

These notes are the work of Hobart Grazier, Professor of VFCC and NBI/C for many years. They are unedited and offered freely to those interested in understanding the Book of Job. Having studied under Bro. Grazier, I offer them for the edification and blessing of those at Bethel A/G with the sincere hope that this great man of God will continue to influence those of this generation as he did in mine.

Pastor Rich Catapano

Job

INTRODUCTION

A. The Beauty of the Book of Job.

According to Keats, the English author, beauty is truth; truth, beauty. This being the case, the book of Job is certainly a book of beauty. Beauty calls for reality. Job's cry is the cry of every human heart that searches for truth. The experience of Job is the experience of every forward moving Christian. Beauty calls for pathos of which the book of Job abounds. One calamity after another befell Job. His friends forsook him; those who should have comforted him in his distress proved to be his accusers. The innocent suffered misunderstanding, false accusations, and reproaches. Beauty calls for life. The book of Job abounds with truths, which vibrates in the breasts of all who peruse its pages.

B. The Book of Job is Neglected.

Admittedly, Job is referred to quite often as an example of suffering and patience but we seldom see a genuine attempt to analyze the book of Job with a view to a thorough understanding of its contents. This is for two reasons. First, other portions of the Word seem to meet the needs of men much easier. The gospels with their stories, the Psalms with their devotional element, and the epistles with their doctrine and exhortation all lend themselves rather easily to meeting the needs of the Christian. Job seems to be too abstract, too philosophical, for every day consumption. The average Christian does not want to project his religious life very far beyond the borders of that which is easily grasped with the mind.

Secondly, that which is of great value is often appreciated only after it is thoroughly understood. Some folk have to learn to like good music. A careful analysis of Berlioz's Symphony Fantastique often results in admiration on the part of the student. So it is with the book of Job. When it is READ, DIGESTED, and ANALYZED it affords us an understanding and appreciation that is unparalleled in Scripture.

C. The Theme of the Book of Job.

A number of books in the Bible have what is commonly called a "theme", or central thought. The theme of Colossians e.g., has to do with the Lordship of Christ above all things. In Ephesians the theme is Christ, the Head of a unified Church on display to show the manifold wisdom of God. What is the central idea in Job? What is the theme of Job? Once the student has the answer to these questions the problem in the book of Job is solved.

1. "Suffering" has been advanced as the theme of the book of Job. "Why do Christians suffer?" has been suggested as a theme also. Now it is true that in the book of Job there is much suffering. But is the purpose of the book merely to tell us about suffering or to tell us why Christians suffer? Now the theme of the book is related to suffering but is not suffering as such.
2. Some will say that the theme of the book is "repentance". It is pointed out that if Job whom God called a perfect and upright man could find place for repentance, the average Christian

should surely be willing to repent. This thought is an excellent one; men should be willing to repent as often as sin is found in their lives. Job is a splendid example of this. We must never get beyond the point where we are willing to repent. We never outgrow our need for repentance. If Job, as stalwart a man of God as ever lived, could repent in dust and ashes surely the forward moving Christian should be alert to his own need in this area. But the message of Job goes far deeper than repentance.

3. At this point we do not propose to point out what we believe to be the theme but merely indicate a series of thoughts that should guide the student in his endeavor to determine for himself the theme of Job. The following items will help the student formulate the theme.
 - a. Sanctification, perfection, holiness are suggestive words.
 - b. THE END OF THE LORD, God's ultimate purpose in one's life.
 - c. The theme has to do with the PURPOSE of God not the PROBLEM in the book. Since the book of Job is so little understood, the problem stands out in sharp focus. Consequently most of us think of the message of Job in terms of the problem. And the problem is, why did Job have to suffer so? What was the point of it? Purpose, though, not problem, gives us the answer. When the purpose is seen the problem disappears.
 - d. We must see that Job had a deep lesson to learn regarding his own nothingness.
 - e. We must learn that suffering and chastening can be marks of love, not punishment. Sin causes suffering. All suffering is not caused by sin, however. We hasten to qualify the previous statement by saying that all suffering is not caused by personal sin in an individual's life. Suffering can be for the purpose of refining and perfecting.
 - f. We must realize that we never use a giant's test on a pigmy. We never determine a scholar's learning by asking him to recite the alphabet. In other words, the test is geared to the individual. The intensity of any trial in a Christian's life is an indication of the caliber of the man God is dealing with. Only a Job could stand a Job's test. Does this not tell us why God can trust some folk with burdens, with intercessory prayer, responsibility in the kingdom and not others? I believe so. Let us ask ourselves the question, what would Job's three friends have done had they received the afflictions instead of Job?

Brother Glen Reed, an instructor at Central Bible Institute, gave his class in Hebrew Poetry this statement:

“We should feel a sense of discontentment were the devil to challenge some PUNY creature a man known only for his meanness and weakness; and we feel in this tremendous contest, the best, strongest and purest man was chosen. One that was *blameless, upright, fearing God and turning away from evil.* (1:8).”

Job, while he was wealthy, was not known for that wealth; he was famous as a great man but was not known and is not known for his popularity; he lived a long life but he is not remembered for having attained a great age. Job is known because when he was reduced to an ash heap, was humiliated, and was scorned; he constantly looked to God, accepted the picture God painted of him, and was big enough to repent in dust and ashes. This is what makes Job famous.

D. The Outline of Job

Following is a suggested outline:

II

- A. Dialogue between Job and the three comforters Chapters 3-31
- B. Speech of Elihu Chapters 32-37
- C. Message of Jehovah Chapters 38-41

The following outline was given by Glen Reed mentioned above. We feel it is an excellent one.

- A. 1:1-5 Introduction –Historical – Prologue.
 - B. 1:6 – 2:10 Satan’s assault. Job stripped of all.
 - C. 2:11 – 13 The three friends – their arrival.
 - D. 3:1 – 31:40 Job and his friends.
 - E. 32:1 – 37:24 The ministry of Elihu, the mediator*
 - D. 38:1 – 42:6 Job and Jehovah.
 - C. 42:7-9 The three friends – their departure.
 - B. 42:10-13 Satan’s defeat. Job blessed with double.
- A. 42:14-17 Conclusion – Historical – Epilogue.

*Note that by this introversion of the ministry of Elihu, the mediator is placed in the middle, summing up the ministry of Job’s three friends and introducing the ministry of Jehovah.

II. SETTING

A. The Characters in Job are real.

Ezekiel refers to Job as a real character (14:14, 20); James makes reference also to Job (5:10, 11)

Regarding Eliphaz the Temanite we know that Teman was a son of Esau (Genesis 36: 10, 11). Obadiah informs us that Teman was noted for its wise men (1:8). See also Jeremiah 49:7.

Bildad the Shuhite was descended from Shua the sixth son of Abraham by Keturah (Genesis 25:2).

Zophar the Naamatite was descended from Benjamin (Numbers 26:40).

Chaldeans and Sabeans are mentioned and are well known as historical.

Elihu was from Buz; his father's name is given Barachel.

B. The places in Job are real.

The land of Uz has been identified by Harold M. Frelich of Nyack Missionary Training Institute as being in Northern Arabia. This was near enough to the Chaldeans and Sabeans to allow them to raid.

Naamah is located some six miles south of Lod in the lowland of Judah.

Teman has been associated with Edom, the land of Esau.

C. Identifying Job.

Can Job be identified with Job the son of Issachar of Genesis 46:13? From notes received from Glen Reed we offer the following possibility.

If Job was the son of Issachar (Genesis 46:13) he would have gone down into Egypt with his father. Issachar was forty at "the going down to Egypt".

If Job was the third son (Genesis 46:13) he would have been about 20 years old at that time. (1706 B.C.)

We are told that he lived 140 years after his "double" blessing (42:10). If that blessing included length of years, then his age would have been 70 plus 140 or 210 (i.e. 3 seventies of years. His lifetime would be from 1726-1516 B.C.).

According to this he was born the year after Joseph was sold, and died 119 years after the death of Joseph (in 1635 B.C.)

If his double blessing did include length of years, than his affliction took place 21 years previously, when he was 70. His removal from Egypt to Uz must therefore have taken place earlier still.

When Job died (1516 B.C.) Moses was 55, and had been in Midian fifteen years (25 years before the Exodus). This would account for Job being a worshipper of the God of Abraham, and explains how Moses could have been the author of the book, and perhaps an eyewitness of the events it records in Midian. If so the time has come (as Dr. Steir foretold and hoped) when this book would be regarded as "the porch of the sanctuary" and when this "fundamental wisdom of original revelation" will cease to be ascribed, as it now is by some of the best, to a later poet in Israel.

The Book of Job has always formed an integral part of the Hebrew Canon; and some 57 passages in it are quoted in other books of the Bible.

D. Regarding the text.

There is no traceable contact with Mosaic legislation in Job. This fact causes us to believe that Mosaic legislation had not yet been given. Therefore the book must have been written previous to Sinai. Surely a Hebrew writing the Book of Job would have appealed to or mentioned the law in support of his views if the law had been given.

Roots of words found in Job are found in Arabic only indicating an early culture and an influence from the area of Midian and Northern Arabia. There are some words of Egyptian origin also which shown the author was familiar with Egyptian. All this points to Moses as the author.

III. THE PROBLEM

We now come to a consideration of the problem in the Book of Job. Why did Job have to suffer as he did when he was such a perfect man? The answer is not given in so many words in the book. We must search for it. At this point there are many who say that a precise answer cannot be given. This is an excuse for not studying and thinking. God has a message here for Christians and it is necessary for us to do our very best to determine what it is.

A. Why do people suffer?

There are those who say that suffering comes because of our natural limitations and our ignorance. A mortal man is unable to cope with the elements successfully and therefore he suffers from his inability. I suppose that much of our suffering is brought about by our weakness but a further question must be asked. Why are we limited and weak? What brought about this inability to cope with nature? We see, therefore, that we must go further for our answer.

