THE VOICE FROM THE WHIRLWIND

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THE purpose of this paper is to review some of the most important theories which have been advanced within the present decade regarding the Theophany in Job 38–42.[1] All commentators recognize that these chapters present a difficult problem. Job has indignantly repudiated the interpretation which his friends put upon his sufferings and has turned from them to the very God whom he holds responsible for his undeserved affliction; but God appears only to silence him with ironic questions, vouchsafing no explanation of his torment, and draws from him a confession of error, then paradoxically condemns the three friends, declares that Job is in the right, and restores him to health and prosperity. That the difficulty is a real one is shown by the number of solutions which commentators have felt called upon to offer. The same consideration should also serve to warn us against accepting any theory too readily.

It is neither feasible nor necessary to discuss in this connection the critical questions involved in other portions of the book. For our present purpose we may assume that the Prologue was a part of the original work. We may also assume that chapter 28 and the Elihu speeches are later additions. In

[1] The commentators to whom I shall refer particularly are Jastrow (1920), Driver and Gray (I. C. C., 1921), Ball (1922), Buttenwieser (1922), and Fullerton (*ZATW* 1924, pp. 116–136). I have been unable to secure the commentaries of Volz (1921) and Steuernagel (1923) in time for the preparation of this paper.

fact within the chapters with which we are particularly concerned we may admit without argument that 40 15–41, the behemoth-leviathan section, is probably secondary.

Having thus agreed that the book as we have it is not a unit, we are bound to confess that the most obvious way out of our difficulty with regard to the Yahweh speeches is to consider them the work of a later writer who did not sympathize with Job's bold indictment of God's justice. Several scholars have so considered them. If the chapters immediately preceding this section and nearly two chapters in the heart of it are admittedly secondary, the only question that remains is how much, if any, of the section is original. This is a matter of specific evidence.

Before examining the evidence in detail, however, we may ask whether it is probable that the book ever existed without a speech of Yahweh. If the Epilogue is retained, a divine address to Job is indispensable. Gray points out (I. C. C., p. lxii) that to remove the Yahweh speeches would leave Job's vindication in 42 7 clearer, but without the direct manifestation which Job desired; he would be answered only by the restoration of his fortunes, which he had not asked; and God would speak only to Eliphaz. The words addressed to Eliphaz in 42 7 clearly presuppose some reply to Job, though they do seem to imply a speech of commendation rather than one of rebuke.

Some scholars, however, reject the Epilogue as well as the Yahweh speeches. Jastrow (p. 67) sees in the last clause of 31 40—"The words of Job are ended"—evidence that the book once ended at that point.[1] But this statement may mean simply, "I have said all there is to say, and there is no use talking any more." In other words, the finality may be only in Job's mind: he does not expect God to take up his challenge immediately and enter into debate with him. Or the clause may be, as Gray thinks, an editorial note, inserted to mark the transition from the Dialogue to the Theophany or to the

[1] We are not here concerned with his theory that it originally ended with chapter 19.

Elihu speeches. However that may be, if there were no reply from God, Job's confidence in a divine vindication would be left hanging in the air. The reader would not know whether it was ever rewarded or not. This can hardly be called impossible, yet there is a dramatic fitness and impressiveness in having a Theophany here, and all Job's demands that he may speak with God face to face seem to point forward to it. It is more likely that the present speeches of Yahweh were substituted for something of a different tenor than that the book ever existed without any Theophany at all.

