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JOB 1: 1 There was a man in the land of Uz, whose name was Job. That man was blameless and upright, and one who feared God, and turned away from evil.

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This is the most singular book in the whole of the Sacred Code: though written by the same inspiration, and in reference to the same end, the salvation of men, it is so different from every other book of the Bible, that it seems to possess nothing in common with them, for even the language, in its construction, is dissimilar from that in the Law, the Prophets, and the historical books. But on all hands it is accounted a work that contains "the purest morality, the sublimest philosophy, the simplest ritual, and the most majestic creed." Except the two first chapters and the ten last verses, which are merely prose, all the rest of the book is poetic; and is every where reducible to the hemistich form, in which all the other poetic books of the Bible are written: it is therefore properly called a Poem; but whether it belongs to the dramatic or epic species has not been decided by learned men. To try it by those rules which have been derived from Aristotle, and are still applied to ascertain compositions in these departments of poetry, is, in my opinion, as absurd as it is ridiculous. Who ever made a poem on these rules? And is there a poem in the universe worth reading that is strictly conformable to these rules? Not one. The rules, it is true, were deduced from compositions of this description: - and although they may be very useful, in assisting poets to methodize their compositions, and to keep the different parts distinct; yet they have often acted as a species of critical trammels, and have cramped genius. Genuine poetry is like a mountain flood: it pours down, resistless, bursts all bounds, scoops out its own channel, carries woods and rocks before it, and spreads itself abroad, both deep and wide, over all the plain. Such, indeed, is the poetry which the reader will meet with in this singular and astonishing book. As to Aristotle himself, although he was a keen-eyed plodder of nature, and a prodigy for his time; yet if we may judge from his poetics, he had a soul as incapable of feeling the true genie createur, as Racine terms the spirit of poetry, as he was, by his physics, metaphysics, and analogies, of discovering the true system of the universe.

As to the book of Job, it is most evidently a poem, and a poem of the highest order; dealing in subjects the most grand and sublime; using imagery the most chaste and appropriate; described by language the most happy and energetic; conveying instruction, both in Divine and human things, the most ennobling and useful; abounding in precepts the most pure and exalted, which are enforced by arguments the most strong and conclusive, and illustrated by examples the most natural and striking.

All these points will appear in the strongest light to every attentive reader of the book; and to such its great end will be answered: they will learn from it, that God has way every where: that the wicked, though bearing rule for a time, can never be ultimately prosperous and happy; and that the righteous, though oppressed with sufferings and calamities, can never be forgotten by Him in whose hands are his saints, and with whom their lives are precious; that in this world neither are the wicked ultimately punished, nor the righteous ultimately rewarded; that God's judgments are a great deep, and his ways past finding out; but the issues of all are to the glory of his wisdom and grace, and to the eternal happiness of those who trust in him. This is the grand design of the book, and this design will be strikingly evident to the simplest and most unlettered reader, whose heart is right with God, and who is seeking instruction, in order that he may glorify his Maker, by receiving and by doing good.

Notwithstanding all this, there is not a book in Scripture on the subject of which more difficulties have been started. None, says Calmet, has furnished more subjects of doubt and embarrassment; and none has afforded less information for the solution of those doubts. On this subject the great questions which have been agitated refer, principally,

1. To the person of Job.
2. To his existence.
3. To the time in which he lived.
4. To his country.
5. To his stock or kindred.
6. To his religion.
7. To the author of the book.
8. To its truth.
9. To its authenticity; and,
10. To the time and occasion on which it was written.

With respect to the first and second, several writers of eminent note have denied the personality of Job; according to them, no such person ever existed; he is merely fabulous, and is like the *Il penseroso*, or sorrowful man of Milton; sorrow, distress, affliction, and persecution personified, as the name imports. According to them, he is a mere ideal being, created by the genius of the poet; clothed with such attributes, and placed in such circumstances, as gave the poet scope and materials for his work.

Thirdly, as to the time in which those place him who receive this as a true history, there is great variety. According to some, he flourished in the patriarchal age; some make him contemporary with Moses; that he was in the captivity in Egypt, and that he lived at the time of the exodus. Some place him in the time of the Israelitish judges; others in the days of David; others, in those of Solomon; and others, in the time of the Babylonish captivity, having been teacher of a school at Tiberias in Palestine, and, with the rest of his countrymen, carried away into Babylon; and that he lived under Ahasuerus and Esther. Fourthly, as to his country: some make him an Arab; others, an Egyptian; others, a Syrian; some an Israelite; and some, an Idumean. Fifthly, as to his origin: some derive him from Nachor, and others from Esau, and make him the fifth in descent from Abraham. Sixthly, as to his religion: some suppose it to have been Sabaeism; others, that it was patriarchal; and others, that he was bred up in the Jewish faith. Seventhly, as to the author of the work, learned men are greatly divided: some suppose the author to have been Elihu; others, Job; others, Job and his friends; others, Moses; some, Solomon; others, Isaiah; and others, Ezra, or some unknown Jew, posterior to the captivity. Eighthly, as to the book: some maintain that it is a history of fact, given by one best qualified to record it; and others, that it is an instructive fiction-facts, persons, dialogues and all, being supposititious; given, however, by the inspiration of God, in a sort of parabolic form, like those employed in the Gospel; and similar to that of the rich man and Lazarus. Ninthly, as to its authenticity: while some, and those not well qualified to judge, have asserted it to be a mere human production, of no Divine authority; others have clearly shown that the book itself, whatever questions may arise concerning the person, author, time, place, etc., was ever received by the Jewish Church and people as authentic, genuine, and divinely inspired; and incorporated, with the