Again, there are some who say that suffering is solely a matter of discipline. True, suffering can aid discipline. But even where punishment is used for disciplinary purposes there should be justification for its use. A disciplinarian would not punish unless there was sufficient reason. If God punished, surely there was some ground for His action. It is this ground or justification we are searching for in the life of Job.

A common belief is that suffering is the cause of sin, and that, personal. Job's comforters believed this to be the cause of Job's suffering. This is extremely difficult to demonstrate. Observation today reveals that the saints who are to be holiest are often subjected to the greatest difficulty. Some who are notorious rascals seem to go free. It is extremely dangerous for one to accuse a brother of sin because of afflictions he must undergo. All of the above reasons for suffering are inadequate. They give a partial but not the entire answer.

B. Some important observations.

We must learn that pain can be a privilege as well as a punishment. This may be hard to grasp but let us remember that suffering often has a significance that is realized long after it has gone. Have we not all said at some time or other that what we suffered was worth it? Can we not see that God who watches the sparrow and lily has too much concern for us to allow us to suffer needlessly. Do we not believe that ALL THINGS work together for good to the ones who love God and are called according to His purpose? It becomes necessary, then, for us to look for the good that was accomplished in Job's life to determine the reason for the affliction.

C. The relationship between Calvary and suffering.

Calvary helps us with the solution. The cross is a definite declaration that God wills only good for His creatures. Certainly God would never have sent His son to the cross to suffer in our place if He did not have our good in mind. Christ would not suffer in a bad cause. **THE CAUSE MUST BE GOOD.** Christ's suffering had a high and lofty purpose; it provided for the salvation of mankind. What could be more lofty and noble than this? Is it not conceivable, therefore, that our suffering could, in the wisdom of God, have a noble purpose also?

We must remember also that Christ's sufferings were not for His own sin. Christ was not being punished on the cross. He was suffering there for others. This is redemptive suffering. Now no human being can suffer redemptively for his own self or for others but is it not conceivable that a person's sufferings could well work for the benefit of another? Certainly missionaries suffer much for others. God in His great sovereignty and wisdom is able to use even our suffering for His own glory. Even so, we have yet to determine WHY God would cause one person to suffer for another. Does God have any real justification for doing so? Job gives us the answer.

Calvary shows us that all suffering is not the result of personal sin. Christ, who knew no sin, suffered. Are we to be exempt from this type of suffering? Do I have to locate some sin in my life for each bit of suffering that comes my way? Honest and objective Christians have insisted that they do not know why certain afflictions befall them. It is difficult to question these assertions.

D. Was Job sinful?

God testified twice (1:8, 2:3) that Job was a perfect and upright man, one that hated evil. Job's wife testified to his integrity (2:9). His children relied on him for sacrifices and depended on him for intercession (1:5). His friends failed to find fault in him and Job himself insisted on his innocence. In the light of all this testimony we must agree that Job was a man as free from sin as it is possible to be. To lay sin at his door would be a matter of guesswork. Even after the series of calamities that befell him Job sinned not nor did he charge God foolishly. Why then did Job have to suffer these afflictions? What did God have in mind? God surely had a most excellent justification and reason for allowing the axe to fall on Job. This reason, is what we desire to determine.

E. Did God desire to prove Job's integrity to Satan?

The conversations between God and Satan at the beginning of the book might lead one to believe that God desired to prove to Satan the faithfulness of Job. God reminded Satan of Job; Satan challenged God regarding Job and God accepted the challenge. For God to allow Job to suffer as he did simply to prove to Satan that Job would emerge victorious would have been a very small reason. **GOD IS UNDER NO OBLIGATION AT ALL TO SATAN; HE HAS TO PROVE NOTHING TO SATAN!!!!** Satan's accusation of Job was no more than what he has done and will do to all of God's children. God merely used Satan as a tool to accomplish something else. Now what was it that God was trying to accomplish? When we learn that we have the theme of the book.

Apropos here is Romans 8:28; I Peter 4:1, 2, 6; and Hebrews 12:11

It was not the refuting of Satan but **THE END OF THE LORD** that is in view here. Reverend Walter Beuttler, a fellow laborer in the ministry, made a comment, the substance of which we have condensed as follows:

*“For God to do something for us He must do something with us
Which involves doing something to us.”*

God wanted to do something for this man Job; Job's own welfare was in the mind of God. In order to accomplish this for Job, God had to do something with and to Job.

Can we all not say that under the hand of God we have been made more mellow and Christ-like? Have we all not seen the truth of Peter's statement when he said, *“Therefore, since Christ has suffered in the flesh, arm yourselves also with the same purpose, because he who has suffered in the flesh has ceased from sin, so as to live the rest of the time in the flesh no longer for the lusts of men, but for the will of God.”* (I Peter 4:1-2)

IV. THE THREE COMFORTERS – THEIR CONTRIBUTIONS

Note that Job's three friends when they arrived, hardly recognized him and that they were so affected by the sight of Job that they did not venture to speak to Job for seven days. Job's plight must have been a sorry one indeed. We will learn also that each one of them brought with him his own preconceived ideas regarding Job's afflictions.

ELIPHAZ was perhaps the oldest of the three since he was allowed to speak first. In those days the elders were thus respected. His speech seems to be the most mature of the three as well. The word ELIPHAZ means GOD OF FINE GOLD. Some have ventured to say that he was a capitalist. One thing is certain; he knew nothing about the ministry of comforting. One essential for comforting is that the comforter be able to speak from personal experience. Christ suffered and is therefore able to succor those who suffer. It is obvious that Eliphaz had suffered little in the way of affliction else he would not have antagonized Job so.

Eliphaz has ONE SOURCE OF INFORMATION: A SPIRITUAL EXPERIENCE. In 4:16, 17 we read that he had a spiritual vision. This makes him some kind of an authority, so he thought. On the basis of this one experience, Eliphaz is ready to give Job advice, to point out his difficulty, and to do so with the voice of authority. Eliphaz is typical of those individuals in our Christian community who after having received a healing, an answer to prayer, a prophecy, an interpretation, or a vision of some kind, project themselves upon others with the air of having attained some kind of spiritual superiority. They seem to have the answers but they are all based on their one, lone experience. Actually the experience of Eliphaz was so limited as to be worthless in helping Job. The Christian who has had a life full of rich experiences is likely to be rather modest and unassuming about them. A truly great man is a truly humble one.

In 5:27 Eliphaz assures Job, "*Behold this; we have investigated it, and so it is. Hear it, and know for yourself.*" He is adroit and wise but sarcastic and he cuts Job to the heart. In his last speech he casts away his poise and is very abrupt (22:3). He accuses Job of neglecting the poor and needy (22:5 12-14). The accusations of this man show that he has a pre-conceived judgment that all calamity comes as a result of sin. How can such a person help Job? He knew very little about Job's problem and less about comforting. In 4:7 he actually accuses Job of sin. Job needed someone to help and sympathize with him in his hour of need. Eliphaz was not that man.

BILDAD had his source of information also but his was TRADITION, HISTORY. In 8:8 he advises Job to inquire of the former age and to see what the fathers have learned. He is a philosopher who thinks that the answers to life's problems are to be found in books, study, and knowledge. He is a dry and composed individual who speaks not from experience but from learning. He has made no discoveries of his own but merely reads the accounts of other men.

He is typical of those men who have had no spiritual experience but who can explain theological problems most accurately. I am reminded of the old mother of Israel who when her son, home from the Seminary, told her all about the process of sanctification, said, "John, that is all very interesting you know all about it but I have it." There is a difference between knowing about God and knowing God personally.

Bildad is more direct and brusque than Eliphaz. Note what he says; "*How long will you say these things, And the words of your mouth be a mighty wind?*"(8:2) In 8:13 we read "*So are the paths of all who forget God; And the hope of the godless will perish.*" All Bildad did was to rub salt in the wound. Poor Job was suffering enough as it was. A man in a ditch needs to be picked up; a penniless prospector needs a grubstake. Job was the greater of the two but he was subject to the criticism of his inferior.

ZOPHAR, probably the youngest of the trio, was blunt, rough, and dictatorial. He lacked the dignity of Eliphaz and the argumentative ability of Bildad. This man, speaking dogmatically seems to rush right into the picture. Note his comment in 11:2, 3 *“Shall a multitude of words go unanswered, And a talkative man be acquitted? Shall your boasts silence men? And shall you scoff and none rebuke?”*

What is the source of his information? It is within himself; he knows it all. He has no need for a vision, an experience, learning, or education. He has the answers himself. He claims in 20:2 *“Therefore MY disquieting THOUGHTS make me respond”*. He accuses Job of having the portion of the wicked man (20:29). He goes farther than the other two by hinting that God was not taking care of the matter. He says, *“But would that God might speak, And open His lips against you; And show you the secrets of wisdom! For sound wisdom has two sides. Know then that God forgets a part of your iniquity.”* (11:4) Since God does not speak, Zophar does. In the above verse he as much as says that Job deserved twice as much punishment.

Job was outraged at Zophar’s speech and answered rather sarcastically, *“Truly then you are the people, And with you wisdom will die! But I have intelligence as well as you; I am not inferior to you. And who does not know such things as these?”*

Obviously, Job’s three friends tried to cure rather than comfort him. They failed in both. Knowing that God punished sin they laid all calamity to personal sin. Their knowledge of spiritual things and the way God works with men was limited indeed. Job knew how he stood with God and was therefore able to pronounce the comfort of his friends as vain and their speeches as lies (21:34). It would be interesting to see just how God would treat the three comforters if He punished them as severely for all their sin as He did for what sin Job had. Glen Reed gives us this very timely statement:

“Friends are valued in times of trouble. The kind of friends Job had made were not those who cared for sports and frivolities only. Before you criticize these friends wait until you have visited the sick in trouble, tried to comfort, wait with them, weep with them, sat down for seven days in silence. WHEN FOLK GET INTO TROUBLE THEY WANT SOMEONE WHO CAN TOUCH GOD.”

