to be prized, and for its preservation we may be very thankful.<sup>2</sup>

While for most of these positions there is broad agreement amongst a number of scholars, with much divergence of detail at some points, it is only fair to say that there are scholars who would challenge them more radically. There are some conservative scholars who still maintain the unity of the whole book.<sup>3</sup> On the other hand there are some who peel off a great deal more than has yet been suggested. Baumgärtel thought that originally

p. 490, retains this chapter, though he rejects the Prologue and Epilogue as older and the Elihu speeches as later. J. E. Steinmueller, *A Companion to Scripture Studies*, ii (2nd edn., 1944), 168, holds that chapter xxviii is original, and so W. Grossouw and C. Epping, in A. van den Born et al., *Bijbels Woordenboek*, 2nd edn., 1954-57, col. 847, and H. Haag's *Bibel-lexikon*, 1951, col. 825. P. Szczygiel, op. cit. p. 233, retains the chapter but transfers it to follow xlii. 6. S. Davidson, *Introduction to the O.T.*, ii (1863), 202 f., retained xxvii. 7-xxviii. 28 in their present form as integral to the book, though he rejected the Elihu speeches (pp. 204 ff.).

<sup>1</sup> Cf. Ball, op. cit. p. 12.

<sup>2</sup> H. A. Fine, *J.B.L.* lxxiv (1955), 28 ff., argues that chapters xxvii f. form a unit, separable from the rest of the book, preserving the tradition of a patient Job who maintained his uprightness throughout. On this view chapter xxvii is not to be redistributed and transferred in part to Zophar. Whether these chapters are by the author of the main part of the book, or were composed earlier or later than the dialogue, are questions left without answer.

<sup>3</sup> So F. Prat in F. Vigouroux (ed. by), *Dictionnaire de la Bible*, iii (1903), 1567 f.; L. Bigot, in A. Vacant (ed. by), *Dictionnaire de Théologie Catholique*, viii (1947), 1479 ff.; H. Höpfl, *Introductio specialis in V.T.*, 5th edn., revised by A. Miller and A. Metzinger, 1946, pp. 280 f.; E. J. Young, *Introduction to the O.T.*, 1949, p. 313; H. Möller, *Sinn und Aufbau des Buches Hiob*, 1955. Such a view can be found in many older writers, e.g. C. F. Keil, *Einleitung in das A.T.*, 3rd edn., 1873, pp. 389 ff. Cf. also P. Humbert, *V.T. Supplements* iii (Rowley Festschrift, 1955), 151 n.: "Nous tentons ici une voie nouvelle, essayant de montrer que les tensions, qui semblent manifester la non-unité du livre, révèlent au contraire une sorte de progression existentielle de l'œuvre conçue comme une unité."

there was a single cycle of speeches, followed by a monologue by Job, fragments of which have survived scattered amongst his speeches in the present second and third cycles.<sup>1</sup> Snaith would go farther, and suggests that in the original form of the book the three friends did not figure at all, so that the verses relating to them in the Prologue and Epilogue, and all their speeches and Job's answers, are to be rejected.<sup>2</sup> The book is thus reduced to the Prologue, a single soliloquy by Job (contained in chapters iii and xxix-xxxi), the first divine speech, Job's submission and the Epilogue. This seems to me quite arbitrary, and an unlikely theory of the origin of a masterpiece. All the serious wrestling in argument with the problem of innocent suffering is torn out of the book, and after the Prologue giving the setting for Job's trial we have but his bitter lament that he had been born and agonised cry to God, and then the divine response and his release. But the nature of the divine speech is scarcely to be understood, save in the light of the things Job has said in his speeches to the friends. It is there that he has impugned the justice of God, and called forth the rebuke of the divine speech, that he has passed judgement on what lies beyond his understanding.

Lindblom, to whose view reference has already been made, also thinks that a simple dialogue originally stood in the book, but that for this a three cycle debate was later substituted.<sup>3</sup> He rejects the Elihu speeches, the wisdom chapter, and the second divine speech, and also, surprisingly, Job's submission in xlii.1-6.<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Cf. *Der Hiobdialog*, 1933. A. Weiser, *Einleitung in das A.T.*, 4th edn., 1957, p. 235 rejects the views of Baumgärtel. Cf. also J. Hempel, *Die althebräische Literatur*, 1930, p. 179; Eissfeldt, *Einleitung*, 2nd edn., pp. 565 ff., 570 f., and Baumgartner, in *O.T.M.S.*, p. 219. Cheyne (*E.B.* ii, 2476) omits xx-xxviii.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. *The Book of Job*, 1945, p. 15. This view is closely similar to that of P. Bertie, *Le poème de Job*, 1929. A. Lods (*Histoire de la littérature héb. et juive*, p. 683) rejects it on the grounds (a) that it is *a priori* improbable that the author did not intend to discuss the problem of innocent suffering and (b) that the style of the rejected parts is precisely the same as that of the retained parts.