highest propriety, among the most instructive, sublime, and excellent portions of Divine revelation. Tenthly, as to the occasion on which it was written, there are considerable differences of opinion: some will have it to be written for the consolation of the Hebrews in their peregrinations through the wilderness; and others, for the comfort and encouragement of the Israelites in the Babylonish captivity: these state that Job represents Nehemiah, and that his three professed friends, but real enemies, Eliphaz the Temanite, Bildad the Shuhite, and Zophar the Naamathite, represent Sanballat the Horonite, Tobiah the Ammonite, and Geshem the Arabian! and that the whole book should be understood and interpreted on this ground; and that, with a little allowance for poetic colouring, all its parts perfectly harmonize, thus understood; showing, in a word, that into whatsoever troubles or persecutions God may permit his people to be brought, yet he will sustain them in the fire, bring them safely through it, and discomfit all their enemies: and that whatsoever is true on this great scale, is true also on that which is more contracted; as he will equally support, defend, and finally render conqueror, every individual that trusts in him.

I shall not trouble my readers with the arguments which have been used by learned men, pro and con, relative to the particulars already mentioned: were I to do this, I must transcribe a vast mass of matter, which, though it might display great learning in the authors, would most certainly afford little edification to the great bulk of my readers. My own opinion on those points they may naturally wish to know; and to that opinion they have a right: it is such as I dare avow, and such as I feel no disposition to conceal. I believe Job to have been a real person, and his history to be a statement of facts.

As the preface to this book (I mean the first chapter) states him to have lived in the land of Uz, or Uts, I believe, with Mr. Good and several other learned men, this place to have been "situated in Arabia Petraea, on the south-western coast of the lake Asphaltites, in a line between Egypt and Philistia, surrounded with Kedar, Teman, and Midian; all of which were districts of Arabia Petraea; situated in Idumea, the land of Edom or Esau; and comprising so large a part of it, that Idumea and Ausitis, or the land of Uz, and the land of Edom, were convertible terms, and equally employed to import the same region: thus, Lam 4:21: 'Rejoice and be glad, O daughter of Edom, that dwellest in the land of Uz.'" See Mr. Good's Introductory Dissertation; who proceeds to observe: "Nothing is clearer than that all the persons introduced into this poem were Idumeans, dwelling in Idumea; or, in other words, Edomite Arabs. These characters are, Job himself, dwelling in the land of Uz; Eliphaz of Teman, a district of as much repute as Uz, and (upon the joint testimony of Jer 49:7, Jer 49:20; Eze 25:13; Amo 1:11, Amo 1:12, and Oba 1:8, Oba 1:9) a part, and a principal part, of Idumea; Bildad of Shuah, always mentioned in conjunction with Sheba and Dedan, all of them being uniformly placed in the vicinity of Idumea; Zophar of Naamah, a city whose name imports pleasantness, which is also stated, in Jos 15:21, Jos 15:41, to have been situated in Idumea, and to have lain in a southern direction towards its coast, or the shores of the Red Sea; and Elihu of Buz, which as the name of a place occurs but once in sacred writ, but is there (Jer 25:22, Jer 25:23) mentioned in conjunction with Teman and Dedan; and hence necessarily, like themselves, a border city upon Ausitis, Uz, or Idumea. It had a number of names: it was at first called Horitis, from the Horim or Horites, who appear to have first settled there. Among the descendants of these, the most distinguished was Seir; and from him the land was known by the name of the Land of Seir. This chief had a numerous family, and among the most signalized of his grandsons was Uz, or Uts; and from him, and not from Uz the son of Nahor, it seems to have been called Ausitis, or the Land of Uz. The family of Hor, Seir, or Uz, were at length dispossessed of the entire region by Esau, or Edom; who strengthened himself by his marriage with one of the daughters of Ishmael; and the conquered territory was denominated Idumea, or the land of Edom." I think this is conclusive as to the country of Job and his friends. See Mr. Good as above.

The man and his country being thus ascertained, the time in which he lived is the point next to be considered.