V. THE PROBLEM OF SELF

A. Sin is deeper in our lives than we realize.

A bit of intense scrutiny on our part, of our own lives, will reveal the truth of the statement at the head of this paragraph. There are times in our lives when we find ourselves guilty of thoughts, actions, or words, that we considered impossible previously. Certain circumstances that are brought to bear upon our lives have the peculiar ability of causing us to respond in unchristian ways. Under pressure, trial, affliction, distress, suffering, and difficulty secret sins and tendencies, part of our very nature, come to the surface and have to be dealt with. Otherwise these INNER TENDENCIES would never show themselves.

Was Job an exception to this rule? Was Job absolutely free from sin? Romans 3:23 teaches us that *all have sinned and fallen short of the Glory of God*. Does this include Job? Certainly Job was a sinner in the same sense that we all are. God called Job a perfect and upright man; what did He mean? The word for “perfect” does not carry the same connotation as our English word. The Hebrew word has to do with “moral integrity” and “blamelessness”. The intent of God’s remark was that Job had such moral integrity –which results in uprightness—that when the pressure would be applied to Job he would eventually respond as God wished. Job voiced the same belief by saying that when he was tried he would emerge as pure gold (23:10). This was in the mind of God when He asked Satan to consider His servant Job. God then called Job a perfect man because he knew that when Satan had done all he could Job would come forth as pure gold. We must not fall into the error of believing that Job was perfect in the sense that he did not commit a sin.

B. Afflictions can reveal secret sins.

Our secret sins and inner tendencies can be dealt with only as they are exposed; they are exposed only under circumstances and pressures designed to reveal them. God in His wisdom knows just how this should be done in each of His children’s lives.

There are three courses open to a man under affliction. He can grow bitter, rebel and finally lose out with God. This man has failed. We should constantly guard against this reaction. The enemy of our soul makes this course seem the most natural and just one. Let us be on our guard.

A second course open to man is to humble himself immediately before God, to respond immediately to the moving of the Spirit of God and repent. There are folk that do this quite regularly. I personally feel that they are in the minority, however.

A third course is the one taken by Job. He squirmed, questioned, wondered, grumbled, and complained but was constantly looking for the solution. He continued to look to God and to trust God for the ultimate outcome. He was honest in all of his remarks and when the final expose of himself came, Job recognized it and repented.

It is probable that most of us follow the third alternative when faced with a spiritual crisis similar to that of Job.

Whether the response to be obedient comes immediately or only after a period of time, it is lovely to see Christian virtues expressed by an individual under great affliction. It is beautiful to see a brave smile work its way across a face full of pain. The writer recalls going with Reverend George W. Hobbs to visit a Mrs. Nemo who was desperately ill in the hospital. This sister was frail and sickly and we wondered just how we would approach her. To our surprise this wonderful saint of God was bubbling over with joy, her face was wreathed with smiles and her conversation was about only the goodness of God. This experience made a marked impression on my life.

When we squeeze a plastic catsup bottle catsup comes out. Put honey in the plastic bottle and when squeezed the bottle will give up honey. Squeeze a man by circumstances and whatever is in that man will come out. Adversity has a way of bringing to the surface that, which is in the heart of man. When, in the midst of persecution, a man prays for and blesses his enemies, he has the love of God in his heart. Apropos is the little poem:

The sandal tree, most sacred tree of all,
Perfumes the very axe that bids it fall.

My children when whipped, would without fail, jump into my arms and love me, even in the midst of their tears. They were begging for love instead of the whipping. What a lesson in lack of malice we adults can learn from this. If adults would bless and seek the love of all those who oppose us in any way what a world this would be. Recall that Job in the end prayed for his comforters.

Had Job reached this state yet? Did he pray for those who persecuted him? Did love and all that was sweet and kind exhibit themselves in Job's life? Not yet. Job started to grumble, complain; and he actually justified himself rather than God in the matter. Job, we shall see, exhibited attitudes that were not those of a mature Christian. Suffering, Peter tells us (I Peter 4:1, 2), serves to bring us to the place where we no longer should live the rest of our time in the flesh to the lusts of men, but to the will of God. God was taking Job through the process Peter was referring to. As long as Job exhibited anything but a totally lovely spirit, God was just in dealing with him with a strong hand. As long as Job insisted in his integrity and complained about the hand of God on his life he yet lacked that sweetness and yieldedness that comes to the mature Christian.

To get rid of the sin problem involves more than conquering certain sins. SELF must be conquered before the sin problem can be solved. In fact SELF is the sin problem. Self is the only sin a man can commit; all sins spring from self. Dr. Tozer, recent editor of "The Alliance Witness" once said that as cancer had many symptoms which could be dealt with separately without effecting a cure, so sin or self has many symptoms which can be dealt with without bringing about a solution to the sin problem. Whenever the cause of cancer is removed the symptoms disappear; similarly when the cause of sin, namely SELF, is removed, the symptoms disappear. Gambling, dope, horseracing, murder, lying, robbery, envy, lust etcetera are all but symptoms of the sin principle of self. Dr. Tozer went on to say that a man was required to deny himself and take up his cross and follow Christ. To deny oneself is to obliterate each and every expression of human desire that runs counter to the will of God. This can be done only as one allows another person, Jesus Christ, to dwell in his heart as Lord and Master. When a man went to the cross in Roman days he never came back. That man was gone forever. When a Christian goes to the cross, crucifies himself thereon, and allows Christ to come into his heart as ruler, the original man with his sinful nature does not come back. Self or self-assertion is the only sin a man can commit; all other sins are but indications or symptoms of the underlying principle of self. Self causes a man to lie about his tax returns. Self causes a child to lie on the floor and kick and scream. Self causes a man to promote unjust causes for gain. Self causes present-day women to expose themselves unduly. Certainly the above items are not expressions of the Holy Spirit.

However, we should not be too critical of Job. Consider the list of trials and afflictions that were his.

He lost his oxen, asses, and servants to the Sabeans.
He lost sheep and servants by fire.
He lost his camels and servants to the Chaldeans.
He lost his sons and daughters.
He developed sores and boils all over his body.
His wife was of no help she nagged him.
His three friends accused him of sin and condemned him in the midst of his sickness.
Elihu was some better but even he talked rather sharply to Job.

Let me say in all seriousness that it would take Jesus Christ Himself or some human being within whom Christ is dwelling to the fullest measure to suffer those afflictions without being disturbed. Job was disturbed but it was this disturbance that finally caused Job to see himself as he was.

Job was not guilty of any of the accusations of his friends. Job knew this and endeavored to vindicate himself. It was this self-vindication, this self-justification, this defense of self that finally led the way for Job to get a realistic picture of himself. It was this, along with the pressure of affliction, that revealed to Job that poisonous worm eating away at the roots of his very spiritual life. Until God exposed Job to himself nothing could be done by way of correcting the evil. No sinner can be saved until he realizes he is lost. No sin can be removed in a Christian's life until the Christian is made aware of that sin. Part of God's plan is to make us aware of our sin. In His wisdom He knows just the best way to do this.

To get an idea of Job's attitude let us look at his comments in 6:1-15 with emphasis on verses 5-9. What does Job mean by these verses? Job seems to say this: 'Your reasoning is insipid, tasteless, and unsavory. If you gave me something to feed upon, something worthwhile to think about, something to help me, I would not bray and complain to you'. This is sarcasm. In 6:22 Job tells them that their advice is unrequested: "*Have I said, 'Give me something,'*" we have more sarcasm in 6:25. Harold M. Freligh in his book on Job, page 62, has this to say regarding Job's attitude:

"The discussion soon becomes a give-and-take affair. Job will not back down for any of them. "*What you know I also know; I am not inferior to you.*" (13:2). They are not touching his case. "*Sorry comforters are you all.*" (16:2), he declares to them. They only succeeded in vexing his soul, and Job asks how long they are going to keep this up (19:2). If they are so wise, why don't they prove it by keeping still? "*O that you would be completely silent, And that it would become your wisdom!*" (13:5). As a final thrust, Job openly calls them not only vain comforters but also liars. "*How then will you vainly comfort me, For your answers remain full of falsehood?*" (21:34)"

Are these the words of a man noted for patience? Job's patience gives out rather early. "*What is my strength, that I should wait? And what is my end, that I should endure?*" (6:11) Later he makes the following excuse for his "*As for me, is my complaint to man? And why should I not be impatient?*" (21:4). As Freligh writes, "If anybody is going to be blamed it can't be Job; he is quite sure of that. Consequently self-righteousness exudes from his lips like gum from the incision in a cherry tree." (Page 62 in Freligh's book, Job.)

Job had to come to the place where he had no righteousness of his own. When he says, "*Desist now, let there be no injustice; Even desist, my righteousness is yet in it. Is there injustice on my tongue?*" (6:29, 30), he is saying in effect that his cause is righteous and that he has nothing to take back. On the contrary it is his friends who should take their remarks back. Self-righteousness defends self. The righteousness which is from God by faith has no personal defense.

We ask an important question at this point. Did Job's self-righteous declarations give him any satisfaction? Hardly. Instead, they created a barrier between him and God. Job's complaints against his friends were but echoes of his complaint against God. What does Job say against God? "*Why have You set me as Your target, So that I am a burden to myself? Why then do You not pardon my transgression, And take away my iniquity? For now I will lie down in the dust; And You will seek me, but I will not be.*" (7:20, 21). He tries to convince God of his self-righteousness. "*According to Your knowledge I am indeed not guilty, Yet there is no deliverance from Your hand. Your hands fashioned and made me altogether, And would You destroy me?*" (10:7,8). Later Job said, "*As God lives, who has taken away my right, And the Almighty, who has embittered my soul; ...My lips certainly will not speak unjustly, Nor will my tongue mutter deceit. Till I die I will not put away my integrity from me. I hold fast my righteousness and will not let it go. My heart does not reproach any of my days.*" (27:2ff). Of interest are verses 13--15, 22 also.