<sup>3</sup> Cf. *Composition*, p. 91.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.* p. 90. C. Siegfried (*J.E.* vii (1907), 199) deleted xlii. 1-6 as secondary. Similarly K. Fullerton (*Z.A.W.* xlii (N.F. i, 1924), 124 f.) says these verses are absolutely opposed to the Dialogue, and B. D. Eerdmans, *Studies in Job*, 1939, p. 18, rejects them. Jastrow thinks there were four epilogues (see above p. 187, n. 1), and also rejects the Elihu speeches and both divine speeches, all of which he thinks were appendices (op. cit. pp. 64 ff.). Further, he holds xxix-xxxi to be

He holds that these last mentioned verses were added after the second divine speech. These verses seem to me, as I shall say, as also to many other scholars, to be vital to the understanding of the book, and to yield an appropriate response of Job to the speech of Yahweh. Without them the only response of Job is found in xl. 4 f., and it amounts simply to the statement that he has nothing more to say. He has found no satisfaction of his tortured spirit. Hence I would align myself more closely with the normal critical view of the problems of the book.

We may therefore briefly review the form of the book as it emerges from our examination.<sup>1</sup> There is the Prologue, followed by Job's opening soliloquy; then three cycles of speeches in which the friends speak in turn, being each answered by Job; then Job's closing soliloquy;<sup>2</sup> then the speech of God from the whirlwind, followed by Job's submission, the two parts of which, now separated, are brought together; and finally the Epilogue. It is complete in its artistry of form, and Job's submission, which closes the poetic part of the work, is, as we should expect it to be, the climax of the book.

Some writers have supposed that the purpose of the book was to solve the mystery of suffering.<sup>3</sup> If this was indeed its purpose

supplementary (p. 70), xxviii to be an addition (*ibid.*), and also the third cycle of speeches to be secondary (p. 71). Van Hoonacker (*R.B.*, xii (1903), 166) held that there were four editions of the book, the first ending with xxxi, the second adding the speeches of Elihu, the third adding the divine speeches and the Epilogue instead of the Elihu speeches, and the fourth combining the second and the third. G. Studer (*Das Buch Hiob*, 1881, p. 19) held that the book originally consisted of iii-xxxi only, and that the Elihu speeches, the divine speeches, the Prologue and Epilogue, and ch. xxviii were successive additions.

<sup>1</sup> This examination of the structure of the book is a necessary preliminary to the study of its purpose and message. Cf. Buttenwieser, *op. cit.* p. 4: "A study of the religious significance of the book, if it is to be intelligent and thoroughgoing, must go hand in hand with a careful literary analysis."

<sup>2</sup> On the character of chapter xxxi, as the final speech of Job before the theophany, with its daring oaths as the evidence of Job's consciousness of innocence, cf. S. H. Blank, *J.J.S.* ii (1950-1), 105 ff.

<sup>3</sup> This is implied in the observations of Cornill, *Introduction*, p. 426: "The poet . . . surely must have had a solution of the problem to offer: else he would have been attempting a task that exceeded his strength, and would not deserve to be described as an artist so much as a torturer of humanity, who delights in plunging the knife ever deeper and deeper into the mortal wound." C. Westermann, *Der Aufbau des Buches Hiob*, 1956, thinks the book is less concerned with

it must be pronounced a conspicuous failure. The mystery of suffering is too great and complex to be solved in so short a study, even if any writer thought he could solve it at all. Some of the scholars who have believed this to be the purpose of our author have clung to the Elihu speeches because it is here alone that anything relevant to this subject can be found. I have already said, however, that Elihu's solution is not relevant to this book. That suffering is educative is doubtless sometimes true. "Whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth."<sup>1</sup> But he would be both bold and shallow who supposed that this was the explanation of all suffering. It was certainly not the explanation of Job's, for the reader is told this quite clearly in the Prologue. The dialogue nowhere penetrates the true reason for Job's suffering, and if the purpose of the debate was to solve this problem, it nowhere comes within sight of the solution. The Babylonian sufferer could not divine the explanation of his miseries, and as little could Job and his friends penetrate the reason for his. If this was what the author was interested in, he was but beating the air, and his masterpiece was no more than a futility.

Others have thought the author was only concerned to overthrow the view that all suffering was self-entailed and that rigid justice was done in human affairs.<sup>2</sup> It has even been suggested that this was the orthodox view throughout the Old Testament until the book of Job came to set things right.<sup>3</sup> This rests on a very superficial reading of the Old Testament. The earliest document of the Pentateuch tells how Cain and Abel offered sacrifices to God, and records that Abel's was well-pleasing to God, while Cain's was not.<sup>4</sup> When we read thereafter that Cain murdered Abel, it is plain that the sacred writer did not wish the reader to infer that Abel got but what he deserved. When the problem of innocent suffering than with man's complaint "Why must I suffer?"

<sup>1</sup> Heb. xii. 6.

<sup>2</sup> Driver, *Introduction*, p. 409, declares this to be the principal aim of the book.

<sup>3</sup> Cf. Meinhold, *Einführung in das A.T.*, 3rd edn., 1932, p. 322; L. W. Batten, *A.T.R.* xv (1933), 126. Cf. also I. G. Matthews, *The Religious Pilgrimage of Israel*, 1947, pp. 171 f., where we are told that the friends of Job reiterated "the time-honoured assumptions of the ancients", while Job "challenged the sacrosanct conclusions of the centuries".

