



Calvin's exposition of the book of Job

Theodore Beza, whose commentary on Job was first published in English in 1587, spoke of the difficulty of the task: *'I am minded to expound the histories of Job, in which ... there are many dark and hard places, insomuch as I must here of necessity sail, as it were, among the rocks: and yet I hope I shall not make any shipwreck.'*

The fear of 'shipwreck' explains why so many preachers shy away from Job. To avoid it, it is necessary to obtain a key in order to unlock the mysteries of the Book of Job.

One key is provided for us in the Book of James: *'You have heard of Job's perseverance and have seen what the Lord finally brought about. The Lord is full of compassion and mercy'* (James 5:11). The book of Job swivels on two hinges: Job as a man of enduring, persevering godliness under the most acute sufferings; and God as a sovereign, covenantally faithful Father who will not abandon his own children.

Another key is to be found in John Calvin's expository sermons on Job translated into English by Arthur Golding and published just over a decade before Beza's commentary, in 1574. The recent facsimile reproduction of this work is a timely and important landmark in our understanding both of the Book of Job, and of God himself.

Calvin's contribution to our understanding of Job and his sufferings is crucial. Job was one of the few books of the Bible on which Calvin did not write a commentary. He did, however, preach 159 sermons on Job, delivered every day over a period of just under 6 months. The sermons were published in 1574, though they were preached some twenty years earlier in 1554 at a crucial moment in Calvin's life. Although the *Institutes* was first published in 1536 and had already been through six editions, two more were to follow and the final definitive edition was still five years away from completion (1559).

Calvin's doctrine of predestination was under severe attack from all quarters. Having, in the earlier editions of the *Institutes*, placed it where it is usually and most logically belongs (as Zwingli, before him and Beza and Perkins did after him), in the doctrine of God and as a special application of the doctrine of providence, Calvin became convinced that the doctrine of predestination properly belongs elsewhere — as an issue belonging to the application of redemption and thus under the section of the *Institutes* dealing with God as Redeemer. For Calvin the issue of predestination was a pastoral one. At its core lay a reluctance to enter into controversy over issues to which there are no answers. There are aspects of God's sovereignty which we cannot fathom. Calvin seemed more concerned to reflect the sense of awe and wonder that God's sovereignty was a sovereignty that had saved him. *'Predestination, as Calvin understood it, is neither a church steeple from which to view the human landscape, nor a pillow to sleep on. It is rather a stronghold in times of temptation and trials and a confession of praise to God's grace and to His glory.'* This pastoral concern, to submit to God's sovereignty rather than question it, or even comprehend it, is evident in Calvin's sermons on Job. That Calvin needed the solace that comes from such submission is evident when we recall that in 1547 a piece of paper was found attached to Calvin's pulpit threatening him that if he did not leave *'no one will save you from destruction ... revenge will be had at last'*. And just a year before Calvin's expositions of Job, Michael Servetus was burned at the stake in Geneva for *'terrible blasphemies against the Trinity and against the Son of God'*.

In addition we know of Calvin's physical condition and the constant pain he suffered. His afflictions included painful stomach cramps, intestinal influenza, migraine headaches, fevers, pleurisy, gout, colic, haemorrhoids, arthritis, and acute pain in the knees and feet, gallstones and kidney stones. Calvin, like Job, was fully acquainted with suffering.

Suffering and Job

In the opening sermon on Job 1:1, Calvin gives us the key that unlocks the Book of Job: *'in all this disputation, Job maintains a good case, and contrariwise his adversaries maintain an evil case. And yet it is more, that Job maintaining a good quarrel, did handle it ill, and that the other setting forth a poor case, did convey it well. The understanding of this, will be as a key to open unto us all this whole book'*.