I feel all the difficulties of the various chronologies of learned men: all that has been offered on the subject is only opinion or probable conjecture; and, while I differ from many respectable authors, I dare not say that I have more to strengthen my opinion than they have to support theirs.

I do not believe that he lived under the patriarchal dispensation; nor in any time previous to the giving of the Law, or to the death of Moses. I have examined the opposite arguments, and they have brought no conviction to my mind. That he lived after the giving of the Law appears to me very probable, from what I consider frequent references to the Mosaic institutions occurring in the book, and which I shall notice in their respective places. I know it has been asserted there are no such references; and I am astonished at the assertion: the reader will judge whether a plain case is made out where the supposed references occur. An obstinate adherence to a preconceived system is like prejudice; it has neither eyes nor ears.

With this question, that relative to the author of the book is nearly connected. Were we to suppose that Job himself, or Elihu, or Job and his friends, wrote the work, the question would at once be answered that regards the time; but all positive evidence on this point is wanting: and while other suppositions have certain arguments to support them, the above claimants who are supported only by critical conjecture, must stand where they are for want of evidence. The opinions that appear the most probable, and have plausible arguments to support them, are the following:

1. Moses was the author of this book, as many portions of it harmonize with his acknowledged writings.

2. Solomon is the most likely author, as many of the sentiments contained in it are precisely the same with those in the Proverbs; and they are delivered often in nearly the same words.

3. The book was written by some Jew, in or soon after the time of the Babylonish captivity.

1. That Moses was the author has been the opinion of most learned men; and none has set the arguments in support of this opinion in so strong a light as Mr. Mason Good, in his Introductory Dissertation to his translation and notes on this book. Mr. G. is a gentleman of great knowledge, great learning, and correct thinking; and whatever he says or writes is entitled to respect. If he have data, his deductions are most generally consecutive and solid. He contends, "that the writer of this poem must in his style have been equally master of the simple and of the sublime; that he must have been minutely and elaborately acquainted with Astronomy, Natural History, and the general science of his age; that he must have been a Hebrew by birth and native language, and an Arabian by long residence and local study; and, finally, that he must have flourished and composed the work before the exodus." And he thinks that "every one of these features is consummated in Moses, and in Moses alone; and that the whole of them give us his complete lineaments and portraiture.

Instructed in all the learning of Egypt, it appears little doubtful that he composed it during some part of his forty years' residence with the hospitable Jethro, in that district of Idumea which was named Midian." In addition to these external proofs of identity, Mr. Good thinks, "a little attention will disclose to us an internal proof, of peculiar force, in the close and striking similarity of diction and idiom which exists between the book of Job and those pieces of poetry which Moses is usually admitted to have composed. This point he proceeds to examine; and thinks that the following examples may make some progress toward settling the question, by exhibiting a very singular proof of general parallelism. "The order of creation, as detailed in the first chapter of Genesis, is precisely similar to that described in Job 38:1-20, the general arrangement that occupied the first day; - the

formation of the clouds, which employed the second; - the separation of the sea, which took up a part of the third; - and the establishment of the luminaries in the skies, which characterized the fourth. "In this general description, as given in Genesis, the vapor in the clouds, and the fluid in the sea, are equally denominated waters: thus, Gen 1:5-7, 'And God said, Let there be a firmament in the midst of the waters, and let it divide the waters from the waters. And God made the firmament, and divided the waters which were under the firmament from the waters which were above the firmament.' "Let us compare this passage with Job 26:8-10: -

He driveth together the waters into His thick clouds;

And the cloud is not rent under them -

He setteth a bow on the face of the waters,

Till the consummation of light and of darkness. "These are, perhaps, the only instances in the Bible in which the cloudy vapors are denominated waters, before they become concentrated into rain; and they offer an identity of thought, which strongly suggests an identity of person. The following is another very striking peculiarity of the same kind, occurring in the same description, and is perhaps still more in point. The combined simplicity and sublimity of Gen 1:3, 'And God said, Be light! and light was,' has been felt and praised by critics of every age, Pagan and Mohammedan, as well as Jewish and Christian; and has by all of them been regarded as a characteristic feature in the Mosaic style. In the poem before us we have the following proof of identity of manner, Job 37:6: -

Behold! He saith to the snow, Be!

On earth then falleth it.