<sup>4</sup> Gen. iv. 4.

Uriah the Hittite was killed by the deliberate design of David, the prophet Nathan came to the king to rebuke him sternly in the name of God.<sup>1</sup> The prophet did not think Uriah deserved what came to him, and the reader of the Bible is not expected to draw that conclusion. This story stands in one of the oldest documents in the Bible, and does not teach the rigid equation of desert and experience. Later the prophet Elijah denounces Ahab for the judicial murder of Naboth, which Jezebel had staged in his name,<sup>2</sup> and again the reader is expected to draw the conclusion that Naboth died innocently. The eighth and seventh century prophets declaimed against the injustice that was rampant in Israel, instead of drying the springs of sympathy by any doctrine that whatever a man got he must have deserved. To suppose that the doctrine enunciated by Job's friends was in any period the accepted orthodox view of Yahwism is to ignore a great deal in the Old Testament.

That it was accepted in some circles is doubtless true. It is to be presumed that these were the circles of the prosperous—who frequently come under the lash of the sacred writers. Some writers have suggested that Jeremiah and Ezekiel were responsible for this doctrine.<sup>3</sup> But again this involves a strange reading of Jeremiah, whose sensitive spirit was more incapable of so perverse a view than the harder spirit of Ezekiel. Jeremiah, whose own mission involved him in acute suffering which caused him to cry out against God with something of the agony of Job,<sup>4</sup> is scarcely likely to have cherished so deluded a view. It was Jeremiah who asked “Wherefore doth the way of the wicked

<sup>1</sup> 2 Sam. xii. 1 ff.

<sup>2</sup> 1 Kings xxi. 17 ff.

<sup>3</sup> It is frequently maintained that before Jeremiah and Ezekiel the individual was regarded merely as a fragment of the community and hence this problem could not arise. Cf. e.g. Peake, *Jeremiah*, ii, p. 100: “The doctrine (sc. of the solidarity of the community) had affirmed the mutual responsibility of the members of the group which formed its social unit. The individual had but little independent significance”; C. H. Patterson, *The Philosophy of the O.T.*, 1953, p. 239, where it is said that before Jeremiah the idea “that Yahweh held individuals responsible for their own deeds” had not arisen.

<sup>4</sup> Cf. Jer. xx. 7 ff., and the passages commonly referred to as the “Confessions of Jeremiah” (on which cf. J. Skinner, *Prophecy and Religion*, 1922, pp. 201 f.; E. A. Leslie, *The Intimate Papers of Jeremiah*, 1953; J. Leclercq, in *Études sur les prophètes d'Israël* (Lectio Divina 14), 1954, pp. 111 ff.).

prosper ? ”<sup>1</sup> and who said of himself “ I was like a gentle lamb that is led to the slaughter ”.<sup>2</sup> He can scarcely be supposed to have enunciated the doctrine expressed by Job’s friends.

It is true that in days when men were excusing themselves from any share of responsibility for the misfortunes of their day by quoting the proverb “ The fathers have eaten sour grapes and the children’s teeth are set on edge ”, Jeremiah insisted on the measure of their individual responsibility and said “ Every one shall die for his own iniquity ”.<sup>3</sup> But it is a far cry from this to the thought of Job’s friends. In the New Testament we read “ Whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap ” ;<sup>4</sup> but it would be a travesty of the New Testament to say that its teaching is that a man always gets what he deserves, and no intelligent reader of the New Testament could suppose that it teaches that Jesus was crucified because He deserved to be. Nowhere does the Bible teach such a doctrine, for the Bible has no simple solution of the problem of suffering.<sup>5</sup> There are some whose sufferings are self-entailed ; but there are some whose sufferings are not. Jeremiah insisted that some suffering is not innocent ; the book of Job that some is. It is the way of the doctrinaire theologian to wish to reduce the complexity of experience to the simplicity of a single formula. Such were Job’s friends ; such was not Jeremiah, who could recognize now innocent suffering, and now suffering that was self-entailed.

It lies beyond our purpose to discuss the date of the book of Job, which has been most variously estimated. It must suffice here to say that it is by most held to be post-exilic,<sup>6</sup> and by many

<sup>1</sup> Jer. xii. 1.

<sup>2</sup> Jer. xi. 19.

<sup>3</sup> Jer. xxxi. 30.

<sup>4</sup> Gal. vi. 7.

<sup>5</sup> Cf. Driver, *Introduction*, pp. 409 f.

<sup>6</sup> Older writers thought of the patriarchal age or the time of Moses, but these are now universally dismissed. The age of Solomon is still accepted by E. J. Young, *Introduction to the O.T.*, 1949, p. 309. F. Prat, in Vigouroux, *Dictionnaire de la Bible*, iii (1903), 1567, dates the book between the time of Solomon and that of Hezekiah, and E. W. Hengstenberg (*Das Buch Hiob*, 1870, p. 62), before the time of Amos ; A. Merx (*Das Gedicht von Hiob*, 1871, p. xlii ; cf. D. Schenkel (ed. by), *Bibel-Lexikon*, iii (1871), 100) favoured a date *circa* 700 B.C. ; O. Zöckler, in Lange’s *Commentary*, O.T. vii (Eng. trans. by Ll. J. Evans), 252, suggested that Hezekiah was the author ; de Wette (op. cit. ii, 570), Ewald (op. cit. p. 82), J. G. Stickel (*Das Buch Hiob*, 1842, p. 261), F. Bleek (*Introduction to the O.T.*, Eng. trans. by E. Venables, ii (1894), 286), S. Davidson (*Introduction to the O.T.*,