Deep down in Job's soul there was a complaint against God. He failed to see the justice of God in letting him suffer so. Job considered himself a laughing stock (12:4); he claimed righteousness for himself (13:18); and declared that, "*Although there is no violence in my hands, And my prayer is pure.*" (16:17). All this created a barrier between Job and his God. Job was not guilty of the sins his accusers thought but he was guilty of something "far more subtle and deep" as Freligh put it. Job was guilty of depending upon his own goodness and self-righteousness. He had yet to learn that no man is righteous before God.

Man is like an iceberg, nine-tenths submerged, one-tenth visible. The one-tenth that we and others see of a man represents but a fraction of the entire man. In unguarded moments and in times of great stress there springs from a man's innermost being thoughts, inclinations, and even actions that show the wickedness and deceitfulness of the human heart. The Psalmist, realizing this prayed to be delivered from secret sins. If, in desperate circumstances, and in unguarded moments, man displays an evil temper, a nasty spirit, a desire for vengeance; and since our outward performances are but the expression of our inner character; it is evident that unsanctified self lies deep down in our beings. God in His love seeks to remove it and in His wisdom employs circumstances that are designed to force these inner tendencies and attitudes to the surface where they can be seen and dealt with. We are reminded of the oft-used phrase; what a man is, is more important than what he does. God seeks in every Christian's life to produce a highly sanctified life. God is holy and perfect and seeks for men to be the same.

We ask the student to pause at this point and try to form a statement regarding the theme of Job. Can you do it?

Freligh points out that in chapters 29-31 Job refers to himself nearly one hundred times. It is "I", "I", "I" from beginning to end. In chapter 29 he refers to himself more than forty times while the references to God are but five.

God had to break Job down in order to work with him. When Job came to the end of himself, helpless and worn out; when he received a picture of his sinful condition and confessed his sin; then God could step in and solve all his problems. "This poor man cried, and the Lord heard him and delivered him out of all his troubles," the Psalmist cried. Job could not be made righteous in a Godly sense as long as he had a righteousness of his own. Job had to be stripped of his own self-righteousness before God's righteousness could be given him. As long as "I" is on the throne of our life the great "I AM" cannot be there.

C. God's methods of dealing with the sin problem.

God has four ways of dealing with sin in the life of His saints. First, we know that when a man gets saved there is a remarkable transformation in his life. A good experience of salvation gets rid of many of our sinful tendencies because we have been regenerated and have become new creatures in Christ.

All have observed, however, that the sin problem is not entirely eliminated at salvation. Romans teaches us that the capability of living a holy life is ours at salvation but experience teaches us that this is not as easily realized as we would wish. Therefore, God uses the WORD as a second means. The honest man of God when confronted with the Word of God speaking to him and revealing to him what he should do, quite often makes the appropriate adjustment in his life. The writer is reminded of a friend of his who when he received salvation inquired about the appropriateness of certain activities. Upon realizing that the Word was opposed to them he immediately gave them up as not in keeping with his Christian experience.

All do not obey the Word so willingly. It is necessary for God to let the Holy Spirit burn conviction and condemnation into a man's very soul causing him to cry out for deliverance before victory can be obtained. It is a common experience for God's children to cry out for deliverance.

God pin points some sin in their life and until they obtain victory all spiritual progress comes to a standstill.

Sorry to say, man does not always respond to the wooing of the Holy Spirit either. Sin can get such a grip on our lives, and desires can become so strong that even conviction fails to break the hold. God then resorts to a fourth means, suffering chastisement. If we have flint in our nature if we are black walnuts instead of peanuts, God will use heroic means to bring about the desired effect in our lives. Few of us escape even this fourth measure. But God in His sovereignty can and does use this method. Note Hebrews 12:5-12; I Peter 4:12-19 also in this regard.

Hebrews 12:5-13

⁵ *and you have forgotten the exhortation, which is addressed to you as sons*
"MY SON, DO NOT REGARD LIGHTLY THE DISCIPLINE OF THE LORD, NOR FAINT
WHEN YOU ARE REPROVED BY HIM; ⁶FOR THOSE WHOM THE LORD LOVES HE
DISCIPLINES, AND HE SCOURGES EVERY SON WHOM HE RECEIVES."

⁷ *It is for discipline that you endure; God deals with you as with sons; for what son is there whom his father does not discipline?*

⁸ *But if you are without discipline, of which all have become partakers, then you are illegitimate children and not sons.*

⁹ *Furthermore, we had earthly fathers to discipline us, and we respected them; shall we not much rather be subject to the Father of spirits, and live?*

¹⁰ *For they disciplined us for a short time as seemed best to them, but He disciplines us for our good, so that we may share His holiness.*

¹¹ *All discipline for the moment seems not to be joyful, but sorrowful; yet to those who have been trained by it, afterwards it yields the peaceful fruit of righteousness.*

¹² *Therefore, strengthen the hands that are weak and the knees that are feeble,*

¹³ *and make straight paths for your feet, so that the limb which is lame may not be put out of joint, but rather be healed.*

I Peter 4:12-19

¹² *Beloved, do not be surprised at the fiery ordeal among you, which comes upon you for your testing, as though some strange thing were happening to you;*

¹³ *but to the degree that you share the sufferings of Christ, keep on rejoicing, so that also at the revelation of His glory you may rejoice with exultation.*

¹⁴ *If you are reviled for the name of Christ, you are blessed, because the Spirit of glory and of God rests on you.*

¹⁵ *Make sure that none of you suffers as a murderer, or thief, or evildoer, or a troublesome meddler;*

¹⁶ *but if anyone suffers as a Christian, he is not to be ashamed, but is to glorify God in this name.*

¹⁷ *For it is time for judgment to begin with the household of God; and if it begins with us first, what will be the outcome for those who do not obey the gospel of God?*

¹⁸ *AND IF IT IS WITH DIFFICULTY THAT THE RIGHTEOUS IS SAVED, WHAT WILL BECOME OF THE GODLESS MAN AND THE SINNER?*

¹⁹ *Therefore, those also who suffer according to the will of God shall entrust their souls to a faithful Creator in doing what is right.*

VI. THE PROBLEM SOLVED

We now come to the solution of the problem in Job's life. Elihu now appears on the scene with a keen insight into Job's problem. Some have criticized this young man and have placed him in the category of the three comforters. God, however, does not condemn him; neither should we. In fact, Elihu, in the opinion of the writer, plays the role of an able mediator and prepares the way for Job to listen to God when He speaks.

Elihu's contribution lies in his emphasis of the fact that God, in His sovereignty, can discipline His children through sufferings. Note again I Peter 4 and Hebrews 12. The student should read chapter 32 very carefully at this point. Elihu was angry with Job because he justified himself rather than God (32:2). He was angry at the three friends as well because they condemned Job and had found no way to help him (32:3).

We must pause here for comment on Elihu's anger towards Job's three friends. They had condemned Job continually throughout their conversations with him and had found no answer to his problem. Further, they do not seem to be interested at all in giving Job any comfort, and solid aid. Oh! How often do God's children, wittingly or unwittingly, add to the discomfort of their afflicted brethren by simply failing to understand and sympathize with them. How often do hints of sin and failure enter into their remarks as they presumably try to be of some assistance! Elihu was angered at the three friends of Job because they stung Job and condemned him when he had already all he could bear. What Job needed was a kind-hearted brother to put his arm around him and plead with God in intercessory prayer in his behalf. A person who is desperately ill does not want or need someone to condemn, criticize, hint at failure, or to say "Oh brother!" just believe. He needs some one to love understand, sympathize, plead in intercessory prayer, and to offer some concrete help. Such is a Godly comforter.

The writer will never forget when he was desperately ill with a heart condition on one occasion and Reverend Robert Moore; President of E.B.I. came to pray. He took hold of God immediately and with tears and cryings and speaking in tongues reached heaven. There was no word of classes that might be missed or of work undone, just pure concern for my welfare. No challenge of faith was given; Brother Moore took the challenge on himself. I loved that man for his excellent ministry when I was afflicted.

It will be well to look at several statements made by Elihu together to get a better understanding of his role.

1. 33:12 *"Behold, let me tell you, you are not right in this, For God is greater than man."*
2. 33:32 *"Then if you have anything to say, answer me; Speak, for I desire to justify you."*
3. 32:2 Note that Elihu was angry with Job because he JUSTIFIED HIMSELF RATHER THAN GOD.

It is very important for the student to note at this time that Elihu did not condemn Job as did the other three; however, he laid his finger on the fault of Job immediately. Job in his self-righteousness failed to justify God and instead justified himself and complained against God. Furthermore, Elihu indicated that he wanted to justify Job. This is more than the three tried to do. Finally, in 33:12 Elihu points out that God demands justification, that God can do no wrong and is thus just in all He does Job failed to look at his afflictions from this viewpoint.

Once again, we say that the student at this point should try to formulate the theme of the book of Job.

STEPS IN THE SOLUTION

A. Step One.

The first step has to do with the fact that God, being what He is, a spirit, infinite, eternal, and unchangeable, in His being, wisdom, power, holiness, justice, goodness, and truth, is absolutely incapable of error and demands justification and reverence from all men at all times. Elihu points out that “*God is greater than man*” (33:12) and that He does not give account to anyone of His matters (33:13). Elihu very tactfully reminds Job of declarations of innocence, (33:9-11)

By saying that “God is greater than man,” Elihu includes the wisdom of God. Therefore, God in His dealings with men cannot make a mistake. What God allowed to happen to Job was not a mistake but was for Job’s eternal welfare. Job failed to glory in tribulations not knowing that tribulations worketh patience and patience experience and experience giveth hope that will not disappoint the man of God. How mistaken Job was by thinking God was mocking him, considering him an enemy and marking his paths. God was rather, refining Job, making of him as outstanding specimen of God’s grace in the life of a man.

