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JOB 9: 1 Then Job answered,

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Job acknowledges God's justice and man's sinfulness, Job 9:1-3. Celebrates his almighty power as manifested in the earth and in the heavens, Job 9:4-10. Maintains that God afflicts the innocent as well as the wicked, without any respect to their works: and hath delivered the earth into the hands of the wicked, Job 9:11-24. Complains of his lot, and maintains his innocence, Job 9:25-35.

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JOB 9: 2 "Truly I know that it is so, but how can man be just with God?"

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Verse 2

I know it is so of a truth - I acknowledge the general truth of the maxims you have advanced. God will not ultimately punish a righteous person, nor shall the wicked finally triumph; and though righteous before man, and truly sincere in my piety, yet I know, when compared with the immaculate holiness of God, all my righteousness is nothing.

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JOB 9: 3 If he is pleased to contend with him, he can't answer him one time in a thousand.

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Verse 3

If he will contend with him - God is so holy, and his law so strict, that if he will enter into judgment with his creatures, the most upright of them cannot be justified in his sight.

One of a thousand - Of a thousand offenses of which he may be accused he cannot vindicate himself even in one. How little that any man does, even in the way of righteousness, truth, and mercy, can stand the penetrating eye of a just and holy God, when all motives, feelings, and objects, come to be scrutinized in his sight, on this ground, no man living can be justified. O, how necessary to fallen, weak, miserable, imperfect and sinful man, is the doctrine of justification by faith, and sanctification through the Divine Spirit, by the sacrificial death and mediation of the Lord Jesus Christ!

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JOB 9: 4 God who is wise in heart, and mighty in strength: who has hardened himself against him, and prospered?

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Verse 4

He is wise in heart, and mighty in strength - By his infinite knowledge he searches out and sees all things, and by his almighty power he can punish all delinquencies. He that rebels against him must be destroyed.

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JOB 9: 5 He removes the mountains, and they don't know it, when he overturns them in his anger.

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Verse 5

Removeth the mountains, and they know not - This seems to refer to earthquakes. By those strong convulsions, mountains, valleys, hills, even whole islands, are removed in an instant; and to this latter circumstance the words, they know not, most probably refer. The work is done in the twinkling of an eye; no warning is given; the mountain, that seemed to be as firm as the earth on which it rested, was in the same moment both visible and invisible; so suddenly was it swallowed up.

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JOB 9: 6 He shakes the earth out of its place. Its pillars tremble.

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Verse 6

The pillars thereof tremble - This also refers to an earthquake, and to that tremulous motion which sometimes gives warning of the approaching catastrophe, and from which this violent convulsion of nature has received its name. Earthquakes, in Scripture language, signify also violent commotions and disturbances in states; mountains often signify rulers; sun, empires; stars, petty states. But it is most likely that the expressions here are to be understood literally.

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JOB 9: 7 He commands the sun, and it doesn't rise, and seals up the stars.

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Verse 7

Which commandeth the sun - Obscures it either with clouds, with thick darkness, or with an eclipse.

Sealeth up the stars - Like the contents of a letter, wrapped up and sealed, so that it cannot be read. Sometimes the heavens become as black as ebony, and no star, figure, or character, in this great book of God can be read.

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JOB 9: 8 He alone stretches out the heavens, and treads on the waves of the sea.

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Verse 8

And treadeth upon the waves - This is a very majestic image. God not only walks upon the waters, but when the sea runs mountains high, he steps from billow to billow in his almighty and essential majesty. There is a similar sentiment in David, Psa 29:10: "The Lord sitteth upon the flood; yea, the Lord sitteth King for ever." But both are far outdone by the Psalmist, Psa 18:9-15, and especially in these words, Psa 18:10, He did fly on the wings of the wind. Job is great, but in every respect David is greater.

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JOB 9: 9 He makes the Bear, Orion, and the Pleiades, and the rooms of the south.