Harold Decker summarises in this way: *'Job's "good case" is that affliction is not always divine punishment, and that therefore it is not necessarily a measure of sin. Job pleads it poorly by rash self-defence, excessive self-assertion, seething resistance to God, and unrestrained passion. The poor case of his friends is that affliction is divine punishment, meted out according to the measure of men's sins. They plead it well by making statements about God and man which are altogether true and valid, and which must be accepted as being in themselves the pure teaching of the Holy Spirit. The key thought about a good case poorly presented and a poor case well presented recurs several times...'*

Job, to be sure, went too far in his protestations of innocence. No one is absolutely innocent and in a manner reminiscent of Hamlet's words to Ophelia, it may be said of Job that *'the man doth protest too much'*. This comes to fruition in a lengthy protestation in Job 31:1-40. It is *'the climax of (Job's) peroration'*. Job is dumbfounded that God has visited him with the curses, rather than the blessings of the covenant (Deuteronomy 28:18, 31, 35). *'God seems to Job to have forsaken the suzerain's role as protector, and strangely turned enemy against an obedient vassal'*. But Job in this chapter also exposes a remarkable degree of self-righteousness. His blindness to the depravity of his own heart does not prove that he was unregenerate, but that he had a serious spiritual need.

The cause of suffering

To embark on a series of sermons on Job because a congregation is suffering and needs answers to difficult questions is to make a grave error of judgement. Job provides few, if any, answers to the 'Why's' of suffering: Why do the righteous suffer? Why does a God who is omnipotent (and is thus able to prevent suffering) and merciful (thus willing to prevent suffering) allow suffering, particularly in the lives of those who appear to have no special reason to deserve it? We all know of those who give as the reason for their rejection of Christianity and the existence of God, the sufferings of the seemingly innocent. Whilst the subject of apologetics devotes much of its time in responding to this difficulty, the Book of Job provides no answer. According to E. W. Hengstenberg, the theme of the book is 'the sufferings of the righteous'. To some extent, this is true, but it fails to convey a more profound lesson of the Book of Job: that submission to God and his ways is the best course of wisdom. The sufferings of the righteous is not, in this writer's opinion, the major theme of the Book of Job.

The cause of suffering is the theme of much of what Job's three friends (and especially Elihu) have to say and partial answers are given. Suffering can have the closest possible connection with sin. It can be a punishment for sin and a warning to keep us from sin. But the cause of suffering can often be for no earthly reason at all, but for *'some inscrutable divine reason.'*

Crucial here is an understanding of the opening two chapters. Here we are given an insight into the divine council which neither Job nor his friends were privy to. Meredith Kline is correct when he says: *'to have a grasp of this matter (the conflict between Satan and God in chapters 1 and 2) is to have the key to a satisfactory understanding of the fundamental meaning and message of the Book of Job'*. The scene is that of legal conflict and it is crucial to note that how the legal conflict (law-suit) finally turns out is already implicit in the setting in which it takes place. God sovereignly initiates the battle: *'Hast thou considered my servant Job?'* (1:8). Job is a trophy of grace, a living testimony to the fact that Satan's doom (as foretold in Genesis 3:15, 16) is already in operation. Satan who is intrinsically masochistic, destructive and irrational, refuses to acknowledge it. He seeks to delay his own doom by engaging in a legal challenge (a sort of lawsuit) with God. He challenges Job's commitment (1:9) but more importantly, he charges God (the Judge) with deceit and fraud (1:10). Job is to be put to the test, but it is God himself who is being tested. It is God's

grace that Satan is challenging. It is a *'trial by ordeal'*. *'The legal dispute that had arisen between them in the divine assembly was to be settled by resort to combat designed to demonstrate whose power actually prevailed in the life of Job'*. Satan must try to undo what God claimed to have done in Job, or make it appear that it had never been done in the first place.