B. Step Two.

The second step is indicated in 33:19 where reference is made to the chastening of God with pain upon the sick bed. The point we wish to make here is that God can get our attention and speak to us through the medium of chastisement. My earthly father never chastened the children of his neighbour but confined his attention to his own children. God does not chasten sinners; they will be punished. Chastening is correction; its purpose is to improve. God seeks to save the sinner but to perfect the saint. The 12th chapter of Hebrews and 4th of I Peter give abundance of proof of this. The testimonies of those who claim to have been crowded to Christ through adversity, including physical ailments, are myriad.

A godly mother once said to her son who had been so active in religious matters that he failed to seek God personally, “J. God has had to slow you down by putting you on your back in order to speak to you.” This was a matter of observation on the part of the mother and I daresay there was some truth in it. An angel of the Lord once sought to kill Moses because he failed to have his children circumcised according to the commandment of God. Being unable to move, Moses and his wife, much against her will, circumcised the sons (Exodus 4:24-26). Otherwise Moses would not have been allowed to lead the people of Israel out of Egypt. God’s ministers must set the example of obedience.

One might wonder about the justification of the thoughts and principles we have just presented. When we consider the theme the justification should become clear.

C. Step Three.

The third step is presented in the words of Freligh in his book on Job, “But this chastening is not arbitrary (as Job had believed) but purposeful.” Note the following passages from 33:18ff

“He keeps back his soul from the pit, And his life from passing over into Sheol. Man is also chastened with pain on his bed, And with unceasing complaint in his bones; His flesh wastes away from sight, And his bones which were not seen stick out. Then his soul draws near to the pit, And his life to those who bring death. If there is an angel as mediator for him, One out of a thousand, To remind a man what is right for him, Then let him be gracious to him, and say, ‘Deliver him from going down to the pit, I have found a ransom’; Let his flesh become fresher than in youth, Let him return to the days of his youthful vigor; Then he will pray to God, and He will accept him,”

The above passage is full of significance, pointing out the need of an intercessor, one who ransomed all of which presupposes a corresponding repentance on the part of the afflicted.

The point we have to make at present, however, is that Job was being spared a far worse fate –the pit–; there was something far worse than his afflictions. In the above passage the theology involved assumes the repentance of the man concerned, before the work of the intercessor and ransom becomes effective.

When the writer was but a youth his pastor told the story of a woman of his acquaintance whose child was dying. The mother persisted in prayer for months while the child suffered. Despite the doctor’s statement that the child would die, the mother practically lived in the child’s bedroom interceding. She would not take “no” for an answer. The child lived to become a criminal much to the mother’s regret. When this story was told, a friend of the writer whose child was dying, was in the service. He and his wife were “hanging on” in prayer similarly, demanding that God heal the child. The child was in pain for weeks and had suffered much by lingering in life. But upon hearing the story in the service that night, they went home, knelt down beside the little child’s bed and told God to have His perfect will in the matter. The child died and God gave peace to the bereaved hearts. Beloved, God has a purpose in all that He does! The hairs of our head are numbered; the fall of the sparrow is observed. God has a tremendous interest in His children and does not let them suffer without an excellent reason. Chastening is not arbitrary; it is purposeful.

Romans 8:28 *“And we know that God causes all things to work together for good to those who love God, to those who are called according to His purpose.”* Is still in operation. Nearly all Christians know this verse but how few of us really believe in it to the extent that we say amen to whatever God lets come our way. In our anxiety to be relieved from financial, spiritual, physical, and other pressures we forget that God is constantly dealing with our lives trying to bring about some desired improvement in our relationship with Him.

D. Step Four.

The fourth step consists of Elihu asking Job to take a different attitude towards God. In 34:31-37 we read Elihu’s statement.

“For has anyone said to God, ‘I have borne chastisement; I will not offend anymore; Teach me what I do not see; If I have done iniquity, I will not do it again’? Shall He recompense on your terms, because you have rejected it? For you must choose, and not I; Therefore declare what you know. Men of understanding will say to me, And a wise man who hears me, ‘Job speaks without knowledge, And his words are without wisdom. Job ought to be tried to the limit, Because he answers like wicked men. For he adds rebellion to his sin; He claps his hands among us, And multiplies his words against God.’”

Elihu realizes the possibility of secret sin in Job’s life. There could be things about which Job was unaware. He advises Job to look a little deeper into his life for some fault. Job should realize that he MIGHT BE WRONG. The three friends had failed to discover the fault in Job’s life. Job knew this and defended himself most vigorously. Elihu points out that although the three friends did not succeed in unveiling Job’s sin, it was present nevertheless. Job is persuaded to look for it himself.

Job had to come to the place where he would admit that God was perfectly right and just regardless of circumstances. *“Let God be true and every man a liar”* (Romans 3:4). To complain and grumble is one thing; to be perfectly content in whatever state we find ourselves is quite another. To sing songs of gladness in the day time is easy but to sing them in the night is a chore. Friends, God can give us songs even in the night. The peace that passeth understanding can so become a part of us that even in the midst of the darkest night and amid life’s most severe trial a song of praise to God can burst out of our very being. Christians who have not experienced the joy of the Lord in the midst of severe difficulty have been denied one of the most satisfying and rewarding experiences of the Christian life.

We refer again to 32:2, “he justified himself rather than God”. Also 33:13 “*Why do you complain against Him That He does not give an account of all His doings?*” And finally 35:2, “*Do you think this is according to justice? Do you say, ‘My righteousness is more than God’s’*”. In these verses Elihu has hit upon the fault that was in Job’s life.

E. Step five

One question remains: will Job recognize his error, see the danger he is in and make proper adjustment? God had called Job a perfect (blameless) and upright man, indicating that Job would eventually make the proper response to God’s discipline. Job expressed belief also that when he was tried he would ‘come forth as gold’. Man, in adversity has three choices before him. He can become bitter and rebel. Job was in danger of doing just this. Secondly, a man can yield to the voice of God without questioning. Rarely do we see one who does this constantly. A third choice open to man is to squirm, question, grumble, and complain but at the same time remain honest before God seeking a way out. Job chose the third alternative and justified God’s faith in him. He, like David, was a good repentant; he was honest enough to admit his fault when it was presented to him. The three friends did not succeed; Elihu, while pointing out Job’s fault, was unable to convince Job of sin. It remained for God Himself to effect the proper change in Job’s thinking.

VII. GOD CONVINCES JOB

A study of chapter 38-41 reveals much of God's character and the wisdom He uses in dealing with man. We notice first that God does not accuse Job of wrong; He does not utter any harsh complaint against Job. Neither does He make any reference to Job's complaints against Himself. It would have been easy for God to crush Job at this point but instead, Job's God comes with healing, comfort, balm and as Job's true friend in the time of need. How this should cheer the heart of every Christian. God's business is never to accuse or condemn man; that is the devil's self-appointed task. Christ is ever sitting at the right hand of the Father making intercession for the saints, counteracting the accusations of the enemy. The Lord is our Shepherd, leading us always into green pastures and besides the still waters.

We recall that when Elijah was sitting in the cave on mount Horeb waiting for God to speak, a great and strong wind came but Elijah made no attempt to discern the voice of God in it. The wind was followed by an earthquake and then by a fire but God's voice was not discernable. How did God speak to Elijah on that memorable occasion? With a still small voice (I Kings 19:11f). It is thus always with God. He speaks tenderly and lovingly when He deals with His children. We can be bombarded with voices of accusation and condemnation; our life can seem to be one of deep chaos and confusions causing us to despair. But we should remember that God is not the author of confusion and chaos but of peace and contentment. When God speaks, His sheep know His voice. How often we cause ourselves untold agony by trying to determine which of several voices is of God. When God speaks there will be no doubt at all in the Christian's mind as to the source. We should learn to wait until God does speak. When in doubt, stand still. Eventually God will lead us by devious routes to the place where we can hear and know the voice of God. There is no indication that Job did not know when God spoke to him.

Note also that God did not dwell on Job's troubles. Job knew them well enough. God drew Job's attention to things outside of himself; nature, plants, animals. God knew that for Job to continue to dwell on his troubles would but deepen the despair. Consequently, His first move was to get Job to thinking of something entirely neutral: nature. There was an excellent reason for this. Job, by seeing God in nature, obtained a picture of God and His greatness that caused Job to repent of his former attitude concerning God. Elihu told Job to change His attitude; God enabled Job to change his attitude by giving him a more accurate picture of the vast difference between man and God.

It is human nature to fight back when accused. Job was but being a normal human when defending himself against his accusers. "A soft answer", however, "turneth away wrath". When the Spirit of God probes deep into our lives and speaks to us gently, we are moved to repentance and tears. The goodness of God has led us to repentance. Such was the case with Job. He melted before the tremendous love and gentleness, which was so dominant in God's approach.

In chapter 40 we see an entirely different Job. God closes His remarks by saying, "*Will the one who contends with the Almighty correct him? Let him who accuses God answer him!*" (40:2). Now note Job's answer: "*I am unworthy-how can I reply to you? I put my hand over my mouth. I spoke once, but I have no answer- twice, but I will say no more.*" (40:4, 5).

Job is now a quiet and subdued man. The storm, the wind, the earthquake and the fire have all gone and Job is now ready for the still small voice. As long as Job was in the midst of a storm and defending himself God could not speak to his heart but now the storm has ceased and Job is calm enough to hear the voice of God directing him further. Once we get the "fight" out of our system God can speak peace.

God puts His stamp of approval on Elihu's claim that Job justified himself rather than God when He says "*Would you discredit my justice? Would you condemn me to justify yourself?*" (40:8). We can therefore, say without reservation that Job's sin was justifying and defending himself in the midst of great affliction and in complaining against God instead of justifying Him.