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#### Verse 9

Which maketh Arcturus, Orion, and Pleiades, and the chambers of the south - For this translation the original words are עֵשׂ עֵשׂה עֵשׂ כְּסִיל וְכִימָה וְהַדְרִי תַמָּן oseh ash, kesil, vechimah veadrey theman, which are thus rendered by the Septuagint: Ὁ ποιῶν Πλειάδα, καὶ Ἑσπερον, καὶ Ἀρκτουρον, καὶ ταμεια νοτου; "Who makes the Pleiades, and Hesperus, and Arcturus, and Orion, and the chambers of the south."

The Vulgate, Qui facit Arcturum, et Oriona, et Hyadas, et interiora Austri; "Who maketh Arcturus, and Orion, and the Hyades, and the innermost chambers of the south."

The Targum follows the Hebrew, but paraphrases the latter clause thus: "and the chambers or houses of the planetary domination in the southern hemisphere."

The Syrian and Arabic, "Who maketh the Pleiades, and Arcturus, and the giant, (Orion or Hercules), and the boundaries of the south."

Coverdale has, He maketh the waynes of heaven, the Orions, the vii starres and the secrete places of the south. And on the vii starres he has this marginal note: some call these seven starres, the clock henne with hir chickens. See below.

Edmund Becke, in his edition, 1549, follows Coverdale, but puts Vaynes of heaven for waynes, which Carmarden, in his Bible, Rouen, 1566, mistaking, changes into Waves of heaven.

Barker's Bible, 1615, reads, "He maketh the starres Arcturus, Orion, and Pleiades, and the climates of the south." On which he has this note, "These are the names of certain starres, whereby he meaneth that all starres, both knowen and unknowen, are at His appointment."

Our early translators seem to agree much with the German and Dutch: Er machet, den wagen am himmel, und Orion, und die Gluken, und die Sterne gegen mittag; "He maketh the wagon of heaven, (Charles's wain), and Orion, and the clucking hen, (the Pleiades), and the stars of the mid-day region." See above, under Coverdale.

The Dutch version is not much unlike the German, from which it is taken: Die den wagen maecht, den Orion, ende het sevengesternte, end de binnenkameren ban't Zuyden.

The European versions, in general, copy one or other of the above, or make a compound translation from the whole; but all are derived ultimately from the Septuagint and Vulgate.

As to the Hebrew words, they might as well have been applied to any of the other constellations of heaven: indeed, it does not appear that constellations are at all meant. Parkhurst and Bate have given, perhaps, the best interpretation of the words, which is as follows: - "כִּימָה kimah, from כָּמָה camah, to be hot or warm, denotes genial heat or warmth, as opposed to עֵשׂ ash, a parching, biting air, on the one side; and כְּסִיל kesil, the rigid, contracting cold, on the other; and the chambers (thick clouds) of the south." See more in Parkhurst, under כָּמָה.

I need scarcely add that these words have been variously translated by critics and commentators. Dr. Hales translates kimah and kesil by Taurus and Scorpio; and, if this translation were indubitably correct, we might follow him to his conclusions, viz., that Job lived 2337 years before Christ! See at the end of this chapter, Job 9:35 (note).

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JOB 9: 10 He does great things past finding out; yes, marvellous things without number.

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Verse 10

Great things past finding out - Great things without end; wonders without number - Targum.

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JOB 9: 11 Behold, he goes by me, and I don't see him. He passes on also, but I don't perceive him.

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Verse 11

Lo, he goeth by me, and I see him not - He is incomprehensible in all his ways, and in all his works; and he must be so it he be God, and work as God; for his own nature and his operations are past finding out.

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JOB 9: 12 Behold, he snatches away. Who can hinder him? Who will ask him, 'What are you doing?'

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Verse 12

He taketh away - He never gives, but he is ever lending: and while the gift is useful or is improved, he permits it to remain; but when it becomes useless or is misused, he recalls it.

Who can hinder him? - Literally, Who can cause him to restore it?

What doest thou? - He is supreme, and will give account of none of his matters. He is infinitely wise, and cannot mistake. He is infinitely kind, and can do nothing cruel. He is infinitely good, and can do nothing wrong. No one, therefore, should question either his motives or his operations.

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JOB 9: 13 "God will not withdraw his anger. The helpers of Rahab stoop under him.

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Verse 13

If God will not withdraw his anger - It is of no use to contend with God; he cannot be successfully resisted; all his opposers must perish.