From our perspective it is almost instinctive to consider that it is Job who is under trial. From Satan's point of view it is not so much Job, but God himself who is being challenged. From the perspective of God (and it is this perspective that chapters 1 and 2 are designed to convey) it is not Job, or God who is under trial so much as Satan himself. The eventual triumph of God is already implicit in the opening prologue. Nor is the scene depicted in these chapters unique. Time and time again, Satan has challenged God to a duel. He will not believe his doom. The history of the church, in its trials and testings, is the arena of Satan's obduracy. There have been countless repetitions of Satan's challenge, and we can expect these to continue until Satan is cast *'into the lake of fire'* (Revelation 20:10). As members of Christ's body, we live our lives in the arena of *'spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms'* (Ephesians 6:12). We find ourselves experiencing all kinds of difficulty and distress, the cause of which may not be punishment for particular transgressions, but a recognition that we are caught up in a cosmic battle between God and Satan. The only way to survive is to put on the armour of faith, hope, the covenantal word of God and the weapon of *'all-prayer'* (Ephesians 6:10-18).

For Job's friends there is only one explanation as to his suffering: he is reaping the just deserts of his sins. But the prologue has insisted that Job is *'innocent'* (not that he is sinless, but that he has done nothing in particular to warrant this suffering as punishment). Job maintains his own innocence (6:30; 9:15), as does the narrator of the story (1:1). More importantly, so does God himself (1:8; 2:3; 42:7-8). That such a case exists is attested by our Lord in the story of a man who was born blind in John 9. The cause of his affliction could not be levelled at any sin in himself or in his ancestry; his blindness was sovereignly given so that the works of God might be displayed in him. His affliction was not so much a punishment but a means of future usefulness in the advancement of the kingdom of God (John 9:1-3).

For some modern Christians the presence of suffering in the life of a believer is a very great problem. It calls into question the power of faith, the presence of supernatural gifts, and the promise (as they see it) that those who obediently follow the Lord can expect certain blessings, including health and wealth. Job is, then, a problem. Thus Frederick K. Price (one of the leading faith healers and charismatic authors in the USA), comments on Job 1:10: *'As long as Job walked in faith, the wall — the hedge — was up. But when he started walking in unbelief and doubt the hedge was pulled down. Job pulled it down!'* Job sinned, according to this view, because he sinned! Price lines up behind Job's miserable comforters.

This is, of course, a failure to appreciate that certain sufferings can only be explained in terms of what Dr J.I. Packer calls *'the law of Harvest'*. The reference here is to John 12:24-26 *'Unless a kernel of wheat fall to the ground and die, it remains a single seed. But if it dies it produces a great harvest...'* Packer says: *'Every experience of pain, grief, frustration, disappointment, and being hurt by others is a little death. When we serve the Saviour in our world, there are many such deaths to be died. But the call to us is to endure, since God sanctifies our endurance for fruitfulness in the lives of others.'* Thus Paul could say of his own ministry: *'I fill up in my flesh what is still lacking in regard to Christ's afflictions, for the sake of his body which is the church'* (Colossians 1:24). These afflictions are edificatory and not propitiatory. Paul is affirming a link between his troubles and Christ's work in building his church. Similar sentiments are to be found in the following remarks of the apostle: *'I, Paul, the prisoner of Christ Jesus for the sake of you Gentiles'* (Ephesians 3:1); *'Death is at work in us, but life is at work in you'* (2 Corinthians 4:12); *'I endure everything for the sake of the elect, that they too may obtain the salvation that is in Christ Jesus, with eternal glory'* (2 Timothy 2:10). God is pleased at times to break us up into little bits that each bit, in turn may become food on which others may draw nourishment and flourish.

Learning from suffering

Can we learn anything from Job's suffering? Calvin draws attention to the role played by Job in helping us in our own particular sufferings: *'Wherefore it is good for us to have such examples, as*

shows unto us how there have been other men as frail as we, who nevertheless have resisted temptations, and continued steadfastly in obedience unto God, although he have scourged them even with extremity. Thus have we here an excellent mirror'. As the seventeenth century German Lutheran hymn writer, Paul Gerhardt, put it: 'Until the grave, the rod of the cross will lie on us; but then it ends.' Job's calm, accepting, trust in God through every dark providence that unfolds is, as James reminds, a model of perseverance and fortitude (James 5:11).