To the rain - and it falleth; -

The rains of his might. "This can hardly be regarded as an allusion, but as an instance of identity of manner. In the psalmist we have an allusion: and it occurs thus, Psa 33:9, הוא אמר ויהי hu amar vaiyehi, 'He spake, and it existed;' and I copy it that the reader may see the difference. The eulogy of Longinus upon the passage in Genesis is a eulogy also upon that in Job; and the Koran, in verbally copying the psalmist, has bestowed an equal panegyric upon all of them: -

Dixit, 'Esto;' et fuit. - He said, Be Thou; and it Was. "With reference to the description of the creation, in the book of Genesis, I shall only farther observe, that the same simplicity of style, adapted to so lofty a subject, characteristically distinguishes the writer of the book of Job, who commonly employs a diction peculiarly magnificent, as though trusting to the subject to support itself, without the feeble aid of rhetorical ornaments. Of this the description of the tribunal of the Almighty, given in the first and second chapters of the ensuing poem, is a striking example, as indeed I have already remarked; and that of the midnight apparition in the fourth chapter is no less so. "The following instances are of a more general nature, and lead, upon a broader principle, to the same conclusion: - Job Exodus Job 13:24 Job 4:9 Job 15:24 Job 20:26 Wherefore accountest thou me thine enemy?

Wouldst thou hunt down the parched stubble?

By the blast of God they perish;

And by the breath of His nostrils they are consumed.

Distress and anguish dismay him;

They overwhelm him as a king ready for battle.

Terrors shall be upon him -

Every horror treasured up in reserve for him.

A fire unblown shall consume him. Exo 15:7 Exo 15:8 Exo 15:10 Exo 15:16 Thou sentest forth thy wrath,

Consuming them as stubble.

And with the blast of thy nostrils

The waters were gathered together.

Thou didst blow with thy wind:

The sea covered them.

Terror and dread shall fall upon them:

By the might of thine arm they shall be still as a stone. Job Deuteronomy Job 20:27 Job 18:15 Job 18:16 Job 18:17 18:24 7:25 Job 8:17 Job 8:18 Job 8:19 The heavens shall disclose his iniquity,

And the earth shall rise up against him.

Brimstone shall be rained down upon his dwelling.

Below shall his root be burnt up,

And above shall his branch be cut off.

Counsellors he leadeth captive,

And judges he maketh distracted.

He bewildereth the judgment of the leaders of the people of the land,

And causeth them to wander in a pathless dessert:

They grope about in darkness, even without a gl

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JOB 1: 2 There were born to him seven sons and three daughters.

JOB 1: 3 His possessions also were seven thousand sheep, three thousand camels, five hundred yoke of oxen, five hundred female donkeys, and a very great household; so that this man was the greatest of all the children of the east.

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Verse 3

His substance also was seven thousand sheep - A thousand, says the Chaldee, for each of his sons. Three thousand camels: a thousand for each of his daughters. Five hundred yoke of oxen for himself. And five hundred she-asses for his wife. Thus the Targum divides the substance of this eminent man.

A very great household - עבדה רבה מאד abuddah rabbah meod, "a very great estate." The word עבדה abuddah refers chiefly to husbandry, including all manner of labor in the field, with cattle, and every description of servants.

The greatest of all the men of the East - He was more eminent than any other person in that region in wisdom, wealth, and piety. He was the chief emir of that district.

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JOB 1: 4 His sons went and held a feast in the house of each one on his birthday; and they sent and called for their three sisters to eat and to drink with them.

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#### Verse 4

Feasted in their houses, every one his day - It is likely that a birthday festival is here intended. When the birthday of one arrived, he invited his brothers and sisters to feast with him; and each observed the same custom.

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JOB 1: 5 It was so, when the days of their feasting had run their course, that Job sent and sanctified them, and rose up early in the morning, and offered burnt offerings according to the number of them all. For Job said, "It may be that my sons have sinned, and renounced God in their hearts." Job did so continually.

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#### Verse 5

When the days of their feasting were gone about - At the conclusion of the year, when the birthday of each had been celebrated, the pious father appears to have gathered them all together, that the whole family might hold a feast to the Lord, offering burnt-offerings in order to make an atonement for sins of all kinds, whether presumptuous or committed through ignorance. This we may consider as a general custom among the godly in those ancient times.

And cursed God in their hearts - וברכו אלהים uberechu Elohim. In this book, according to most interpreters, the verb ברך barach signifies both to bless and to curse; and the noun אלהים Elohim signifies the true God, false gods, and great or mighty. The reason why Job offered the burnt-offerings appears to have been this: in a country where idolatry flourished, he thought it possible that his children might, in their festivity, have given way to idolatrous thoughts, or done something prescribed by idolatrous rites; and therefore the words may be rendered thus: It may be that my children have blessed the gods in their hearts. Others think that the word ברך barach should be understood as implying farewell, bidding adieu - lest my children have bidden adieu to God, that is, renounced him, and cast off his fear. To me this is very unlikely. Mr. Mason Good contends that the word should be understood in its regular and general sense, to bless; and that the conjunction I vau should be translated nor. "Peradventure my sons may have sinned, nor blessed God in their hearts." This version he supports with great learning. I think the sense given above is more plain, and less embarrassed. They might have been guilty of some species of idolatry. This is possible even among those called Christians, in their banquets; witness their songs to Bacchus, Venus, etc., which are countless in number, and often sung by persons who would think themselves injured, not to be

reputed Christians. Coverdale, in his translation, (1535), renders the passage thus: Peradventure my sonnes have done some offense, and have been unthankful to God in their hertes.