In chapters 40,41 God makes reference to the remarkable character and strength of Behemoth and Leviathan. These beast stand for pride, creature power. Could Job create or even tame such animals? God could. If Job was unable to tame the great beasts how could he tame his own carnal nature? God, being the creator of Behemoth, and Leviathan could certainly tame and control them. Likewise, God, being the creator of man knows how to perfect man. God was at work in the life of Job perfecting and sanctifying a carnal nature. This is the task God has set out to do in every born-again Christian's life. Oh! that we would let Him have His perfect way in our lives and trust Him explicitly regardless of the things we suffer.

Note: The student now has enough information to determine the theme of the book of Job. Can you do it?

A Christian may think that he has his inner life under control but the thought is folly. God alone knows how to rid man of all taint of sin, to render the carnal nature inoperative, and to make of him an expression of divine life. God, in His wisdom, knows just how to apply pressure designed to bring to the surface the inner thoughts and intents of the heart. The gasket that can withstand pressure is the one the factory desires to make. God delights in creating men who can withstand the devil, the flesh, and the world. In His sovereignty He has the right to use any means at His disposal to effect the desired end. If our hearts are flint, God will use heroic means. God knew Job's heart while Satan, Job and the three friends did not. Satan thought Job would utterly fail the test; Job claimed he was innocent and that the afflictions were unjust; the three friends accused Job of sins which he did not commit.

How does God deal with each man? Certainly He does not deal with us all in the same way.

Jacob was separated from his home, family, and possessions for fourteen years and finally, fearing the meeting with Esau, spent an entire night in prayer before yielding entirely to his God.

Joseph spent years in prison and captivity following his exaltation over his family before he was raised to the position of second ruler in Egypt.

Moses had to face death at the hand of the angel of the Lord before he would yield to the command to circumcise his children. If Moses was to lead God's people out of Egypt he must himself first become obedient.

Elijah went through the whirlwind, the earthquake, and finally a fire before hearing the voice of God.

ISAIAH said, "*Woe is me, for I am ruined!*"

Paul said, "*Wretched man that I am! Who will set me free from the body of this death?*"

Jesus Himself was tempted in every point as we are but without sin. He was rejected by His own people and given up to be crucified.

We must all learn that God has for His people a peace and joy that is greater than outward circumstances. God was making of Job a spiritual giant capable of conquering all the assaults of the enemy. We cannot help but think of James 4:10 "*Humble yourselves in the presence of the Lord, and He will exalt you.*", in this connection.

To further explain the necessity of Job's afflictions let us consider an analogy. Before the ground can be useful for crops it must first be plowed, harrowed, and watered continually. The better the preparation, the better the crops. When Job was broken up, harrowed, and weeded of all foreign material, the grace of God found much better soil for growth.

Job's language proves his need of a softer heart.

30:26, "*When I expected good, then evil came;*" he was disgusted.

9:22f, *"It is all one; therefore I say, He destroys the guiltless and the wicked. If the scourge kills suddenly, He mocks the despair of the innocent."*

9:30 f, *"If I should wash myself with snow And cleanse my hands with lye, Yet You would plunge me into the pit"*

10:1. *"I loathe my own life; I will give full vent to my complaint; I will speak in the bitterness of my soul."*

13:24f, *"Why do You hide Your face And consider me Your enemy? Will You cause a driven leaf to tremble? Or will You pursue the dry chaff?"*

16:2f, *"...Sorry comforters are you all. Is there no limit to windy words? Or what plagues you that you answer? I too could speak like you, I could strengthen you with my mouth, And the solace of my lips could lessen your pain."*

19:2f, *"How long will you torment me And crush me with words? These ten times you have insulted me; You are not ashamed to wrong me... Behold, I cry, 'Violence!' but I get no answer; I shout for help, but there is no justice. He has walled up my way so that I cannot pass, And He has put darkness on my paths. He has stripped my honor from me And removed the crown from my head."*

30:20f *"I cry out to You for help, but You do not answer me; I stand up, and You turn Your attention against me. You have become cruel to me; With the might of Your hand You persecute me."*

Note also 30:7-14.

As Author of our faith, God starts the sanctifying process; as Finisher, He, in His sovereignty, can use any means His wisdom dictates. God takes into consideration the person involved. Only a giant receives a giant's test; an ant, an ant's test. Job was a giant indeed and God knew he could and would come forth as gold when tried. Men are not afflicted in proportion to their sinfulness, instead, God tries man on the basis of the strength of his moral fiber which will demand more or less heroic means, depending upon its toughness.

Is it any wonder that Job has been called a book of repentance? He was not guilty of any sin his three friends could think of. God called him a perfect (blameless) and upright man and Job himself insisted on his own integrity and innocence. Even so, when he came face to face with his own self-righteousness he repented in dust and ashes. Is there any excuse for present day Christians not to be constantly repenting?

VII. GOD'S CHARACTER IN JOB

The following thoughts were gleaned from Freligh's book on Job.

We learn much about God from the book of Job. He is not a tyrannical being as Job might have thought at times. He does not stand over man ready to mete out judgment for every infraction of His holy law. On the contrary, God is a wise, loving ruler who does all things well and for our best welfare. The end of Job certainly proves that God had his welfare in mind.

We learn also that God rules Satan and allows him to go only so far in his dastardly activity. Actually God uses Satan as a tool. Satan is bound to try to thwart God and His plans but God is wise enough to take Satan's machinations and use them for His own glory and to work out His own purpose. Note that when Satan had done all he could to Job and failed, he disappeared from the scene. This indicated that God was not working in Job's life for Satan's benefit or to prove anything to Satan but that He was primarily interested in producing a better Job.

It is evident also that God works very patiently until man is ready to hear His voice and heed. God stood on the sidelines while the three friends wasted their time and Job's. He waited patiently until Elihu had given his contribution. And finally when Job had come to the end of himself, God very lovingly steps in and graciously meets Job's need. When men fail God can work. Oh! If we could but learn to go to God with all of our problems, acknowledging Him in all our ways, we would see His hand directing us in all our paths.

God is revealed as one who cares, who loves. Despite Job's attitude, God worked with him until He had made an entirely new man of him. Whereas Job had reviled his friends, was bitter and sarcastic towards them; now, after he had obtained a picture of his own worthlessness, and of God's greatness he was so changed as to intercede for his friends who had antagonized him. Jesus prayed for His enemies while on the cross. Stephen likewise, could pray for those who were mistreating and even killing him. Job, too had found a place in God where he could, in reality, love and pray for his accusers. God must have cared for Job to have taken the time to produce such results.

The author obtained the following notes from Glen Reed, Instructor at C.B.I.

In bringing this summary of the doctrines I am quoting from Mr. Allen's book, who in turn acknowledges his indebtedness to Albert Barnes' "Book of Job"

- (1) The existence of one God, the wise and glorious Creator of all things. Not like the pagans of Persia or Eastern countries holding to the principle of good and evil.
 - (a) He is almighty – 9:4-12.
Remover of mountains; shakes the earth; commands the sun; makes the stars. (also chapters 38-40)
 - (b) He is omniscient. 11:8-11 also 21:22. Knows the hearts of men – even wicked men.
 - (c) He is wise. 12:13. With Him is wisdom. 28:12. He is the source of wisdom.
 - (d) He is inscrutable. 11:7-9 "*Can you discover the depths of God?*" (Job possessed a surprising knowledge of the sciences and arts.)
 - (e) He is invisible. 11:7; 10:4. "*Have You eyes of flesh?*"
 - (f) He is the supreme governor of the world. 5:9-13; 8:4-6; 12:10-25. In His hand is the soul of every living creature, and the breath of all mankind.

- (g) He is creator of all things 10:8-11; 38:4-10.
 - (h) He is perfectly pure and holy. 15:15, 16. *"..the heavens are not pure in his eyes"* Also 35:5,6.
 - (i) He is eternal. 10:5 *"Are Your days as the days of a mortal."*
 - (j) He is a spiritual being. 10:4
 - (k) He is gracious and ready to forgive sin. 33:23-28. If one seeks God he may find a ransom.
He will deliver his soul from going down into the pit.
 - (l) He is merciful; He allows the wicked to prosper. 21:7-13.
 - (m) He is a hearer of prayer. 33:26-42:8.
 - (n) He is the dispenser of life and death. 4:9; 10:12; 33:4; 42:2.
 - (o) He is the revealer of all divine truth. 33:14-17. *"... He opens the ears of men, And seals their instruction,"* Also 42:2,3.
- (2) The universe was created by God. It did not come into being by chance. "It was not the work of an inferior, nor was it eternal." 38:4-11. *"Where were you when I laid the foundation of the earth?"*
 - (3) He is the governor of all His creatures. The whole book demonstrates this. 12:23 *"He makes the nations great, then destroys them; He enlarges the nations, then leads them away."* 34:24: *"He breaks in pieces mighty men without inquiry, And sets others in their place."*
 - (4) The existence of angels spoken of – 1:6 *"...the sons of God came."*
 - (5) The existence of evil spirits likewise. 1:6-12. Satan also represented as a vicious, malignant accusing enemy, delighting to cause pain and ruin character.
 - (6) Man was looked upon as fallen and wholly depraved. 14:1, 4 *"Who can make the clean out of the unclean? No one!"* 15:14-16 *"What is man, that he should be pure"*
 - (7) The necessity of reconciliation with God in order to be at peace. 22: 21, 22. *"Yield now and be at peace with Him"* (In offering sacrifices Job recognized that reconciliation was needed.)
 - (8) Sin was to be expiated by sacrifice. Job offered sacrifices for the sins of his family –1:5. Also at God's command for his friends, with prayers for their forgiveness – 42:8. He undoubtedly knew that these sacrifices pointed to the great sacrifice, offered once for all, a ransom for many. 33:24.