In particular, Job is a model of cross-bearing. As Christians we are called to follow in the footsteps of our Master, to take up a cross and follow after him (Luke 9:23). Those who carried their own crosses were outcasts whose rights had been taken away. Suffering aids self-denial and draws us nearer to Christ. It can, of course, embitter and harden too. We are called upon to share in the sufferings of Christ (Philippians 1:29). *'When you crush lavender,' wrote David Watson, shortly before his death, 'you find it is full fragrance; when you squeeze an orange, you extract its sweet juice. In the same way it is often through pains and hurts that we develop the fragrance and sweetness of Jesus in our lives.'* Commenting on the need for patience under afflictions, Calvin says:

'But God will have us patient ... he will have us ready to endure all things, assuring ourselves that good and evil proceed from the hand of him. He will have us to abide his chastisements, desiring nothing but to be governed by him, and renouncing all our own affections. And though it seem troublesome to us, he will have us fight against our own wicked lusts, and to resist them in such a way, as he alone may continue our master: for it is not possible that we should have that patience so frank and free in us, if we take not occasion to comfort ourselves in God.'

One aspect of the holiness of the Lord Jesus Christ was his willingness to suffer all kinds of pain for his Father's glory and others' good. A facet of holiness in Jesus' disciples is a willingness to be led along a parallel path. In a lengthy section in his very last sermon on Job, Calvin draws a comparison between Job's suffering and consummate patience and that of Christ:

... In all our adversities we be shaped like to the image of our Lord Jesus Christ, who is the eldest Son in the house of God. And truly if we look but only on the cross of Jesus Christ, it is cursed by God's own mouth: we shall see nothing there but shame and terror: and to be short, it will seem that the very gulf of hell is open to swallow up Jesus Christ. But when we join his resurrection to his death, behold wherewith to comfort us, behold wherewith to assuage all our sorrows, to the end we be not over sorrowful whenever it shall please God to afflict us. And this was purposely fulfilled in our Lord Jesus Christ, to the intent we should know that this was not written for any one person only: but to the intent that all of us should understand, that the Son of God will make us partakers of his life if we die with him, and partakers of his glory, if we bear all the shames and adversities which it shall please God to lay upon our shoulders ... We should always have an eye to the end which God hath promised to his children, according as he hath showed by effect, as well in Job, as also in David, and others, but chiefly in our Lord Jesus Christ, who is the true and chief pattern of all the faithful.

All of this runs counter to those modern versions of Christianity which expect no suffering, or else hope to see miracles to eliminate it as soon as it appears. But this type of religion is really only a philosophy which makes human happiness the highest object. It is a view which leads us to expect God to shield us from unhappiness and unpleasantness. It is thereby false because it loses sight of the role of pain in sanctification. God trains his children to share in his holiness *through pain*. When such a preacher as Oral Roberts begins a service by saying: *'Something good is going to happen to you today'*, he is rejecting the possibility that we may be called upon to suffer chastisement like Job. Health and prosperity are not the will of God for all Christians.

Not every blessing intended for heaven is to be enjoyed now. Colin Urquhart, for example, commenting on Isaiah 53:4, 5: *'he bore our griefs (sicknesses)'*, has this to say: *'When Jesus stood bearing the lashes from the Roman Soldiers, all our physical pain and sicknesses were being heaped upon him ... It is as if one lash was for cancer, another for bone disease, another for heart*

disease...' And Kenneth Hagin adds: *'God made him (Jesus) sick with your diseases that you might be perfectly well in Christ'*. With this sentiment we heartily disagree.