Thus did Job continually - At the end of every year, when all the birthday festivals had gone round.

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JOB 1: 6 Now on the day when God's sons came to present themselves before the LORD, Satan also came among them.

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#### Verse 6

There was a day when the sons of God - All the versions, and indeed all the critics, are puzzled with the phrase sons of God; בני האלהים beney haelohim, literally, sons of the God, or sons of the gods. The Vulgate has simply filii dei, sons of God. The Septuagint, οἱ ἄγγελοι του θεου, the angels of God. The Chaldee, כתי מלאכיא kittey malachaiya, troops of angels. The Syriac retains the Hebrew words and letters, only leaving out the demonstrative ה he in the word האלהים haelohim, thus, (Syriac) baney Elohim. The Arabic nearly copies the Hebrew also, (Arabic) banoa lloheem; to which, if we give not the literal translation of the Hebrew, we may give what translation we please. Coverdale (1535) translates it, servauntes of God. The Targum supposes that this assembly took place on the day of the great atonement, which occurred once each year. And there was a day of judgment in the beginning of the year; and the troops of angels came, that they might stand in judgment before the Lord. But what are we to make of this whole account? Expositions are endless. That of Mr. Peters appears to me to be at once the most simple and the most judicious: "The Scripture speaks of God after the manner of men, for there is a necessity of condescending to our capacities, and of suiting the revelation to our apprehension. As kings, therefore, transact their most important affairs in a solemn council or assembly, so God is pleased to represent himself as having his council likewise; and as passing the decrees of his providence in an assembly of his holy angels. We have here, in the case of Job, the same grand assembly held, as was before in that of Ahab, 1 Kings 22:6-23; the same host of heaven, called here the sons of God, presenting themselves before Jehovah, as in the vision of Micaiah they are said to stand on his right hand and on his left. A wicked spirit appearing among them, here called Satan or the adversary, and there a lying spirit; both bent on mischief, and ready to do all the hurt they were permitted to do; for both were under the control of his power. The imagery is just the same; and the only difference is in the manner of the relation. That mentioned above, Micaiah, as a prophet, and in the actual exercise of his prophetic office, delivers, as he received it, in a vision. "I saw the Lord sitting on his throne, and all the Host of Heaven standing by him, on his right hand and on his left, and there came forth a Lying Spirit, and stood Before the Lord, and said," 1Kgs 22:19-22. The other, as a historian, interweaves it with his history; and tells us, in his plain narrative style, "There was a day when the sons of God came to Present themselves Before the Lord, and Satan came also among them." And this he delivers in the same manner as he does, There was a man in the land of Uz, whose name was Job. "The things delivered to us by these two inspired writers are the same in substance, equally high, and above the reach of human sight and knowledge; but the manner of delivering them is different, each as suited best to his particular purpose. This, then is the prophetic way of representing things, as to the manner of doing them, which, whether done exactly in the same manner, concerns us not to know; but which are really done: and God would have them described as done in this manner, to make the more lively and lasting impression on us. At the same time, it must not be forgotten that representations of this kind are founded in a well-known and established truth, viz., the doctrine of good and bad angels, a point revealed from



the beginning, and without a previous knowledge of which, the visions of the prophets could scarcely be intelligible." See Gen 28:10-15.

And Satan came also - This word also is emphatic in the original, *יושן* *hassatan*, the Satan, or the adversary; translated by the Septuagint *ὁ Διαβολος*. The original word is preserved by the Chaldee, Syriac, and Arabic; indeed, in each of them the word signifies an adversary. St. Peter, 1Pet 5:8, plainly refers to this place; and fully proves that *יושן* *hassatan*, which he literally translates *ὁ αντιδικος*, the Adversary, is no other than *ὁ Διαβολος*, the Devil, or chief of bad demons, which he adds to others by way of explanation. There are many *διαμονες*, demons, mentioned in Scripture, but the word Satan or devil is never found in the originals of the Old and New Testaments in the plural number. Hence we reasonably infer, that all evil spirits are under the government of One chief, the Devil, who is more powerful and more wicked than the rest. From the Greek *Διαβολος* comes the Latin *Diabolus*, the Spanish *Diablo*, the French *Diable*, the Italian *Diavolo*, the German *Teuffel*, the Dutch *Duivel*, the Anglo-Saxon and the English *Devil*, which some would derive from the compound *The - Evil*; *ὁ πονηρος*, the evil one, or wicked one.