MAN SHALL LIVE AFTER DEATH

1. The soul is immortal *“If a man dies, will he live again?”* 14:14,15 (resurrection) 19:25-27.
2. There will be happiness and rest after death. *“There the wicked cease from raging, And there the weary are at rest.”* 3:17
3. There shall be a resurrection. 19:25 He believed that if a man die he shall live again – and would answer the summons one day. 14:14,15.
4. There shall be a judgment. *“For the wicked is reserved for the day of calamity; They will be led forth at the day of fury.”* 21:30; 19:29; 27:8; 31:28; 21:7-12.

The effect of religion on morals and manners as taught in Job.

- (1) It taught man to be diligent, and not dissipate his body or his wealth. Chapter 1.
- (2) It taught man against a bigamist home but to believe in a monogamous home. 31:9-11
- (3) It taught men the golden rule, to be respectful in their treatment of another. The friends of Job were polite; they waited their turns when arguing with Job.
- (4) It taught respect for age. The elder spoke first, and the younger waited until the last.
- (5) It taught men that charity was God-like. Job denied his lack of charity. 31:16-22. 31:31-34

Job was a type of Christ. A great sufferer, despised, even by his dearest friends, he was emptied and humbled, but in order to greater glory.

Persecuted for a time by men and devils and seemed forsaken of God; but was afterward raised up to be an intercessor for his friends who had sinned and added to his affliction.

We do well to understand some deep truths as Job; if we lived as close to God as he did and had his patience in suffering, and endurance to wait for God’s time and hold out faithfully against sin.

The above notes are not mine. Let me urge the students to consider the statement (above) with care, that Job was a type of Christ. Was Job a type of Christ?

IX. THE THEME

A. A VERY SIGNIFICANT VERSE *Job 42:5,6*

“I have heard of You by the hearing of the ear; But now my eye sees You; Therefore I retract, And I repent in dust and ashes.” These words pinpoint the change of attitude necessary in Job’s life and mark the end of the final stage of his discipline. What has Job said in these verses? He makes a distinction between hearing about God with his ears and seeing Him with his eyes. We need not seek far for the distinction. Previously, Job knew God academically, theologically, but had not that personal and intimate knowledge of God that grows out of a great spiritual experience. Job had known about God but now he knows God. God, very tenderly, had led Job to see his own unworthy self and to get a picture of the greatness and goodness of his Creator. Job at last realized that Almighty God was infinitely wise and just and that man was obliged to humble himself in His sight. Job had now ceased to complain; he was a humble, obedient, yielded servant of the Most High. This was brought about by seeing God in a far different light. Immediately, Job repents in dust and ashes and abhors himself.

B. JOB’S REMORSE.

Job’s remorse was that of inbred sin, of spiritual deformity, and defilement clinging to him even in the midst of good deeds. Gross sin could not have caused the remorse Job felt. His was the remorse of a deep humiliation and self-hatred caused by comparing himself with the spiritual law of God. Compared with his friends Job stood rather high; such comparison, however, is not very accurate or valuable. In order to compare himself with God Job had to see himself and God in an entirely new light. The entire process of affliction was designed, in the wisdom of God, to thus enlighten Job. Job had loved and defended himself but now he loathes self-love and instead there is born a tremendous love and fear of God. Here, affliction destroyed self-love and created a love for God.

C. JOB LEARNED TO LIVE WITHOUT THINGS.

To learn to be satisfied without “things”, in itself, is quite an accomplishment. When Job had learned this; when God became more to him than the things he had lost; when he was able to say – as he did in 42:5, 6 – Lord, I do not deserve anything at your hand; you are just in afflicting me with poverty, sickness, and despair; I abhor myself and repent of all my self-righteous thoughts and deeds; then and only then did God meet him. Job’s craving now was spiritual; he realized that the ultimate in life is the perfecting and sanctifying of the spirit; to this end he now devoted himself. God, however, had accomplished in Job what He had set out to do. He, therefore, in His great goodness, restored to Job all that had been lost and added a double portion besides. It is just like God to give back to us that which we give to Him.

Lange, an eminent, German theologian of the nineteenth century, gives the best presentation of the THEME of the book of Job that the author of this paper has ever read. On page 26 of his commentary he presents his solution to the book of Job and the following material is based on Lange’s comments.

There are two aspects to the solution of the book of Job, one presented by Elihu from the viewpoint of man and the other by God from His viewpoint.

D. THE SOLUTION AS PRESENTED BY ELIHU FROM MAN’S VIEWPOINT.

1. Chastening and purifying is the aim of unmerited suffering. This is in accord with ^AProverbs 3:11, 12 and Hebrews 12:5-11, which the student should read carefully at this point. If God watches the sparrow that falls, numbers the hairs of our head, clothes the lily; if all things work together for good to them who love the Lord, and if Jesus bought us with His own blood; surely nothing can befall us that is beyond His control and that He will not work out for our eternal welfare. God in His sovereignty can use any means He desires to bring about a mature state of holiness in one of His children.

In His wisdom He knows how to best employ affliction to attain the desired perfection. Occasionally we hear folk say that God could not in fairness use sickness as a means to bring about a better spiritual condition in a man's life. The case of Job proves otherwise. Innumerable people have testified to a better spiritual state as a result of some affliction including sickness.

Some unthinking people raise the objection that if sickness makes for a better spiritual condition, we should pray for sickness. It seems to me that this objection has been used only as sarcasm. Let us reason together for a moment. As a result of the fall not only sickness but all the sorrows and discomforts of life including poverty, war, death, sorrow, and despair have come into the world. No one doubts that financial distress – perhaps through failure to pay tithes – can be the means of leading a man to prayer and more often than not to pay his tithes. Now the objection raised above would demand that we pray for poverty because it can draw or crowd one to God. Sorrow and despair often forces a man to seek God but we do not pray for them just because they can be a blessing in disguise. Sin, sickness, poverty, and all kinds of sorrow and discomforts are in the world and cannot be avoided. God, however, in His great wisdom is able to take these things and cause them to work for our eternal welfare. *“And we know that God causes all things to work together for good to those who love God, to those who are called according to His purpose.”*(Romans 8:28). God does not make us sick to make us holy; neither does He send poverty of sorrow to bring us to Him. Man has sinned; all are born in sin and are guilty before God; all are under condemnation and must suffer the penalty inflicted at the fall. We cannot escape the results of the fall until we get to heaven. Until then God is wise enough to take the things that are the lot of men and use them to effect His holy purpose. He has, as we know, provided a means of deliverance for His children. While the child is seeking the deliverance, God has every right to speak to the heart regarding its condition and deal with it accordingly. In 1965 do we not place too much emphasis on the deliverance as compared to the emphasis we place on the corresponding work being done in our hearts?

2. The GROUND or BASIS or JUSTIFICATION of affliction is inbred sin, the corruption that came along as a result of the fall and which has been passed on to all men. Christians have all experienced the taint of sin in their lives. The pull of our five senses toward that which is displeasing to God has been observed and experienced by all. We are not perfect in the ultimate sense. It is this tendency, this guilt, that God would rid His children of, and if necessary, through affliction. The writer of this paper believes that if a man was perfect in the ultimate sense, affliction would be unjust. God would not be just if He allowed one of His children to be afflicted who had not sinned or was perfect in the ultimate sense. At the base of all punishment, affliction, sorrow, and despair is sin, not personal sin, necessarily as we have learned from our study of Job, but a sinful tendency, a weak carnal nature. So God has a reason a justification for what He allowed to happen to Job: it was Job's sinful tendency to justify self instead of God. This was inherent in Job and was revealed and dealt with under pressure.
3. The MOTIVE of affliction is LOVE. If “sanctification” is the aim that the “Taint of sin” is the ground, then the MOTIVE in the heart of God that causes Him to act in His great love for the individual. The Lord chastens and disciplines His own simply because He has their improvement in mind. Parents who really love their children will be careful to discipline and punish when their children need same. That which prompts God to effect a plan which will bring about the purification of a man is His great love for that man.

So we can say that from the viewpoint of man, God in His sovereignty allows affliction to come to an individual when necessary, to bring about a perfect work of sanctification, a perfect devotion, a perfect consecration, a perfect life. This includes the renunciation of self and self-righteousness, and a purging of secret sins and faults which have been brought to the surface by means of the disciplinary measures. God has every right to do this because of the taint of sin which resides in every man. God's love for man is so intense that He is willing to use even affliction if necessary to bring about the desired end.

E. THE SOLUTION FROM GOD'S VIEWPOINT.

We discover the second aspect of the theme of Job by looking for it from the viewpoint of God. From man's viewpoint he is, as we have seen, purified and becomes more conformed to the image of the Son of God. There is an entirely different way of looking at affliction, however, and that is from the viewpoint of God Himself.

1. God ordains such sufferings and affliction to PROVE His people and to test their innocence. God tells us in Ephesians 2:10 that we are His workmanship, and 3:10 He states that His manifold wisdom is displayed to the powers of the universe by means of the Church. If God's people are thus on display as God's handiwork to manifest His great wisdom, it is obvious that a time of testing and proving is imperative. Even manufacturers have learned that it is well to prove and test their merchandise before selling it.

With God, though, this testing has as its purpose, more than simply testing man to see what he will do or to determine his worth. In fact the ultimate purpose is entirely otherwise. From the viewpoint of man, man was tested from the standpoint of determining just what he could stand. From God's viewpoint, however, God is **SHOWING THE POWERS OF THE UNIVERSE AND PROVING TO THEM JUST WHAT A MAN CAN DO WHO HAS THE GRACE OF GOD IN HIS HEART.** God is here proving the excellency of His workmanship. God works a great work in the heart of man at salvation and this work of grace glorifies God who is anxious to display His handiwork to the universe.