Reading Calvin's expositions on Job's sufferings can only have a remedial effect upon current confusions that prevail as to the place of suffering in the Christian life, particularly ill-health. All Christians can expect trials of some kind and some will be catastrophic. *'Know this,'* says Norwell Hayes, *'all bad things that come to visit you are from the devil — all bad things come from hell — not from heaven.'* Clearly, this is not true. The Heidelberg Catechism puts it this way: *'all things, even health and sickness, come to us, not by chance, but by God's hand.'* Job consistently blamed God for his trials — not some second cause like the Sabeans or Chaldeans (cf. 1:21; 2:10). He knew that the Sabeans and Chaldeans had robbed him (1:15, 17) but he did not mention them. *'If it is not he (God)'* asks Job, *'then who is it?'* (Job 9:24). Afflictions are *'God's Archers'*, Calvin comments, to which the best response is one of submission: *'let us be content to walk whithersoever he leads and directs us, assuring ourselves that his only will must be to us the infallible rule of right: whereas we see Job so overmastered of his affections, let us understand that it is a right hard thing for us to submit ourselves to the single will of God, without asking a reason of his works, and especially of those works that surmount our wit and capacity.'* In dealing with the issue of suffering, Calvin suggests again and again that the purpose of the Book of Job is not to provide explanations for it, but to suggest that submission is the way of wisdom.

Job's three friends were concerned with issues of *theodicy*. They attempted to offer answers to the problem of Job's suffering and thus provide some justification for what God was doing in Job's life.

The sovereignty of God

The book of Job is set up to investigate this problem. The Narrator *'founds the whole story upon the doctrine of retribution'*. Job is a pious and prosperous man (Job 1:1-2). Into this prosperity breaks a terrible calamity. He loses everything: his children, wealth, health, the respect of his wife and social respect in terms of his community. We are meant to draw the connection between prosperity and obedience.

Each of Job's three friends has a point of view to contribute with regard to Job's plight, and an explanation that will maintain the justice of God in it all. It is not Job's suffering as such that is to the fore, but God's justice. Is God in control of events? And is his control fair?

For Eliphaz, Job is a slight sinner. He begins with an assumption: the innocent never suffer permanently: *'What innocent man ever perished, where were the upright ever annihilated?'* (Job 4:7) Job must be one of the innocent: his sin must therefore be trivial and his suffering will be over soon. *'Is not your reverence your confidence? And the integrity of your ways your hope?'* (Job 4:6). Job is essentially a righteous man temporarily chastised by God (Job 5:17-18) for some imperfection inevitable in any mortal (Job 4:17). This, in essence, is the attitude of Eliphaz to Job's sufferings.

For Bildad, Job is a serious sinner. He too believes in immediate retribution (suffering is *punishment*) and cites Job's children as a case in point: *'If your sons have sinned against him, he has cast them away for their transgression'* (Job 8:4). He leaves Job's righteousness in doubt. He rests his case on an *'if'*: *'if you are innocent and upright'* (Job 8:6). No justification exists for this inference regarding Job's sons. It goes against the redemptive significance of the sacrifices made on their behalf. Furthermore the book of Job says nothing about the profligacy of Job's sons. This is an instance of Bildad's cold, analytical approach where a principle is applied without any recourse to the facts of the case. Job's sin is serious, though evidently not as serious as his sons'; he may yet have cause, so Bildad thinks, to hope. If he proves to be innocent, he will be rewarded. This is Bildad's solution.

For Zophar, Job is a secret sinner. Since Job refuses to acknowledge his sin (Job 11:4) it follows that Job must be a secret sinner (Job 11:5-6). Job may well be unaware of the enormity of his crimes against God, but God's omniscience ensures that nothing escapes his knowledge. God knows more of Job's sins than the latter can ever imagine.

But these analyses of Job's three friends fail to provide Job (or us) with adequate answers to Job's sufferings. In the end they are all saying the same thing. Some comforters, Calvin comments, *'have no more songs but one, and have no regard at all to whom they sing it'*. In the last analysis, providing us with an adequate theodicy is not the main purpose of the Book of Job. Rather, as Calvin remarks in a sermon on Job 9:1-6, the aim of the Book of Job lies elsewhere: *'Let us mark well, that they be two diverse manners of speech to say, "God is righteous, for he punishes men according to their deserts", and to say, "God is righteous, for howsoever he handle men, yet must we always keep our mouths shut and not grudge against him because we cannot gain anything thereby."*' The key lesson is learning to *'keep our mouths shut'* even in the face of the most intense provocation. *'There is nothing better than to submit all things to God's majesty and to acknowledge that if he should let us follow our own sway, there were no way with us but confusion; and that if he governs us according to his will, all will be to our profit and welfare.'* And nowhere is this clearer than in the very opening sentence of Calvin's expositions on Job:

The better to profit ourselves by that which is contained in this present book, first and foremost it behoves us to understand the sum of it. For the story here written, shows us how we be in God's hand, and that it lies in him to determine of our life, and to dispose of the same accord to his good pleasure: and that it is our duty to submit ourselves to him with all humbleness and obedience...