It is now fashionable to deny the existence of this evil spirit; and this is one of what St. John (Rev 2:24) calls *τα βαθη του σατανα*, the depths of Satan; as he well knows that they who deny his being will not be afraid of his power and influence; will not watch against his wiles and devices; will not pray to God for deliverance from the evil one; will not expect him to be trampled down under their feet, who has no existence; and, consequently, they will become an easy and unopposing prey to the enemy of their souls. By leading men to disbelieve and deny his existence, he throws them off their guard; and is then their complete master, and they are led captive by him at his will. It is well known that, among all those who make any profession of religion, those who deny the existence of the devil are they who pray little or none at all; and are, apparently, as careless about the existence of God as they are about the being of a devil. Piety to God is with them out of the question; for those who do not pray, especially in private, (and I never met with a devil-denier who did), have no religion of any kind, whatsoever pretensions they may choose to make.

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JOB 1: 7 The LORD said to Satan, "Where have you come from?" Then Satan answered the LORD, and said, "From going back and forth in the earth, and from walking up and down in it."

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#### Verse 7

From going to and fro in the earth - The translation of the Septuagint is curious: *Περιελθων την γην και εμπεριπατησας την ὑπ' ουρανων, παρειμι*; "Having gone round the earth, and walked over all that is under heaven, I am come hither." The Chaldee says, "I am come from going round the earth to examine the works of the children of men; and from walking through it." Coverdale, who generally hits the sense, translates thus: I have gone aboute the londe ond walked thorow it. Mr. Good has it, from roaming round the earth, and walking about it.

St. Peter, as has been already stated, 1Pet 5:8, refers to this: "Be sober, be vigilant; for your Adversary the Devil Goeth About, as a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour." I rather think, with Coverdale, that *אֲרַעֵס* here signifies rather that land, than the habitable globe. The words are exceedingly emphatic; and the latter verb *הִתְהַלַּךְ* *hithhallelch* being in the *hithpael* conjugation shows how earnest and determined the devil is in his work: he sets himself to walk; he is busily employed in it; he is seeking the destruction of men; and while they sleep, he wakes - while they are

careless, he is alert. The spirit of this saying is often expressed by the simple inhabitants of the country: when they perceive a man plotting mischief, and frequent in transgression, they say, The devil is Busy with him.

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JOB 1: 8 The LORD said to Satan, "Have you considered my servant, Job? For there is no one like him in the earth, a blameless and an upright man, one who fears God, and turns away from evil."

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#### Verse 8

Hast thou considered my servant Job - Literally, Hast thou placed thy heart on my servant Job? Hast thou viewed his conduct with attention, whilst thou wert roaming about, seeking whom thou mightest devour? viz., the careless, prayerless, and profligate in general.

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JOB 1: 9 Then Satan answered the LORD, and said, "Does Job fear God for nothing?"

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#### Verse 9

Doth Job fear God for naught? - Thou hast made it his interest to be exemplary in his conduct: for this assertion Satan gives his reasons in what immediately follows.

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JOB 1: 10 Haven't you made a hedge around him, and around his house, and around all that he has, on every side? You have blessed the work of his hands, and his substance is increased in the land.

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#### Verse 10

Hast not thou made a hedge about him - Thou hast fortified him with spikes and spears. Thou hast defended him as by an unapproachable hedge. He is an object of thy peculiar care; and is not exposed to the common trials of life.

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JOB 1: 11 But stretch out your hand now, and touch all that he has, and he will renounce you to your face."

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#### Verse 11

But put forth thine hand - Shoot the dart of poverty and affliction against him.

And he will curse thee to thy face - יברכך לא על פניך im lo al paneycha yebarechecca, "If he will not bless thee to thy appearances." He will bless thee only in proportion to the temporal good thou bestowest upon him; to the providential and gracious appearances or displays of thy power in his behalf. If thou wilt be gracious, he will be pious. The exact maxim of a great statesman, Sir Robert Walpole: Every man has his price. "But you have not bought such a one?" "No, because I would not

go up to his price. He valued himself at more than I thought him worth; and I could get others cheaper, who, in the general muster, would do as well." No doubt Sir R. met with many such; and the devil many more. But still God has multitudes that will neither sell their souls, their consciences, nor their country, for any price; who, though God should slay them, will nevertheless trust in him; and be honest men, howsoever tempted by the devil and his vicegerents. So did Job; so have done thousands; so will all do, in whose hearts Christ dwells by faith.

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JOB 1: 12 The LORD said to Satan, "Behold, all that he has is in your power. Only on himself don't stretch out your hand." So Satan went out from the presence of the LORD.

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#### Verse 12

All that he hath is in thy power - Satan cannot deprive a man even of an ass, a sheep, or a pig, but by especial permission of God. His power and malice are ever bounded, and under control.

So Satan went forth - The Targum adds, with authority from the presence of the Lord.

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JOB 1: 13 It fell on a day when his sons and his daughters were eating and drinking wine in their eldest brother's house,

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#### Verse 13

There was a day - The first day of the week, says the Targum. It no doubt refers to one of those birthday festivals mentioned before.