What reason have we, then, for rejecting these chapters? Some of the less important arguments may be considered first. Jastrow (p. 77) holds that the style here differs from that of the Dialogue even more than is the case in the Elihu speeches. Few would agree with him. Gray says (p. xlviii) that difference of style, "if it can be detected at all, does not extend beyond 40 6–41." Jastrow also maintains (p. 82) that the repetitions and abrupt transitions prove a separate origin for chapters 38–41, but this argument proves at most that not all of the section is original. More arresting is Jastrow's contention (p. 143) that these chapters were added after the Elihu speeches: (1) they make Elihu unnecessary, leaving no reason for the insertion of 32–36 in the body of the book; (2) there is a sharp demarcation between the trend of the Dialogue and that of chapters 38–41; and (3) (p. 144 n.) the phrase "out of the storm" in 38 1 assumes the existence of the Elihu speeches. These arguments are no more conclusive than the others. The Elihu speeches would have to be inserted before the theophany if anywhere. Perhaps the later poet, taking 38–42 as a condemnation of Job, felt that a stronger expression of the orthodox position was needed than the speeches of the friends provided; or perhaps, since there is a suspicion of satire in the speeches, he wished to expose the assurance of the younger generation as the preceding dialogue had exposed the complacency of the elder. In any case the purpose and thought of the Elihu speeches are not at all the same as those of the Theophany, and there is therefore no point in saying that the one makes the other unnecessary. Any view of the Elihu

speeches which can be held without the Yahweh speeches is equally tenable with them. The question of a difference in trend between the Dialogue and the Theophany is much more important and will be discussed separately. It does not apply particularly to the point now before us. As regards the implications of the phrase, "out of the storm," Jastrow is not consistent. In another connection (p. 79) he says that 36 24–37 13, 21–22 (the passages describing the storm) were inserted by some one who had 38–42 before him and with the purpose of paving the way for those chapters. In still another place (p. 83) he remarks that the words, "out of the storm" were interpolated because of the description of the storm in chapter 37. Doubtless the presence of such an inconsistency in Jastrow's commentary indicates composite authorship!

Others as well as Jastrow (p. 187) have pointed out that what Yahweh says to Job is anticipated in the earlier speeches of each of the three friends, of Elihu, and of Job himself, and that the manner and effect of God's appearance correspond to what Job in chapters 9–10 dreads and denounces as unfair rather than the meeting for which he expresses a longing in his later speeches. But is it necessary to assume that the poet would make God follow Job's directions? Job has claimed that if he could meet God on equal terms and with an umpire between them he could demonstrate his own righteousness and the injustice of his affliction. God does not grant him such a meeting, but does manage to convince him that he would not be quite such a formidable adversary to the Almighty in forensic debate as he seems to think. At the same time Yahweh does not at all "use his great power" against Job to overwhelm him nor let his terror appal him. The questions of 38–42 are very different from such a crushing as Job had complained of in 9 17. God simply convinces Job by the Socratic method, if you please, that he was mistaken in his denial of divine justice. And it is quite in keeping with the Socratic method not to tell Job anything he does not already know. It is a case of education in the literal sense of the term. Of course I do not mean that the poet deliberately wrote in this way for this reason, but the fact that he did so

write is no ground for objection to these chapters. Only in this way would it be possible for God to speak to a man through Nature. However much or little of the autobiographical element there may be in Job, I suspect that God had spoken through the wonders of Nature to the poet himself and had said just what he says in these speeches.

But, says Jastrow (p. 76), the problem of the book is not touched on: if these "nature poems" were not attached to the Book of Job no reader would ever associate them with the problem. They have "nothing at all" to do with Job's complaints (p. 86). Yet certainly no reader would ever suppose that these chapters were complete in themselves: the form of the questions and the ironic comments show clearly, at the least, that they are addressed to some one who has spoken or acted as though he knew a great deal more than he does. Here again Jastrow is not quite consistent. On the page following the statement just quoted he says (p. 87) that the purpose of these poems was to teach "humility in the face of the overpowering achievements of the Almighty." Has that nothing to do with Job's complaints and the problem of the book? In another place (p. 14) Jastrow himself says that these chapters suggest a definite and final answer to the problem.

It is true, of course, that no explanation of undeserved suffering is given in Yahweh's speeches. One reason which has been suggested is that the poet was not so much concerned with the discussion of a problem as with the portrayal of an experience. That he is interested in portraying experience and character is clear. Eliphaz and the rest are not mere caricatures: they express forcibly and beautifully beliefs with which the poet himself had little sympathy. To this extent the author was like those modern writers who insist that they do not seek to present a message but only to give a faithful picture of human life. He has also a poet's interest in words and phrases, not infrequently overpassing the bounds of dramatic probability to play with a thought and dress it in many colors. None the less he is also concerned, and deeply, with the problem which is raised by Job's experience, and he has convictions about it.