The principal issue is, therefore, a revelation of God's sovereignty.

It may be useful to think of this sovereignty in terms of three models

Job portrayed by three models

1. *David and Goliath: Job as God's champion*

As has already been pointed out, to grasp the importance of the prologue to Job is to have the key to a satisfactory understanding of the fundamental meaning and message of the Book of Job. The entire scene of the book of Job is the court of heaven: God enthroned as Judge of all the earth remains the constant background of all that transpires. It is God, and not Satan, who initiates the battle: *'Have you considered my servant Job?'* (1:8). Job must be seen as a trophy of God's grace. What Job is, God has made him. And Satan is there to challenge it. Satan charges God with deceit and fraud (1:10). The legal dispute is settled by recourse to a combat designed to prove who was in charge of Job's life. It is not Job who is on trial so much as Satan. The issue in the Book of Job is of cosmic proportions.

God's sovereignty is never in question. He needs no external validation. There is no abdication of his sovereignty. Just as in the story of David and Goliath, David is God's champion who goes into battle in the name of the Lord God of Israel. God has chosen Job as his champion in the issue of sovereignty. It is a *Holy War*, where the God of battles has entrusted the honour of his holy name and the vindication of his redemptive work to his servant Job. There can be no greater nobility than that. This is a battle that is constantly going on in the lives of many of his children, who are being called upon to suffer for no apparent reason than that Satan has challenged God. (Ephesians 6:11-12). This is precisely how Calvin sees it:

For when he gives us the grace to govern ourselves by his Holy Spirit, he sets us as it were upon a scaffold, to the end that his gracious goodness and mercy should be known in us, and thereupon he himself should be glorified against Satan in our persons. And sure the honour is inestimable which God does to us, when he chooses us ... to be glorified in us against Satan, and to make his triumphs by us.

2. *The Jacob model*

A second model appears in the closing chapters 38-41 where we are given the words of God himself. What God does not say is as important as what he does say! He does not attempt to enter into an explanation of Job's suffering, nor does he try to justify himself. Instead he enters into a challenge with Job: *'Brace yourself like a man'* (Job 38:3). This appears to be a reference to belt-wrestling contests such as those employed in the Ancient Near East. Job must metaphorically fasten the wrestling-belt and wrestle with God.

The belt-wrestling invitation is reminiscent of Jacob at Peniel. God gives no account of Job's treatment; neither is Job given any opportunity in court to defend himself against the supposed charges made against him. Instead God challenges Job to a duel: a battle of wisdom, for *'wisdom is power'*. It is a test of knowledge (Job 38:3b; 40:7b). The test comes in the form of a series of questions, covering the earth (Job 38:4-21), the heavens (Job 38:22-28), and the animal kingdom (Job 38:39-39:30). As a result, Job is speechless (Job 40:1-5)! It is a test in which Job has learnt his lack of wisdom, his own human limitation, his creatureliness. In a daring display of condescension, God agrees to accept 'a handicap'. Instead of continuing to engage Job in combat himself, he commissions one of his creatures to serve as his champion — Behemoth (Job 40:5). Job has met his match. When asked to explain the meaning of the hippopotamus, Job can find no explanation. *'Innocent suffering is as hard for man to explain as the hippopotamus. The only sense it makes, it makes to God, for it is not amenable to human rationality'*.