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JOB 1: 14 that there came a messenger to Job, and said, "The oxen were ploughing, and the donkeys feeding beside them,

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#### Verse 14

The asses feeding beside them - אֲתִנּוֹת *athonoth*, the she-asses, which appear to have been more domesticated, as of more worth and use than the others, both for their milk and their work.

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JOB 1: 15 and the Sabeans attacked, and took them away. Yes, they have killed the servants with the edge of the sword, and I alone have escaped to tell you."

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#### Verse 15

And the Sabeans fell - The Vulgate alone understands this of a people. The Septuagint, Syriac, and Arabic, understand it as implying a marauding party. The Chaldee says, "Lilith, queen of Zamargad, rushed suddenly upon them, and carried them away." The Sabeans mentioned here are supposed to

have been the same with those who were the descendants of Abraham by Keturah, whose son Jokshan begat Sheba. The sons of Keturah were sent by Abraham into the east, Gen 25:6, and inhabited Arabia Deserta, on the east of the land of Uz. Hordes of predatory banditti were frequent in those countries and continue so to the present day. They made sudden incursions, and carried off men, women, children, cattle, and goods of every description; and immediately retired to the desert, whither it was in vain to pursue them.

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JOB 1: 16 While he was still speaking, there also came another, and said, "The fire of God has fallen from the sky, and has burned up the sheep and the servants, and consumed them, and I alone have escaped to tell you."

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#### Verse 16

The fire of God is fallen - Though the fire of God may mean a great, a tremendous fire, yet it is most natural to suppose lightning is meant; for as thunder was considered to be the voice of God, so lightning was the fire of God. And as the prince of the power of the air was permitted now to arm himself with this dreadful artillery of heaven, he might easily direct the zigzag lightning to every part of the fields where the sheep were feeding, and so destroy the whole in a moment.

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JOB 1: 17 While he was still speaking, there came also another, and said, "The Chaldeans made three bands, and swept down on the camels, and have taken them away, yes, and killed the servants with the edge of the sword; and I alone have escaped to tell you."

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#### Verse 17

The Chaldeans made out three bands - The Chaldeans inhabited each side of the Euphrates near to Babylon, which was their capital. They were also mixed with the wandering Arabs, and lived like them on rapine. They were the descendants of Chesed, son of Nahor and brother of Huz, from whom they had their name Casdim, which we translate Chaldeans. They divided themselves into three bands, in order the more speedily and effectually to encompass, collect, and drive off the three thousand camels: probably they mounted the camels and rode off.

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JOB 1: 18 While he was still speaking, there came also another, and said, "Your sons and your daughters were eating and drinking wine in their eldest brother's house,

JOB 1: 19 and behold, there came a great wind from the wilderness, and struck the four corners of the house, and it fell on the young men, and they are dead. I alone have escaped to tell you."

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#### Verse 19

A great wind from the wilderness - Here was another proof of the influence of the prince of the power of the air. What mischief might he not do with this tremendous agent, were he not constantly under the control of the Almighty! He seems to have directed four different currents, which, blowing

against the four corners or sides of the house, crushed it together, and involved all within in one common ruin.

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JOB 1: 20 Then Job arose, and tore his robe, and shaved his head, and fell down on the ground, and worshipped.

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#### Verse 20

Rent his mantle - Tearing the garments, shaving or pulling off the hair of the head, throwing dust or ashes on the head, and fitting on the ground, were acts by which immoderate grief was expressed. Job must have felt the bitterness of anguish when he was told that, in addition to the loss of all his property, he was deprived of his ten children by a violent death. Had he not felt this most poignantly, he would have been unworthy of the name of man.

Worshipped - Prostrated himself; lay all along upon the ground, with his face in the dust.

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JOB 1: 21 He said, "Naked I came out of my mother's womb, and naked shall I return there. The LORD gave, and the LORD has taken away. Blessed be the LORD's name."

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#### Verse 21

Naked came I out of my mother's womb - I had no earthly possessions when I came into the world; I cannot have less going out of it. What I have the Lord gave: as it was his free gift, he has a right to resume it when he pleases; and I owe him gratitude for the time he has permitted me to enjoy this gift.

Naked shall I return thither - Whither? Not to his mother's womb surely; nor does he call the earth his mother in this place. In the first clause of the verse he speaks without a metaphor, and in the latter he speaks in reference to the ground on which he was about to fall. As I came out of my mother's womb destitute of the earthly possessions, so shall I return שמה shamah, There; i.e., to the earth on which he was now falling. That mother earth was a common expression in different nations, I allow; but I believe no such metaphor was now in the mind of Job.

The Lord gave - The Chaldee has, "The Word of the Lord, מימרא דיי meymera dayai, gave; and the Word of the Lord and the house of his judgment, have taken away!" Word is used here personally, as in many other places of all the Targums.