God could proudly say to Satan and all powers for that matter, "Look at my servant Job, have you considered what my grace has done to him? He, through the grace of God is able to withstand the most difficult of trials." Not only was Job on display but all the redeemed are on display similarly. Oh! that we would determine never to be a reproach to God and the work He is doing in the world. Every time a child of God smiles in the face of adversity, clings to God as his only hope in the midst of severe affliction, asserts his trust in God despite conditions that tend to rob him of that trust, and emerges as pure gold when he has been tried, God's great wisdom and grace is made known to the powers of the universe.

God, in Job, proved the power of the grace of God over sin in the life of his servant. God's grace was so great that Job eventually triumphed by letting God triumph over him. Job repented of his sinful heart, of self-righteousness. Job had insisted on his righteousness but when he got a glimpse of himself and his wickedness, he proved to be what every true man of God is, a good repenter. Job was at his best when he said he hated himself and would repent in dust and ashes. Thus God proved to the powers that God's grace in Job could overcome all obstacles. God proved that when Job was tried he would come forth as gold. He demonstrated that when He spoke, Job would move. He showed the world that where He led Job would follow.

This should be a source of great encouragement to God's children everywhere because the strength and grace that was Job's is available to every one of God's children. We do not have to be weak, to yield to temptations, to go the way of the multitude. We do not have to imitate Hollywood, have worldly standards, succumb to the pressures of life. God has built into each of His children the capability of living a victorious Christian life.

Satan said, "Will a man serve God for naught?" God proved that Job did not serve Him for material things or for health. Rather, it was proved that Job served God out of holy and pure motives because Job renewed his dedication to serve God when he repented of his sin. Repentance, it will be remembered, is an "*About face*" in our intellect, will and emotion. Job's "*about face*" was from self-righteousness and self-justification to a complete acknowledgment of God's justice. When Job went to the heap of ashes it showed his submission under the hand of God.

The MOTIVE, again, is to be found in the love of God for man. His love is so great that He wishes to use man for the highest possible honor in the universe, that of being the means of demonstrating the grace and wisdom of Almighty God.

The JUSTIFICATION, again, also, is in the fact that man at best is a sinful rebellious creature. God, consequently, is just in using affliction as a means to accomplish His purpose.

Job 42:5, 6 are appropriate now. Job had heard of God with the hearing of the ears but now he sees God as He is. Job has had a spiritual experience; God has revealed Himself in all His greatness to Job and Job sees himself. Job determines not to say another word against God or his affliction. He hates and abhors himself and repents of all his sinfulness in dust and ashes. IMMEDIATELY GOD MET AND DELIVERED JOB AND RETURNED TO HIM TWICE AS MUCH AS HE HAD LOST. Ah! what a victory for the man of God.

^A **Proverbs 3:11-12**

“My son, do not reject the discipline of the LORD Or loathe His reproof, For whom the LORD loves He reproves, Even as a father corrects the son in whom he delights.”

Hebrews 12:5-11

⁵ *and you have forgotten the exhortation which is addressed to you as sons, ‘MY SON, DO NOT REGARD LIGHTLY THE DISCIPLINE OF THE LORD, NOR FAINT WHEN YOU ARE REPROVED BY HIM;*

⁶ *FOR THOSE WHOM THE LORD LOVES HE DISCIPLINES, AND HE SCOURGES EVERY SON WHOM HE RECEIVES.’*

⁷ *It is for discipline that you endure; God deals with you as with sons; for what son is there whom his father does not discipline?*

⁸ *But if you are without discipline, of which all have become partakers, then you are illegitimate children and not sons.*

⁹ *Furthermore, we had earthly fathers to discipline us, and we respected them; shall we not much rather be subject to the Father of spirits, and live?*

¹⁰ *For they disciplined us for a short time as seemed best to them, but He disciplines us for our good, so that we may share His holiness.*

¹¹ *All discipline for the moment seems not to be joyful, but sorrowful; yet to those who have been trained by it, afterwards it yields the peaceful fruit of righteousness*

X. LESSONS

1. The lesson of unqualified submission with no reservations is taught in Job.
2. We learn from Job that the means God uses are not to be called into question. The justification of God's method can be found in secret faults and tendencies that deserve to be removed. We are never to question the actions of Almighty God; He gives not an account of any of His matters. There is no one to whom He can give an account.
3. Job, the afflicted, was righteous but his accusers were not. Affliction might well be THE MARK OF A GIANT AMONG GOD'S CHILDREN RECEIVING THE FINAL PERFECTING TOUCH AT THE HAND OF THE MASTER WORKMAN OF THE UNIVERSE. We must learn not to criticize the afflicted. They might well be the spiritual giants while we, if we criticize, might be likened to the three miserable comforters.
4. A Poem, author unknown.

My Father's way may twist and turn,
My heart may throb and ache,
But in my soul I'm glad I know,
He maketh no mistake.

My cherished plans may go astray,
My hopes may fade away,
But still I'll trust my Lord to lead
For he doth lead the way.

There's so much now I cannot see,
My eyesight's far to dim:
But come what may, I'll simply trust
And leave it all to Him.

For by and by the mist will lift
And plain it all He'll make,
Through all the way, tho' dark to me,
He made not one mistake.

5. There are times when we must suffer entirely alone without help.
No man could follow Christ in help,
in sympathy,
in understanding.

Psalm 69:19, 20 reads in part: "*Reproach has broken my heart and I am so sick. And I looked for sympathy, but there was none, And for comforters, but I found none.*" Read also ^BLamentations 1:12 in this connection. Similarly, Job found himself in a situation where none could sympathize with him. It is the opinion of the writer that all forward-moving Christians will some time go through a time of testing when they seem to be entirely alone, when friends cannot seem to touch God for them. It is this standing alone that is the making of a stalwart and dependable Christian. ^BRomans 5:2-5 is particularly enlightening in this connection.

6. At one time, 23:3, Job declares, "*Oh that I knew where I might find Him, That I might come to His seat!*" Christ also cried out, "*My God, My God, why hast thou forsaken me?*" Both reached a place where they even felt that God had gone from their lives. Such was not the case, however. God was very near and came to each and delivered them. We, too, will experience times when God seems to be absolutely out of reach, times when our prayers seem empty words and we feel no sense of communication with God in our souls. We can take heart, knowing that others have walked the way before us.

7. Observe that Job's home was not wrecked by immorality, unfaithfulness, or sin; the wreck was not a moral one. We see homes wrecked by sin and immorality but they are never Christian homes. Christian homes may have despair, poverty, suffering, pain and sorrow but never corruption. When adversity comes to a Christian home there is always the hope that God will eventually turn the chaos into sunshine and order. The sinful home is being punished while the Christian home is being refined for eternity.

8. God often uses experiences such as Job's to prepare His children for a work that lies ahead of them. Note that Joseph was tossed from one unjust treatment to another and for what reason? God was preparing him for the task of ruling Egypt and also of saving his brethren in the midst of famine. Notice that
 - Job suffered and interceded for his brethren.
 - Moses suffered and interceded for his brethren.
 - Joseph suffered and interceded for his brethren.
 - Christ suffered and interceded for his brethren.
 Here again we make note of the fact that suffering can have a high and holy purpose. The mellowing effect of suffering is worth its weight in gold.

9. A blacksmith pounds the iron after it has been in the fire and is soft and pliable but the iron never blames the fire for the blows of the blacksmith. A forward-moving Christian is softened and made pliable by suffering brought about with God's permission – by many people such as teachers, friends, minister, etc. but should he blame the folk God is using? Back of the training of a Christian is the hand of God who in His great wisdom is directing his life.

^B **Lamentations 1:12**

¹² *"Is it nothing to all you who pass this way?
 Look and see if there is any pain like my pain
 Which was severely dealt out to me,
 Which the LORD inflicted on the day of His fierce anger.*

Romans 5:2-5

² *through whom also we have obtained our introduction by faith into this grace in which we stand; and we exult in hope of the glory of God.*

³ *And not only this, but we also exult in our tribulations, knowing that tribulation brings about perseverance;*

⁴ *and perseverance, proven character; and proven character, hope;*

⁵ *and hope does not disappoint, because the love of God has been poured out within our hearts through the Holy Spirit who was given to us.*

XI. THE DOCTRINE OF SATAN IN JOB

1. Sons of God 1:6, 2:1 is taken to refer to all of God's created beings. Properly speaking SONS OF GOD would refer to unfallen angels but since Satan had free access to heaven along with the sons of God perhaps we had better understand this term in its larger sense. They are all sons in the sense of being God's creatures.
2. The word "Satan" means "adversary". See ^CZechariah 3:1f and I Chronicles 21:1.
3. We learn from the book of Job that:
 - a. He is a PERSON, not a force influence, or power. As a person he wanders 1:7, 2:2, I Peter 5:8
 - b. He is POWERFUL. This power, however, is used only when God permits. Human beings such as Chaldeans and Sabeans, the elements such as fire and the whirlwind were all under his control.
 - c. He is CUNNING. He knows Job's outward circumstances but fails to determine Job's inner character; only God knew that. Satan made a misjudgment in regard to Job.
 - d. He is MURDEROUS. He would have slain Job along with his children if God had permitted.
 - e. He is SLANDERER. He claimed that Job served God for impure reasons.
 - f. He is an INCURABLE REBEL. There is no hint in Job or elsewhere that Satan was ever sorry or that he repented.

Concluding Remark:

The above notes are given in the hope that those who read them will be encouraged to trust God and cling to Him tenaciously even in, or rather especially in the most desperate of circumstances.

^CZechariah 3:1

¹ *Then he showed me Joshua the high priest standing before the angel of the LORD, and Satan standing at his right hand to accuse him.*

1 Chronicles 21

¹ *Then Satan stood up against Israel and moved David to number Israel.*

1 Peter 5:8

⁸ *Be of sober spirit, be on the alert. Your adversary, the devil, prowls around like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour.*