to date from about 400 B.C.<sup>1</sup> It is probable that the perverse doctrine enunciated by Job's friends rested on the application of the individualism of one side of the teaching of Jeremiah and Ezekiel to the Deuteronomic doctrine of national merit and

ii (1863), 195 ff.), early in the seventh century ; E. König (op. cit. pp. 495 f.), H. Gunkel (*R.G.G.* iii (1912), 47 f.), J. Goettsberger (*Einleitung in das A.T.*, 1928, p. 229), and J. E. Steinmueller (*A Companion to Scripture Studies*, ii (2nd edn., 1944), 165), the age of Jeremiah ; Pfeiffer (op. cit. pp. 675 ff.) dates the Prologue and Epilogue not earlier than the sixth century, but the poetic parts of the book between 700 and 200 B.C., but probably in the time of Jeremiah ; E. C. S. Gibson (*The Book of Job*, 1899, p. xxii), N. H. Tur-Sinai (*The Book of Job*, 1957, pp. xxxvi f.), date the work in the period of the late monarchy or exile ; Sellin (*Introduction*, 1923, p. 222 ; but cf. *Einleitung*, 7th edn., 1935, p. 145, where the range is given as 600-300 B.C.) between 600 and 450 B.C. ; Dillmann (op. cit. pp. xxix ff.), A. B. Davidson (*The Book of Job*, 1884, p. lxxvii), and Cheyne (*Job and Solomon*, 1887, p. 74 ; but cf. *E.B.* ii (1903), 2385 ff., where the date is brought down to the Persian period) in the time of the exile ; Driver (*Introduction*, p. 431) during or shortly after the Babylonian captivity ; J. P. Naish (*Expositor*, 9th ser., iii (1925), 34 ff., 94 ff.) in the early post-exilic period, holding the author to be a disciple of Deutero-Isaiah ; L. Gautier (*Introduction à l'A.T.*, ii (1914), 120) and Ball (op. cit. pp. 31 ff.), in the Persian period ; A. Lefèvre (in Pirot's *S.D.B.* iv (1949), 1075) in the first century of the Persian period ; E. F. Sutcliffe (*Catholic Commentary on Holy Scripture*, p. 421), circa 500 B.C. ; Duhm (op. cit. p. ix), Dhorme (op. cit. p. cxxxv), J. J. Weber (op. cit. p. 17), and Chaine and Robert (op. cit. p. 185) between 500 and 450 B.C. ; R. H. Strahan (*The Book of Job*, 1913, pp. 18 f.) and C. F. Kent (*The Growth and Contents of the O.T.*, 1926, p. 291) about 450 B.C. ; G. F. Moore (*The Literature of the O.T.*, 1913, p. 248), Gray (in Driver-Gray, op. cit. pp. lxxv ff.), L. H. K. Bleeker (*Job*, 1926, p. 8), and Haag's *Bibellixikon* (1951, col. 825), in the fifth century ; L. Bigot (in Vacant, *Dictionnaire de Théologie Catholique*, viii (1947), 1483) and H. Lusseau (in Robert-Feuillet, *Introduction à la Bible*, i (1957), 652) in the latter part of the fifth century ; A. Weiser (*Einleitung in das A.T.*, 4th edn., 1957, p. 236, and *Das Buch Hiob*, 2nd edn., 1956, p. 13) between the fifth and the third century ; J. E. McFadyen (*Introduction to the O.T.*, new edn., 1932, p. 319) between 450 and 350 B.C. ; H. Creelman (*Introduction to the O.T.*, 1927, p. 239) circa 350 B.C. ; T. K. Cheyne (*E.B.* ii (1901), 2489), C. Steuernagel (*Einleitung in das A.T.* 1912, p. 710), O. Eissfeldt (*Einleitung in das A.T.*, 2nd. edn., p. 578), L. Finkelstein (in *The Pharisees*, i (1938), 231), in the fourth century ; G. Hölscher (op. cit. p. 7) and A. Lods (*Histoire de la littérature héb. et juive*, p. 689), between 400 and 200 B.C. ; Volz (*S.A.T.* III, ii (1911), 26), circa 300 B.C. ; H. Holtzmann (in Stade, *Geschichte des Volkes Israel*, ii (1888), 351 f.) in the third century ; C. Siegfried (*J.E.* vii (1907), 197), a date in the second century B.C., or even later (suggesting that Job xv. 20 ff. may possibly be an allusion to Alexander Jannaeus).