What is to the fore in this contest is that ultimately God and his ways are incomprehensible to us. As Herman Bavinck wrote in the introduction of a work on the doctrine of God: *'Mystery is the vital element of dogmatics'*. Ultimately, God dwells in unapproachable light (1 Timothy 6:16). God is great (Deuteronomy 7:21; Nehemiah 4:14; Psalms 48:1; 86:10; 95:3; 145:3; Daniel 9:4). God is greater than we can ever fathom. We lack the capacity to understand God fully. Though we insist that what we do know of God, we know truly, it remains true that what we know of him, we know but a little. Calvin spoke of God's having *'accommodated'* himself to our capacity in his self-revelation.

'The faithful must content themselves with that which is revealed unto them: and it is far greater and better wisdom, than to be inquisitive of all things without exception ... it is not that (God) is niggardly to show us his will any further, but because he knows what is convenient for us'. Let us always bear in mind that even in the basest things, there is an incomprehensible wisdom of God'. *'And when man has debated the matter thoroughly to and fro, he must needs come to the said conclusion, namely that we comprehend not the greatness and height of God's doings, further than it pleases him to give us some taste of them, at least wise according to our capacity: which is oversmall.'*

So much is this issue to the foreground that Calvin begins one sermon with the words: *'We have to go forward with the matter that we began yesterday: which is, that the Scripture shows us many things which our understanding cannot brook.'* It is interesting to note that Calvin, in discussing 'The Knowledge of God the Creator' in the *Institutes*, speaks of God's essence as *'incomprehensible ... his divineness far escapes all human perception'*. Similarly in Calvin's catechism of 1542 he wrote: *'Our understanding is not capable of comprehending his essence'*.

For Calvin, the best help to offer those in trouble is patiently to yield themselves to the purposes of a sovereign God. To wrestle with God and to prevail is to become like Jacob, *and also like Job*.

3. The Adamic model: Job as redeemed-man

It is essential to see Job as a redeemed man, a trophy of sovereign grace. Job's longings for an *'arbitrator'* (ch. 9), a *'witness'* (ch. 16), or a *'redeemer'* (ch. 19) must be seen in the context of someone who desires that his case be heard before God. As G. Campbell Morgan put it: *'There is no answer to Job till we find it in Jesus.'* Every cry of Job finds its answer in the High-priestly ministry of Christ. In his argument with God, Job is assured that he has a kinsman-redeemer to take up his case and argue it for him. As a fallen son of Adam he has no power or strength to present it; but the Last Adam can and does. But *'the fact that neither Job nor any other speaker subsequently refers to these exalted convictions is further indication that the author's purpose was not theodicy.'* *God's promise to Adam is being fulfilled in Job* (Genesis 3:15). The cosmic battle against Satan in Eden is being re-enacted again in the life of Job. And grace is seen to be victorious.

In the Book of Job, God is showing his power over Satan. It is a foretaste of the truth that one day Satan will be utterly destroyed for ever: *'God will shortly bruise Satan under your feet'* (Romans 16:20; 1 Peter 5:9-10). Meredith Kline puts it this way:

Through the medium of the problem of theodicy, the book of Job sounds anew the demand of the Covenant. It calls men to unreserved consecration to their Sovereign Lord. And this way of the Covenant, this consecration to the transcendent, incomprehensible Creator, it identifies with the way of wisdom. Thereby it presents the Church with its proper testimony to the redemptive revelation before the wisdom schools of the world.

Such submission was, for Calvin, no easy matter:

It is a right hard thing for us to submit ourselves to the single will of God, without asking a reason ... It is a perfect and more than Angelical wisdom to have the skill to yield so much honour unto God, as to rest merely and simply upon his pleasure, that although we find the matter strange, and ... utterly contrary to all right and reason: yet we bow down our heads, and say, 'Lord, although thy judgments be as a deep gulf: yet will not we presume to encounter them.

Calvin's coat of arms was a hand holding a heart and encircled by a motto *Cor meum tibi offero Domine prompte et sincere* (My heart I offer Thee, Lord, promptly and sincerely). Calvin, like Job, knew that life is lived best when offered, humbly and submissively, to God, whatever pains he is pleased to make us pass through.

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