Some commentators hold that it was unnecessary to give a solution in the Yahweh speeches, because it had already been given in the first two chapters. What then is the significance of the Prologue in its relation to the Theophany? If the purpose of the whole book is to refute Satan's accusation, why are so many chapters of dialogue necessary, and how is the problem of suffering related to this purpose? Do Job's complaints merely show how sorely he has been tried and thus emphasize the genuineness of his piety, and are the charges of the friends merely the last refinement of the torture inflicted upon him? Buttenwieser (p. 41) sees a close connection between the Prologue and the doctrine of Job's three friends: the dogma of exact retribution had made piety a matter of mere policy, as the Satan claimed in Job's case. Hence the author's interest in establishing the possibility and reality of a different kind of piety, free from self-seeking. Surely it is not necessary thus to make the whole book a mere expansion of the Prologue. Jastrow (pp. 52 ff.) and Fullerton (pp. 116, 131) attribute the scenes in heaven to the author(s) of the Dialogue, but the fact that both Dialogue and Epilogue are directed against the position of the friends, not the charge of the Satan, suggests rather that the poet simply retained the Satan scenes from the folk-tale. The subtlety and sophistication which Fullerton sees in them (p. 116) are, to say the least, debatable. In relation to the Dialogue the effect, if not the purpose, of the Prologue is to assure the reader in advance that the friends are wrong, indeed to emphasize their error by making Job's righteousness itself the occasion of his misfortune. In heaven, it seems, affliction proves the very opposite of what it is taken by the orthodox on earth to prove.

Even if the Prologue does give the author's own answer to his problem, there is no reference to this answer in the speeches of Yahweh. Job knows nothing of the scenes in heaven. What is the poet's message to the sufferer himself? Possibly he means to suggest that there is an explanation known in heaven, though the one afflicted cannot discern it. There is some comfort in this thought, but if it is what the poet had in mind, the Theophany is indeed, as Ball says (p. 2), "a magnificent

irrelevance." We must find a better hypothesis than this if we are to relate the speeches of Yahweh satisfactorily to the Dialogue.

Another reason that has often been given for the absence of any explanation in 38–42 is that the writer's purpose was not to propose a new solution of the problem but only to refute the old one (so Fullerton, p. 133). If this was all he had in view we should certainly expect a very different divine speech from what we have. Such a speech as is presupposed by 42 7 and was probably found in the *Volksbuch*, clearly and unequivocally commending and vindicating Job, would be more in accord with this purpose. The present Theophany has a somewhat better justification if we suppose that the writer desired not only to refute the old dogma but also to show to what unfortunate results it led when experience proved incompatible with it. This is the view expressed by Gray (p. li): "The book aims not at solving the entire problem of suffering, but at vindicating God and the latent worth of human nature against certain conclusions drawn from a partial observation of life." Job's bitter arraignment of God then shows to what extremes a genuinely righteous man may be driven by insistence on the cruel doctrine, and the Theophany is therefore needed to guard against any impression that Job was right in his charges. The weakness of such an interpretation is that it ignores the fact that by its position, its length, and its literary power the reply of Yahweh stands as the climax of the book. If it is genuine at all, it must be central in the author's plan.

Our difficulty is due in part to studying the Dialogue by itself and assuming that nothing not found in it can be part of the poet's purpose. We should do better to take Dialogue and Theophany together and see if a common purpose can be found in both. As Gray says (p. lxii), since a theophany is needed and there are no other grounds, such as style, for rejecting the one we have, it is safest to keep it if it can be related to the rest of the book.