<sup>1</sup> So Budde (*Das Buch Hiob*, p. liii), Peake (op. cit. p. 40), J. A. Bewer (*The Literature of the O.T.*, 1922, p. 317), Buttenwieser (op. cit. pp. 70 ff.), M. Jastrow (op. cit. p. 36), H. Junker (*Das Buch Hiob*, 1951, p. 7), A. Lods (*La Bible du Centenaire*, iii (1947), p. xiii, and *Histoire de la littérature héb. et juive*, p. 688).



fortune. Deuteronomy had sought to inculcate national loyalty to Yahweh by promising abounding prosperity in days of loyalty and dire misfortune in days of disloyalty. With the greater emphasis on the individual which Jeremiah and Ezekiel brought—which can be recognized without forgetting that this was not the whole of their teaching—this may well have led in some circles to the wooden view held by Job's friends. They cherished the thought that a man's experience reflected his character, and we see as the argument proceeds how this steadily dries the springs of sympathy. When Eliphaz speaks at first he has a measure of sympathy for Job.<sup>1</sup> Ranston describes him as one who had "something of the prophet about him, intense in religious conviction, a mystic recipient of heavenly visions".<sup>2</sup> He supposes that Job has somehow brought his troubles on himself, but he is sorry for him and tries to give him counsel that will bring him to fortune again. For Job all the pity is vitiated by the tacit condemnation which he feels to be undeserved. As the debate continues the friends rebuke Job in severer terms, and we increasingly feel how the thought that the unfortunate must be the wicked hardens the spirit of the man who entertains it. Bildad has been described as a traditionalist.<sup>3</sup> He knows all the clichés, and is as lacking in sympathy as he is in any originality of mind.<sup>4</sup> Zophar is said by Marshall to be the philosopher of the three,<sup>5</sup> and with this view Peake substantially agrees.<sup>6</sup> But he has the harshest spirit and the sharpest tongue of the three, and displays a dogmatism that perhaps proclaims his youth. One purpose of the book of Job is certainly to protest against the idea that misfortune is the evidence of sin, and to affirm that there is a problem of innocent suffering. But this is not where the author's

<sup>1</sup> Cf. Davidson, *The Book of Job*, 1884, p. 41: "The speech of Eliphaz is one of the masterpieces of the book", marked by "great delicacy and consideration" (p. 31), "very wise and considerate as well as profoundly reverential" (p. 35). H. L. Ginsberg, *Leshonenu*, xxi (1956-7), 262 f., holds that the vision attributed to Eliphaz in iv. 12-20 should really be ascribed to Job, since in xxxiii. 6 Elihu refers to iv. 19 in addressing Job.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. *The O.T. Wisdom Books*, 1930, p. 139.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.* p. 140.

<sup>4</sup> W. A. Irwin, *Z.A.W.* li (N.F. x, 1933), 205 ff., holds that Bildad does not espouse this shallow philosophy that misfortune is the proof of ungodliness.

<sup>5</sup> *Op. cit.* p. 67.

<sup>6</sup> *Op. cit.* p. 125.

originality is to be found. In this he is but reaffirming what is to be found in the Law and the Prophets and the Psalms.

The author of our book was concerned less with theology than with religion. So far as any theological or philosophical explanation of the mystery of suffering is concerned, he has none to offer. The reader is told the explanation in Job's case, but that was necessary in order to establish that Job was really an innocent sufferer. Neither Job nor his friends can deduce the reason, and when God speaks from the whirlwind to Job he does not disclose it. Had he done so, the book would immediately have lost its meaning for those who suffer. For men must suffer in the dark, and a Job who was not left in the dark would have had no message for others. It is true that God spoke to Job from heaven, whereas no such voice comes to us. But the voice brought no new revelation of truth, but merely reminded Job of what he could have perceived for himself. It merely reminded him of the unfathomable wonders of creation, and made him realize that there are mysteries beyond human penetration. To say this is not to suggest that theology and philosophy are futile disciplines. There are secrets of Nature that man cannot penetrate ; but this does not mean that scientists ought not to investigate Nature. There are mysteries of experience that neither theology nor philosophy can fully elucidate ; but this does not mean that the human spirit should not wrestle with the problems. But what the book of Job says is that there is something more fundamental than the intellectual solution of life's mysteries. The author has a message for the spirit rather than for the intellect. He is no academic writer<sup>1</sup> addressing himself to the select few profound thinkers. He knows that intellectual giants are few, but that all men have a spirit, and that all may suffer. When one is suffering it may be good to understand the cause ; but it is better to be sustained to endure.

<sup>1</sup> Several writers have suggested that the author was personally involved in the problem, and that the book was born of his own experience. Cf. Battenwieser, *op. cit.* p. 3 ; O. J. Baab, *Interpretation*, v (1951), 336. Some have thought that it was the national experience of his people which inspired the work. Cf. Zöckler, *op. cit.* pp. 238 f. ; Strahan, *op. cit.* pp. 15 ff. ; Davidson-Lanchester, *op. cit.* p. xxix. H. Ranston, *op. cit.* p. 167. Of this, however, there seems little evidence.

We may pause to note that the cause of Job's suffering was more than the Satan's insinuation against him. He was suffering to vindicate more than himself. He was vindicating God's trust in him. He was not so much abandoned by God as supremely honoured by God. The author does not, of course, suggest that this is always the reason for undeserved suffering. He is not so foolish as to imply that a single cause covers all cases, and so far from wishing the reader to deduce that this is always the case, he wishes to make it plain that the actual cause in any given case cannot be deduced by man. The cause or reason for the suffering is hidden in the heart of God. In the case of Job it was not unworthy of God—or of Job. It was the expression of God's confidence in him, and by his very suffering he was serving God. Yet Job could never know this. To the reader, then, the author is saying that when suffering comes undeserved, while he can never guess its explanation he may face it with trust that if he could know the cause, he too might find that he was serving God and was honoured in his very agony.