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JOB 9: 14 How much less shall I answer him, And choose my words to argue with him?

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Verse 14

How much less shall I answer - I cannot contend with my Maker. He is the Lawgiver and the Judge. How shall I stand in judgment before him?

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JOB 9: 15 Though I were righteous, yet I wouldn't answer him. I would make supplication to my judge.

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Verse 15

Though I were righteous - Though clear of all the crimes, public and secret, of which you accuse me, yet I would not dare to stand before his immaculate holiness. Man's holiness may profit man, but in the sight of the infinite purity of God it is nothing. Thus sung an eminent poet: - "I loathe myself when God I see, And into nothing fall;

Content that thou exalted be, And Christ be all in all."

I would make supplication to my Judge - Though not conscious of any sin, I should not think myself thereby justified; but would, from a conviction of the exceeding breadth of the commandment, and the limited nature of my own perfection, cry out, "Cleanse thou me from secret faults!"

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JOB 9: 16 If I had called, and he had answered me, yet I wouldn't believe that he listened to my voice.

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Verse 16

If I had called, and he had answered - I could scarcely suppose, such is his majesty and such his holiness, that he could condescend to notice a being so mean, and in every respect so infinitely beneath his notice. These sentiments sufficiently confuted that slander of his friends, who said he was presumptuous, had not becoming notions of the majesty of God, and used blasphemous expressions against his sovereign authority.

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JOB 9: 17 For he breaks me with a storm, and multiplies my wounds without cause.

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Verse 17

He breaketh me with a tempest - The Targum, Syriac, and Arabic have this sense: He powerfully smites even every hair of my head and multiplies my wounds without cause. That is, There is no reason known to myself, or to any man, why I should be thus most oppressively afflicted. It is, therefore, cruel, and inconsequent to assert that I suffer for my crimes.

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JOB 9: 18 He will not allow me to catch my breath, but fills me with bitterness.

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Verse 18

He will not suffer me to take my breath - I have no respite in my afflictions; I suffer continually in my body, and my mind is incessantly harassed.

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JOB 9: 19 If it is a matter of strength, behold, he is mighty! If of justice, 'Who,' says he, 'will summon me?'

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Verse 19

If I speak of strength, lo, he is strong - Human wisdom, power, and influence avail nothing before him.

Who shall set me a time - יועידיני mi yoideni, "Who would be a witness for me?" or, Who would dare to appear in my behalf? Almost all the terms in this part of the speech of Job, Job 9:11-24, are forensic or juridical, and are taken from legal processes and pleadings in their gates or courts of justice.

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JOB 9: 20 Though I am righteous, my own mouth shall condemn me. Though I am blameless, it shall prove me perverse.

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Verse 20

If I justify myself - God must have some reason for his conduct towards me; I therefore do not pretend to justify myself; the attempt to do it would be an insult to his majesty and justice. Though I am conscious of none of the crimes of which you accuse me; and know not why he contends with me; yet he must have some reason, and that reason he does not choose to explain.

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JOB 9: 21 I am blameless. I don't respect myself. I despise my life.

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Verse 21

Though I were perfect - Had I the fullest conviction that, in every thought, word, and deed, I were blameless before him, yet I would not plead this; nor would I think it any security for a life of ease and prosperity, or any proof that my days should be prolonged.

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JOB 9: 22 "It is all the same. Therefore I say he destroys the blameless and the wicked.

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Verse 22

This is one thing - My own observation shows, that in the course of providence the righteous and the wicked have an equal lot; for when any sudden calamity comes, the innocent and the guilty fall alike. There may be a few exceptions, but they are very extraordinary, and very rare.

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JOB 9: 23 If the scourge kills suddenly, he will mock at the trial of the innocent.

JOB 9: 24 The earth is given into the hand of the wicked. He covers the faces of its judges. If not he, then who is it?

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#### Verse 24

The earth is given into the hand of the wicked - Is it not most evident that the worst men possess most of this world's goods, and that the righteous are scarcely ever in power or affluence? This was the case in Job's time; it is the case still. Therefore prosperity and adversity in this life are no marks either of God's approbation or disapprobation.