May it not be that to the poet's mind the absence of any answer *was* the answer? It is better to recognize that there is no answer than to hold to one which is false. Job realizes

that his charges were foolish because he sees that they were based on insufficient evidence. No amount of suffering or mystery could give man, with his limited knowledge, the right to question God's justice. The ironic tone of the Yahweh speeches reflects the poet's own indignation at such presumption. "Thus the main, if not the only, motive of the writer," says Ball (p. 4), "would seem to be to discourage mankind from striving to penetrate the impenetrable secrets of God; to bid them recognize the limits of human understanding and abstain from all attempts to lay down rules for the Divine actions even in the name of Justice and Right." If this was what the author meant to say, it was true and it was worth saying. It is worth saying today. With all that modern science has added to our knowledge of the universe in this and that particular, wisdom must still confess, "Lo, these are but the outskirts of his ways." We are still very far from being in a position to approve or condemn the government of the world. When any man presumes to question the ways of God with man, Nature still says to him, if he will hear, "Who is this that darkeneth counsel by words without knowledge?" We cannot "grasp this sorry Scheme of Things entire," "shatter it to bits—and then Re-mould it nearer to the Heart's Desire." Whether we approve or no, we must "accept the universe." If there is little comfort in this, if it is neither satisfying nor inspiring, it is still better than ignorant presumption. Submission can become devotion only if we believe that God is good as well as mighty and wise, but whether or not the Book of Job teaches this, faith may add it, and the fact that the poet's message is incomplete will not make it less true or less important so far as it goes.

Many believe that the book does teach not only submission to God's power and wisdom but also trust in His goodness. Buttenwieser (p. 66) sees in 42 2, 5 f. an "act of worship" by which "Job confesses that . . . he now knows God more profoundly than ever . . . as the God of morality and boundless love." Jastrow (p. 14) finds that chapters 38 f. suggest as the answer to the problem of the book "simple faith in a mysterious power, whose manifestations are to be seen in . . . nature."

Many of the older commentators read in the speeches of Yahweh a message of trust in the face of life's mysteries. The instances of God's care of the animals are cited as proving His goodness. For myself I must confess that I can find hardly more than a possible suggestion of this. The God of these chapters is the God of Nature, and Nature, like human life, sometimes suggests goodness and sometimes indifference or even cruelty, as Job found. Some aspects of Nature suggest Providential care, as in Mt. 6 26–30, but this application is not explicitly made in Job. The poet neither clearly suggests nor combats the idea of Providence. Perhaps the reason is that he is not addressing a frightened soul but one which is too self-confident. The purpose of Yahweh's speeches is not to reassure but to humble. Job does not need to be convinced directly of God's goodness, but only to be shown that he was not justified in allowing his misfortune to make him doubt what he had always hitherto believed (*v. i.*, p. 128).

To this we may add another reason which has often been given for the absence of any explanation of Job's sufferings in chapters 38–42. Not only does the poet recognize that there is no explanation to be given; he also knows that without one a sufferer may still find peace. I see no reason to doubt that he wished his book to be of real help to those who suffered as Job did, were misunderstood as he was, and were tormented by his doubts. In order that he might not fail them as the three friends failed Job, it was necessary that he be true to actual experience, in which the sufferer finds no solution but does often find comfort. Here, it seems to me, we must go back from nearly all of the more recent interpretations to what seemed very plain to many of the older commentators. Job finds no answer to his question, but he does find satisfaction in a profound religious experience, and it does not seem at all unwarranted to infer that the poet himself believed and meant to teach that the answer to this most baffling and discouraging of all man's problems is to be found neither in traditional dogma nor in intellectual speculation but only in immediate experience of contact with God.