I have said that there is an inner conflict in the mind of Job. While he repudiates the view of the friends that his suffering proves his sin, he yet has the ever lurking feeling that this ought to be so. He cannot wholly extricate himself from their ideas, and therefore he cannot extricate himself from the consequence of those ideas. Where suffering is believed to be the effect of sin, it is the evidence of a man's isolation from God, since sin is isolation from God. At the beginning of the Bible we find that when Adam sinned he was thrust out from the Garden of Eden.<sup>1</sup> But before he was thrust out and the angel set to guard the gate, Adam had hidden himself from God.<sup>2</sup> He was conscious that his sin had come between him and God and had erected a barrier. Here in this early story, which we so easily characterize as primitive and childish, there is a profound perception of the nature of sin. It separates a man from God. If then suffering is thought to be the evidence of sin, it is by the same token the evidence that the sufferer is cut off from God. And this is what Job feels, despite all his protests. He still tries to cling to God and appeals to the God he has known; but he feels he

<sup>1</sup> Gen. iii. 23 f.

<sup>2</sup> Gen. iii. 8.

cannot get at God and all his appeals are but carried away on the wind.

By insisting that there is such a thing as innocent suffering the author of Job is bringing a message of the first importance to the sufferer. The hardest part of his suffering need not be the feeling that he is deserted by God, or the fear that all men will regard him as cast out from God's presence. If his suffering may be innocent it may not spell isolation from God, and when he most needs the sustaining presence of God he may still have it. Here is a religious message of great significance, and it is by his religious message, which matches the magnificence of his literary gift, that the author of our book created his masterpiece.

It is this which is brought out in the closing verses of the poetical portion of the book, in which Job bows himself in submission before God. "I had heard of thee with the hearing of the ear" he cries, "but now mine eye seeth thee; wherefore I repent and abhor myself in dust and ashes."<sup>1</sup> He does not repent of any sin which had brought his trial upon him. On that issue he is vindicated as against the friends. He repents of the charges he has brought against God, and of the doubts he has entertained. More significant is his recognition that with all the loss and the pain he had suffered, he had gained something even from his agony. In his prosperity he thought he had known God. Now he realizes that compared with his former knowledge his present knowledge is as the joy of seeing compared with a mere rumour. All his past experience of God was as nothing compared with the experience he had now found. He therefore no longer cries out to God to be delivered from his suffering. He rests in God even in his pain.<sup>2</sup>

This is not to explain the meaning of suffering. It is to declare to the reader that even such bitter agony as Job endured

<sup>1</sup> Job xlii. 5 f. B. Kennicott, *Remarks on Select Passages in the O.T.*, 1787, p. 160, strangely renders this verse: "Wherefore am I become thus loathsome and am scorched up, upon dust and ashes?" He also transferred xl. 1-14 to follow xlii. 6 (pp. 161 ff.).

<sup>2</sup> Cf. G. A. Barton, *J.B.L.* xxx (1911), 67: "He has pictured Job as finding the solution of his problem, not in a reasoned explanation or a theology, but in a religious experience. . . . His hero, Job, finds his satisfaction in a first-hand experience of God."

may be turned to spiritual profit if he finds God in it. This is to be distinguished from the thought of the Elihu speeches. Elihu supposed that the suffering itself was disciplinary. Here is no thought that the suffering is itself enriching. Rather is it that the fellowship of God is enriching, and that that fellowship may be found in adversity no less than in prosperity.

Many writers have suggested that the failure of the book to solve the problem of suffering is to be set in contrast to the Christian message.<sup>1</sup> It is supposed that for a fuller answer to the problem it was necessary to wait until a better doctrine of the Afterlife had been attained than Job knew. There are many passages in which the book of Job shows no advance on the thought of the Afterlife which the author's contemporaries cherished. Sheol is thought of as a place where good and bad alike go, where man is shut off from God and in ignorance of the fortunes of his family, and where he is conscious only of his misery.<sup>2</sup> It is true that Job longs for death, and speaks of Sheol as something to be desired, in comparison with his present misery.<sup>3</sup> But that is only his eloquent way of indicating the depth of his misery, and not his way of suggesting that after death any existence that was desirable in itself was to be hoped for. In one familiar passage he has been supposed to attain a faith in a more worthwhile Afterlife. As translated in the Authorized Version the passage runs: "I know that my redeemer liveth, and that he shall stand at the latter day upon the earth: And though after my skin worms destroy this body, yet in my flesh shall I see God: Whom I shall see for myself, and mine eyes shall behold, and not another."<sup>4</sup> In fact this is one of the most cryptic passages in the book, and both text and interpretation are far from sure.<sup>5</sup> Some scholars emend the text to take out all

<sup>1</sup> Cf. G. F. Oehler, *Theology of the O.T.*, Eng. trans. by G. E. Day, Zondervan Press reprint edition, p. 565: "The hope which here (sc. in Job xix. 25-27) flashes for a moment like lightning through the darkness of temptation, is as yet no mature faith in a happy and eternal life after death, and consequently does not furnish a solution to the enigmas with which the book is occupied." Cf. also J. E. McFadyen, *op. cit.* p. 306; H. Wheeler Robinson, *The Cross in the O.T.*, 1955, p. 48; T. H. Robinson, *Job and His Friends*, 1954, p. 124.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. Job iii. 17, x. 21 f., xiv. 21 f.      <sup>3</sup> Cf. Job iii. 13.      <sup>4</sup> Job xix. 25-27.