He covereth the faces of the judges thereon - Or, The faces of its decisions he shall cover. God is often stated in Scripture as doing a thing which he only permits to be done. So he permits the eyes of judgment to be blinded; and hence false decisions. Mr. Good translates the verse thus: - "The earth is given over to the hand of Injustice;

She hoodwinketh the faces of its judges.

Where every one liveth is it not so?"

And vindicates the translation in his learned notes: but I think the Hebrew will not bear this rendering; especially that in the third line.

Where, and who is he? - If this be not the case, who is he that acts in this way, and where is he to be found? If God does not permit these things, who is it that orders them? Coverdale translates, As for the worlde, he geveth it over into the power of the wicked, such as the rulers be wherof all londes are full. Is it not so? Where is there eny, but he is soch one? This sense is clear enough, if the original will bear it. The last clause is thus rendered by the Syriac and Arabic, Who can bear his indignation?

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JOB 9: 25 "Now my days are swifter than a runner. They flee away, they see no good,

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#### Verse 25

Swifter than a post - מִנִּי רַץ minni rats, than a runner. The light-footed messenger or courier who carries messages from place to place. They flee away - The Chaldee says, My days are swifter than the shadow of a flying bird. So swiftly do they flee away that I cannot discern them; and when past they cannot be recalled. There is a sentiment like this in Virgil, Geor. lib. iii., ver. 284: -

Sed Fugit interea, Cubit Irreparabile tempus! - "But in the meanwhile time flies! irreparable time flies away!"

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JOB 9: 26 They have passed away as the swift ships, as the eagle that swoops on the prey.

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Verse 26

As the swift ships - אֲנִיּוֹת אֵבֶה oniyoth ebeh. Ships of desire, or ships of Ebeh, says our margin; perhaps more correctly, inflated ships, the sails bellying out with a fair brisk wind, tide favorable, and the vessels themselves lightly freighted. The Vulgate has, Like ships freighted with apples. Ships laden with the best fruits - Targum. Ships well adapted for sailing - Arabic. Shipes that be good under sale - Coverdale. Probably this relates to the light fast-sailing ships on the Nile, which were made of reeds or papyrus. Perhaps the idea to be seized is not so much the swiftness of the passage, as their leaving no trace or track behind them. But instead of אֵבֶה ebeh, אֵיבָה eybah, hostile ships or the ships of enemies, is the reading of forty-seven of Kennicott's and De Rossi's MSS., and of the Syriac version. If this be the true reading what is its sense? My days are gone off like the light vessels of the pirates, having stripped me of my property, and carried all irrecoverably away, under the strongest press of sail, that they may effect their escape, and secure their booty. The next words, As the eagle that hasteth to the prey, seem at least to countenance, if not confirm, the above reading: the idea of robbery and spoil, prompt attack and sudden retreat, is preserved in both images.

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JOB 9: 27 If I say, 'I will forget my complaint, I will put off my sad face, and cheer up;'

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Verse 27

I will forget my complaint - I will forsake or forego my complaining. I will leave off my heaviness. Vulgate, I will change my countenance - force myself to smile, and endeavor to assume the appearance of comfort.

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JOB 9: 28 I am afraid of all my sorrows, I know that you will not hold me innocent.

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Verse 28

I am afraid of all my sorrows - Coverdale translates, after the Vulgate, Then am I afrayed of all my workes. Even were I to cease from complaining, I fear lest not one of my works, however well intentioned, would stand thy scrutiny, or meet with thy approbation.

Thou wilt not hold me innocent - Coverdale, after the Vulgate, For I knowe thou favourest not an evil doer; but this is not the sense of the original: Thou wilt not acquit me so as to take away my afflictions from me.

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JOB 9: 29 I shall be condemned. Why then do I labour in vain?

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Verse 29



If I be wicked - If I am the sinner you suppose me to be, in vain should I labor to counterfeit joy, and cease to complain of my sufferings.