We have still to face the fact that the Dialogue leads us to

expect and the Epilogue presupposes a speech of vindication, whereas the tone of chapters 38–41 is distinctly one of rebuke. So striking is this that Jastrow (p. 87) thinks the Theophany was added to counteract the effect of the Dialogue. Of all the explanations of this apparent discrepancy which have been offered by scholars who regard the Theophany as a part of the original work, the most remarkable is the theory of Buttenwieser. In his hands the divine speech becomes a vindication of Job, the condemnation in it being directed against the three friends. Job has already reached comfort and assurance before Yahweh appears (pp. 39 f.). The climax of the book is found in chapter 28, which is retained as a part of Job's speech (p. 60). From the conception of material retribution Job has struggled to one of spiritual retribution, in which righteousness finds its reward in fellowship with God (p. 57). His confession in 42 1–6 is not an expression of penitence but "dramatic evidence of the transformation wrought in him" (p. 61). But Buttenwieser attains this result only by drastic emendation and a radical rearrangement of the text. For example, 27 2 does not sound very peaceful, so it is moved from its place so near chapter 28 to a much earlier position (pp. 133, 145). This is altogether too heroic, not to say Procrustean. How can 38 f. be regarded as addressed to the three friends, when the questions are all in the singular? Buttenwieser has an explanation, but it is hardly convincing: divine utterances, he says (p. 64), are regularly represented as addressed to individuals; thus 42 7 is addressed to Eliphaz only, and so is 38 2. But in 42 7 there is a direct reference to the other two friends, while there is no intimation anywhere in 38–42 6 that Yahweh has more than one person in view.

The rearrangements of the text which Buttenwieser's scheme demands are defended with great ingenuity. The arguments are surprisingly plausible, and the form claimed as original can rarely if ever be considered impossible. All the rearrangements, however, rest ultimately on the assumption that there is one speech of condemnation directed against the friends, followed by one of vindication addressed to Job (which, incidentally, is amazingly brief and entirely different from anything in the

Hebrew text). Positive evidence for this is found in the Greek of 38 2 and 40 8. All Buttenwieser's other arguments constantly come back to this. That the LXX reads as it does in these two verses is certainly striking and hard to explain. The Greek is so different from the Hebrew that, so far as I can see, neither can be derived from the other. We must simply choose between them. But this means that the verses have no evidential value, and Buttenwieser's whole case evaporates.

Another explanation of the apparent discrepancy between the Dialogue and the Theophany has been offered by Fullerton. Everything after 40 5 is rejected, and the first reply of Job in 40 3–5 is regarded as the original conclusion of the book (pp. 125 ff.). This confession, which looks like an act of submission and would naturally be so taken by an orthodox reader, is thought to be intentionally ambiguous and designed to convince the more thoughtful that the problem of suffering is really insoluble (p. 129 f.); likewise the speech of Yahweh in 38 f. artfully disguises its real purport: it sounds like a condemnation of Job, but its irony is really directed against orthodox readers who think that they can explain suffering (p. 130). The real purport of 38 f. "was that the problem of suffering, unsolved in the Dialogue, was to be subsumed under the general inexplicability of the universe" (p. 131)—which, by the way, is exactly what these speeches have been taken to mean by hosts of readers, both "pious" and "thoughtful." The ambiguity which Fullerton finds in these chapters—and which is undeniable in Job's first confession, though not necessarily intentional—is attributed to the author's desire to get his book a hearing in the face of the bold skepticism of the Dialogue (p. 133). We are reminded of Mark's explanation of the parables as intended to veil the truth from the uninitiated.

The starting point for Fullerton's theory is the conviction that in Job's revolt there had been nothing irreligious; he had done nothing to repent of and nothing for which he needed to be rebuked. But why assume that the divine speech must be either one of unqualified condemnation or one of unqualified approval? As a matter of fact, God does not imply that Job