<sup>5</sup> For the history of the interpretation of these verses cf. J. Speer, *Z.A.W.* xxv (1905), 47 ff. A brief selection of recent translations will sufficiently indicate the

difficulties of the text and the caution that is necessary in building upon it. Kraeling (op. cit. pp. 87 f.) renders: "But I myself know that my redeemer liveth, And as the last one on the dust (i.e. the ground) he will arise. And after (the loss of) my skin that they have thus torn, And bereft of my flesh I shall see God, Whom I shall see on my side, and mine eyes shall behold, And not as an adversary. (My reins are consumed within me)"; G. Hölscher (op. cit. p. 46): "Ich weiss, es lebt mir ein Verteid'ger, und nachmals tritt er auf Erden auf; Dann, ob meine Haut auch so zerschlagen, werd' ich doch ohne mein Fleisch Gott schau'n; Ihn, den ich selber schauen werde, den meine Augen, kein Fremder sehn; Meine Nieren schmachten in meinem Innern"; Oesterley and Robinson (*Hebrew Religion*, 2nd edn., 1937, p. 355 ff.): "But I know that my vindicator so liveth, And as the last one upon the earth will he stand up. And after my skin hath been thus destroyed, Away from my body shall I see God, Whom I shall see on my side, and not another. And mine eyes shall behold, and not as a stranger. My reins are consumed within me"; Kissane, *The Book of Job*, pp. 114 ff.: "And I know that my Defender liveth, And the Eternal will stand forth on the dust; And after my skin is stripped off, did I but see Him, Without my flesh were I to behold God, He whom I should see would be on my side, And whom my eyes should behold would not be estranged. My reins are consumed within me." Larcher (*Le livre de Job*, 1950, 95 f.; cf. pp. 27 ff.): "Je sais, moi, que mon défenseur est vivant, que Lui, le dernier, se dressera sur terre. Une fois ma peau détruite, je l'apercevrai, hors de ma chair, je verrai Dieu. Celui que je verrai sera pour moi, à mes yeux, il n'apparaîtra plus indifférent. Et mes reins en moi se consomment"; E. F. Sutcliffe (*Providence and Suffering in the O. and N.T.*, 1955, p. 115; cf. also *Biblica*, xxxi (1950), 377): "I know that my redeemer liveth, And that my warrant will stand upon the earth. Should my skin be torn from my flesh, Even after this I shall see God, Whom I shall see and mine eyes behold" (xix. 25 f. only); T. J. Meek (*V.T.* vi (1956), 101): "But I know myself that my vindicator lives, And coming later, he will stand up on the dust; And even after this skin of mine has been stricken (*sic* ? struck) off, In my own flesh I shall see God, Whom I myself shall see, And my own eyes shall behold, and not some stranger; My emotions are spent within me"; A. Weiser, *Das Buch Hiob*, 2nd edn., 1956, p. 141: "Doch ich, ich weiss: Es lebt mein Löser; zuletzt erscheint er auf dem Staub; und ohne mein Haut, die so zerfetzt, ohne mein Fleisch werd' ich Gott schauen. Ihn werd' ich schauen mir (zum Heil); mein eigen Aug', kein Anderer, wird ihn sehen. Mein Herz schmachtet (danach) in meiner Brust"; F. Stier, *Das Buch Ijob*, 1954, p. 96: "Ich aber weiss: Mein Löser lebt, steht auf als Letzter überm Staub. Und dann mein Helfer sich aufrichtet, meinen Zeugen schau ich: Gott. Ich gewahr, ich selber schau, meine Augen sehn ihn, nimmer fremd—die Nieren mir vergehn im Leib"; N. H. Tur-Sinai (*The Book of Job*, 1957, pp. 304 ff.): "Yet I, I want to know my redeemer while alive—but he who cometh later will stand at my dust. After my body let them break it up! Out of my flesh I want to see (my) God, Whom I shall see for myself, mine eyes shall behold and not another. For this my reins go out within me." With these renderings it is instructive to compare that of B. Kennicott, *Remarks on Select Passages in the O.T.*, 1787: "For I know that my Vindicator liveth; and He, at the last, shall arise over this dust. And after that mine adversaries have mangled me thus, even in my flesh shall I see God: Whom I shall see on my side; and mine eyes shall behold, but not estranged from me:

suggestion of an Afterlife,<sup>1</sup> while others emend it to make the suggestion much clearer.<sup>2</sup> Neither course seems to me to be justified. Professor Snaith says these verses "can be made to refer to life after death only by a most liberal latitude in translation, a strong attachment to the Latin version, and reminiscences of Handel's Messiah. The Hebrew text is difficult, but it is unlikely that the vindicator is God, and Job almost certainly means that he will be vindicated before he is dead."<sup>3</sup> Peake observes: "The hope of immortality is not expressed here, but only of a momentary vision of God, assuring him of vindication."<sup>4</sup>