Blessed be the name of the Lord - The following is a fine paraphrase on the sentiment in this verse: - "Good when he gives, supremely good; Nor less when he denies;

Afflictions from his sovereign hand, Are blessings in disguise."

Seeing I have lost my temporal goods, and all my domestic comforts, may God alone be all my portion! The Vulgate, Septuagint, and Coverdale, add, The Lord hath done as he pleased.

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JOB 1: 22 In all this, Job did not sin, nor charge God with wrongdoing.

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 Verse 22

In all this Job sinned not - He did not give way to any action, passion, or expression, offensive to his Maker. He did not charge God with acting unkindly towards him, but felt as perfectly satisfied with the privation which the hand of God had occasioned, as he was with the affluence and health which that hand had bestowed. This is the transaction that gave the strong and vivid colouring to the character of Job; in this, and in this alone, he was a pattern of patience and resignation. In this Satan was utterly disappointed; he found a man who loved his God more than his earthly portion. This was a rare case, even in the experience of the devil. He had seen multitudes who bartered their God for money, and their hopes of blessedness in the world to come for secular possessions in the present. He had been so often successful in this kind of temptation, that he made no doubt he should succeed again. He saw many who, when riches increased, set their hearts on them, and forgot God. He saw many also who, when deprived of earthly comforts, blasphemed their Maker. He therefore inferred that Job, in similar circumstances, would act like the others; he was disappointed. Reader, has he, by riches or poverty, succeeded with thee? Art thou pious when affluent, and patient and contented when in poverty?

That Job lived after the giving of the law, seems to me clear from many references to the rites and ceremonies instituted by Moses. In Job 1:5, we are informed that he sanctified his children, and offered burnt-offerings daily to the morning for each of them. This was a general ordinance of the law, as we may see, Lev 9:7: "Moses said unto Aaron, Go unto the altar, and offer thy sin-offering and thy burnt-offering, and make an atonement for thyself and for the people." Lev 9:22: "And Aaron lifted up his hands towards the people, and blessed them, and came down from offering the burnt-offering."

This sort of offering, we are told above, Job offered continually; and this also was according to the law, Exo 29:42: "This shall be a continual burnt-offering throughout your generations." See also Num 28:3, Num 28:6, Num 28:10, Num 28:15, Num 28:24, Num 28:31.

This custom was observed after the captivity, Ezr 3:5: "They offered the continual burnt-offering: and of every one that offered a freewill-offering." See also Neh 10:33. Ezekiel, who prophesied during the captivity, enjoins this positively, Eze 46:13-15: "Thou shalt daily prepare a burnt-offering unto the Lord; thou shalt prepare it every morning."

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Job appears to have thought that his children might have sinned through ignorance, or sinned privately; and it was consequently necessary to make the due sacrifices to God in order to prevent his wrath and their punishment; he therefore offered the burnt-offering, which was prescribed by the law in cases of sins committed through ignorance. See the ordinances Leviticus 4:1-35; Lev 5:15-19, and particularly Num 15:24-29. I think it may be fairly presumed that the offerings which Job made for his children were in reference to these laws.

The worship of the sun, moon, and stars, as being the most prevalent and most seductive idolatry, was very expressly forbidden by the law, Deu 4:19: "Take heed, lest thou lift up thine eyes to heaven; and when thou seest the sun, and the moon, and the stars, even all the host of heaven, shouldest be driven to worship them, and serve them." Job purges himself from this species of idolatry, Job 31:26-28: "If I beheld the sun when it shined, or the moon walking in brightness, and my

heart hath been secretly enticed, or my mouth hath kissed my hand: this also were an iniquity to be punished by the judge; for I should have denied the God that is above."

He clears himself also from adultery in reference to the law enacted against that sin, Job 31:9-12: "If mine heart have been deceived by a woman, or if I have laid wait at my neighbor's door; then let my wife grind to another: for this is a heinous crime; yea, it is an iniquity to be punished by the judges." See the law against this sin, Exo 20:14, Exo 20:17: "Thou shalt not commit adultery: thou shalt not covet thy neighbor's wife." Lev 20:10: "The man that committeth adultery with another man's wife shall surely be put to death;" see Deu 22:22. And for the judge's office in such cases, see Deu 17:9-12: "Thou shalt come unto the priests and Levites, and unto the judge that shall be in those days; and they shall show thee the sentence of judgment." 1Sam 2:25: "If one man sin against another, the judge shall judge him."

The following will, I think, be considered an evident allusion to the passage of the Red Sea, and the destruction of the proud Egyptian king: Job 26:11, Job 26:12: "The pillars of heaven tremble, and are astonished at his reproof. He divideth the sea with his power; and by his understanding he smiteth through the proud." These, with several others that might be adduced, are presumptive proofs that the writer of this book lived after the giving and establishment of the law, if not much later, let Job himself live when he might. See other proofs in the notes.