had deserved his affliction. Neither does Job cease to hold fast his integrity. This is as true of 40–42 as of 38 f. All Job confesses is that he was mistaken in the inference drawn from his suffering. As Gray puts it (p. lviii), along with the issue between Job and his friends, "Job is also at issue with himself. The old *theory* leads inevitably to the conclusion that God is unjust, but the old *experience* of God still prompts him to trust God as being good as well as mighty." While the theory dominates, he can only beg God to leave him alone; when the experience reasserts itself, he longs for a renewal and confirmation of the old relationship. In other words, Job is satisfied, because in the God of the Theophany he recognizes the God he had known and trusted in the past. The realization that his charges of injustice were not justified allows the return of his former faith (*v. s.* p. 125). He was right in holding fast his integrity, but wrong in condemning God in order to justify himself, wrong in darkening counsel by words without knowledge. Gray reminds us (pp. lix f.) that the condemnation in Yahweh's speech to him and his vindication in the Epilogue do not have the same reference. The lack of any such bill of indictment as Job had challenged God to produce accords with the judgment of the Prologue, which is explicitly confirmed by the Epilogue. What is condemned is Job's attitude *after* the calamity, growing out of the theory of the friends and implying a knowledge of God's ways which no man possesses. Fullerton says (p. 132) that the Dialogue "shows how an honest man should act," but should an honest man charge God with injustice? Given the false conception of God which results from the dogma of retribution, he should certainly maintain his integrity and rebel against such a God, but should he hold such a conception? If as Fullerton says (p. 119), this God was but a phantom, should not a direct manifestation of the true God correct such a misconception? We may agree with Fullerton, and be grateful to him for pointing out so clearly (p. 120), that "Job's ethical triumph in c. 9" is followed by a "deepened religious experience" and in his subsequent speeches "Job is described as gradually struggling out of the clutches of the phantom God and feeling after a truer concep-

tion of the deity." Nevertheless Job seems to feel to the end that God has wronged him and owes him a public apology. Before his friends he is vindicated, as he knew he would be, but only after he has been shown and has admitted that he was wrong in charging God with injustice. There is no real discrepancy between the Dialogue and the Theophany; each needs the other to make clear its full meaning.

One more question, albeit of minor importance, calls for discussion. Was there originally only one speech and one confession, or were there two of each, as now? Jastrow assigns as reasons for rejecting 40 15–41 not only the different character of these chapters but also the fact that they "are put forward as a second speech in the mouth of Yahweh." Surely we cannot prejudge the question in that fashion! Omitting this section we still have two confessions of Job and (in 40 6–14) a second speech of Yahweh. But Jastrow holds (p. 82) that the repetition of 38 3 in 40 7 shows the whole second speech to be "supplementary and presumably by a different author." Now repetition, if not a deliberate literary device, may indicate textual disorder, but that is not necessarily an argument against authenticity. The fragmentary repetitions in 42 3 f. must be due to some corruption of the text, but if there were originally two Yahweh speeches it is not unnatural that the second should begin with a repetition of 38 3.

Fullerton (p. 123), having disposed of Job's second confession as already noted, rejects 40 6–14 also, finding it to be only an awkward addendum when simply combined with the first speech. He prefers (p. 124 n.) to regard it as the introduction to the behemoth-leviathan section. Gray also (p. xlix) treats all of 40 6–42 1 as secondary. Ball, on the other hand, remarks (p. 439) that 40 15 might naturally follow 39, 40 1–14 then being an editorial interpolation. Gray's arguments are as follows: (1) In 40 4 b Job has already thrown up his case and there is no further need for Yahweh to speak. (2) After 40 4 f. a second speech "comes perilously near nagging" (quoting Peake), and this objection is only partly mitigated by omitting verse 7 and retaining 8–14 as a second speech. (3) Without the behemoth-leviathan section the second speech is suspiciously