While it must be agreed that the words are ambiguous, I think it is possible that the author is here reaching out after something more satisfying than the dreary doctrine of Sheol reflected elsewhere in his book. But he has not securely grasped it.<sup>5</sup> Here is no clear faith in a worthwhile Afterlife, but at the best the belief that God will one day vindicate him and that he will be conscious of that vindication. Yet having said this, I would return to say that no faith in an Afterlife can touch the problem with which the book of Job is concerned. The problem of suffering is as real a problem today as it was in the days of our author, and Christian theology is as impotent as Jewish to solve it.<sup>6</sup>

all this have I made up in mine own bosom." On these verses, cf. also A. B. Davidson, *The Book of Job*, 1884, pp. 291 ff.; J. Royer, *Die Eschatologie des Buches Job*, 1892, pp. 86 ff.; S. Mowinckel in *Vom A.T.* (Marti Festschrift), 1925, pp. 207 ff.; H. Rongy, *Revue Ecclésiastique de Liège*, xxv (1933), 25 ff.; G. Hölscher, *Z.A.W.* liii (N.F. xii, 1935), 277 ff. (where the passage is studied in connection with Jubilees xxiii. 30 f.); J. Lindblom, *Studia Theologica II* (Riga), 1940, pp. 65 ff.; W. B. Stevenson, *The Poem of Job*, 1947, pp. 93 ff.; L. Waterman *J.B.L.* lxix (1950), 379 ff.; W. B. Stevenson, *Critical Notes of the Hebrew Text of the Poem of Job*, 1951, pp. 86 ff. M. Vernes (*R.H.R.* i (1880), 232) dismissed xix. 25-29 as an interpolation.

<sup>1</sup> So Ball, op. cit. pp. 276 ff.

<sup>2</sup> So Dhorme, op. cit. pp. 256 ff. Cf. Larcher, op. cit. p. 96.

<sup>3</sup> Cf. *The Distinctive Ideas of the O.T.*, 1944, p. 90 n.

<sup>4</sup> Op. cit. p. 192.

<sup>5</sup> Cf. the present writer's *Faith of Israel*, 1956, p. 165; cf. also Ranston, op. cit. p. 160, and Davidson, op. cit. p. 293: "This principle, grasped with convulsive earnestness in the prospect of death, became the Hebrew doctrine of Immortality."

<sup>6</sup> Cf. Rabbi Yannai (third cent. A.D.): "It is not in our power to explain the well-being of the wicked or the sorrow of the righteous" (Pirque Aboth iv. 15, translation of H. Danby, *The Mishnah*, 1933, p. 454).

It is sometimes thought that the faith that beyond this life there is another where the injustices and inequalities of this life may be rectified offers an answer to the problem. In truth it offers none. When the wicked is seen to prosper, it may be possible to find some comfort in the thought of what lies before him in the next world—though this is not a very exalted comfort. When the pious is seen to suffer, it may be possible to find some comfort in the thought of the bliss that awaits him hereafter. But this can offer no possible explanation of his present sufferings. The book of Job is far more profound in its message that here and now the pious sufferer has no reason to envy the prosperous wicked. The wicked may have his prosperity, but the pious may have God; and in God he has far more than the other. The inequalities of life belong to man's outer lot; but this is immaterial to his spiritual life.

This is already apparent in the story of Joseph, told in the most ancient document of the Pentateuch. "The Lord was with Joseph",<sup>1</sup> and therefore he could face alternate adversity and prosperity in serenity of spirit. And when we come to the New Testament we find that it cannot advance beyond this. St. Paul was a Pharisee before he became a Christian, and as a Pharisee he already believed in the resurrection.<sup>2</sup> He continued to hold that belief after he became a Christian. But it brought him no relevant message in suffering. He suffered from some acute malady, that brought him agonizing pain—so agonizing that at times he cried out to be delivered from it. He does not appear to have found any consolation in thinking of the next world. He says: "Concerning this thing I cried unto the Lord thrice, that it might depart from me. And he hath said unto me, My grace is sufficient for thee: for my power is made perfect in weakness. Most gladly therefore" cries Paul, "will I rather glory in my weaknesses, that the power of Christ may rest upon me".<sup>3</sup> Here we see that Paul ceases to cry out for deliverance from his suffering, but finds enrichment in his suffering, so that he comes to rejoice in the suffering itself because it has brought him a new experience of the grace of God. This is fundamentally the same as we have found in the book of

<sup>1</sup> Gen. xxxix. 2, 21.

<sup>2</sup> Acts xxii. 3, xxiv. 21.

<sup>3</sup> 2 Cor. xii 8 ff.



Job. It falls far short of an intellectual solution of the problem of suffering. But it achieves the spiritual miracle of the wresting of profit from the suffering through the enrichment of the fellowship of God. It was in this that the author of the book of Job was interested and to this that he leads the reader.