short. (4) There is a new subject but not sufficient distinctness of purpose in the second speech, nor does it draw from Job a really distinct or different confession: he does not withdraw his impugnment of God's righteousness. The first two and the fourth of these points hinge largely on the question of a difference between Job's two confessions. The first is, as Fullerton shows, decidedly ambiguous, but instead of seeing a subtle device for appeasing the orthodox it is more natural to suppose that Job was not yet ready for more than this non-committal capitulation. Barton, following Marshall, reads in these verses a sullen submission without conviction of error, and this accords well with the context. Job had not expected such a Theophany as this, and is unwilling to admit that he was mistaken. He is still inclined to feel that he has only been justified in his first contention that in an unequal contest with the Almighty he would not be able to "answer him one in a thousand" (9 3). It is still necessary, therefore, to prolong the Theophany until his rebellious mood is dissolved. Consequently Yahweh is not nagging in the second speech, but simply pressing the point home. It is not at all necessary to omit verse 7 (= 38 3). It is true that the second speech is very short if we omit the behemoth-leviathan section, but that section only obscures the real difference between the two speeches. Possibly the speech was once longer than it is, though we need not assume that if there were two speeches they must have been of the same length. Perhaps it was to compensate for the brevity of the second speech that the behemoth-leviathan passages were composed. The difference between the two speeches is not simply that between divine government in nature and in human life. In 38 f. Job has been shown that there is much which he does not know about God's work; now he is directly challenged to assume omnipotence and demonstrate that he can rule the world with greater justice than God has shown. It is this further challenge which breaks the last shred of his rebellion. In 42 3 he does withdraw his impugnment of God's justice, if not in 6, where the text is quite uncertain.

For his rejection of 40 7–14 as a variant in the original speech Gray gives the following reasons: (1) The effect of 40 2

is weakened by adding more. (2) 40 4 f. is better after 40 2 than after 8–14. (3) If the poet had intended to deal with Job's impugnment of God's righteousness, he would have done so more nearly on the scale of the treatment of the divine wisdom and power in 38 f. (4) If the speech of Yahweh dealt separately and concluded with the question of the divine righteousness, it would be strange that Job's confession should refer only to God's might. Now we have seen that 40 2 did not produce the required effect; more was required to bring Job to the mood expressed in 42 1–6. It is quite true that 40 4 f. belongs immediately after 2 f., but it remains there if 6–14 is retained as a second speech. The third and fourth points in Gray's argument assume that Job's impugnment of God's righteousness is not referred to until 40 6–14, but the whole force of 38 f. has just that in view: there is no point in the exaltation of God's power and wisdom except to convince Job that he has spoken unadvisedly. Finally, Job's confession in 42 3 cannot refer merely to God's might, because he has never denied it. By itself it might mean, "I knew all along that it was hopeless to resist your arbitrary omnipotence," but in conjunction with 5 it means rather, "I realize that you move upon a level quite beyond my sight and understanding."

This defense of the present order of the text leaves something to be desired. If the difference between the two speeches and the difference between the two confessions were in more immediate and obvious accord, and if the distinction between the issue on which Job is condemned and that on which he is vindicated were more explicitly drawn, we might feel more confidence. It is not certain that there were two speeches and two confessions in the original work, but the contrary has not been proved, and since the book has come down to us in this form, the burden of proof is on the negative. After all, most of our arguments in cases like this really prove no more than that we like one alternative better than the other, and we assume that the author's taste was as good as our own. The assumption honors him, of course, but it may be unwarranted.

On the whole, while the newer commentaries exhibit an amazing wealth of erudition and a great deal of keen thinking,

they do not seem to have helped us much in the larger questions of interpretation; indeed they have rather confused the significance of the book. They have raised questions which needed to be raised, however we may answer them; but with one or two exceptions (notably the I. C. C.) they have tended to push this or that theory to an extreme. For an adequate view of the purpose and meaning of the book we are about where we were before 1920, and this is as true of the final chapters as it is of the whole book. We do not see the full meaning of the Dialogue itself if we consider it apart from or over against the Theophany, nor is there any real discrepancy between them; consequently theories of composite origin like that of Jastrow and theories of reconciliation like those of Buttenwieser and Fullerton are equally unnecessary, nor is it true to say with Ball that the divine speeches are integral but irrelevant. The answer God gives to Job is what the poet regarded as the only answer man had ever received; and he was right. Job's problem is as tragically real and as hopelessly baffling today as it ever was. Smug traditional solutions do not help; they may do much harm. Yet presumptuous denial of any justice in the universe is not warranted. Who are we, to suppose that we can judge of matters so far beyond our knowledge? If we could see God face to face we should know how foolish it is to question his goodness.