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JOB 9: 30 If I wash myself with snow, and cleanse my hands with lye,

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Verse 30

If I wash myself with snow water - Supposed to have a more detergent quality than common water; and it was certainly preferred to common water by the ancients. Of this we find an example in an elegant but licentious author: Tandem ergo discubimus, pueris Alexandrinis Aquam in manus Nivatam infundentibus, aliisque insequentibus ad pedes - Petr. Satyr., cap. xxxi. "At length we sat down, and had snow water poured on our hands by lads of Alexandria," etc. Mr. Good supposes that there is an allusion here to the ancient rite of washing the hands in token of innocence. See Psa 26:6: I will Wash my hands in Innocency; and Psa 73:13: Verily I have cleansed my heart in vain, and Washed my Hands in Innocency. And by this ceremony Pilate declared himself innocent of the blood of Christ, Mat 27:24.

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JOB 9: 31 yet you will plunge me in the ditch. My own clothes shall abhor me.

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Verse 31

And mine own clothes shall abhor me - Such is thine infinite purity, when put in opposition to the purity of man, that it will bear no comparison. Searched and tried by the eye of God, I should be found as a leper, so that my own clothes would dread to touch me, for fear of being infected by my corruption. This is a strong and bold figure; and is derived from the corrupted state of his body, which his clothes dreaded to touch, because of the contagious nature of his disorder.

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JOB 9: 32 For he is not a man, as I am, that I should answer him, that we should come together in judgement.

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Verse 32

For he is not a man as I am - I cannot contend with him as with one of my fellows in a court of justice.

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JOB 9: 33 There is no umpire between us, that might lay his hand on us both.

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Verse 33

Neither is there any day's-man - בינינו מוכיח beyneynu mochiach, a reprover, arguer, or umpire between us. Day's - Man, in our law, means an arbitrator, or umpire between party and party; as it

were bestowing a day, or certain time on a certain day, to decree, judge, or decide a matter - Minshieu. Day is used in law for the day of appearance in court, either originally or upon assignation, for hearing a matter for trial - Idem. But arbitrator is the proper meaning of the term here: one who is, by the consent of both parties, to judge between them, and settle their differences. Instead of לֹא יֵשׁ לִי יֵשׁ, there is not, fifteen of Kennicott's and De Rossi's MSS., with the Septuagint, Syriac, and Arabic, read לֹא יֵשׁ לִי lu vesh, I wish there were: or, O that there were! Εἶθε ἦν ὁ μεσιτῆς ἡμῶν, καὶ ἐλεγγῶν καὶ διακουῶν ἀναμεσον ἀμφοτέρων; O that we had a mediator, an advocate, and judge between us both! - Sept. Poor Job! He did not yet know the Mediator between God and man: the only means by which God and man can be brought together and reconciled. Had St. Paul this in his eye when he wrote 1Tim 2:5, 1Tim 2:6? For there is one God, and one Mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus; who gave himself a ransom for all. Without this Mediator, and the ransom price which he has laid down, God and man can never be united: and that this union might be made possible, Jesus took the human into conjunction with his Divine nature; and thus God was manifest in the flesh.

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JOB 9: 34 Let him take his rod away from me. Let his terror not make me afraid;

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#### Verse 34

Let him take his rod away - In the Masoretic Bibles, the word שִׁבְטוֹ shibto, his rod, is written with a large ט teth, as above; and as the letter in numerals stands for 9, the Masora says the word was thus written to show the nine calamities under which Job had suffered, and which he wished God to remove. As שֶׁבֶט shebet signifies, not only rod, but also scepter or the ensign of royalty, Job might here refer to God sitting in his majesty upon the judgment-seat; and this sight so appalled him, that, filled with terror, he was unable to speak. When a sinful soul sees God in his majesty, terror seizes upon it, and prayer is impossible. We have a beautiful illustration of this, Isa 6:1-5: "I saw the Lord sitting upon a throne, high and lifted up, and his train filled the temple. Then said I, Wo is me, for I am undone, because I am a man of unclean lips; for mine eyes have seen the King, the Lord of hosts."

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JOB 9: 35 then I would speak, and not fear him, for I am not so in myself.

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#### Verse 35

But it is not so with me - I am not in such circumstances as to plead with my Judge. I believe the sense of these words is nearly as Coverdale has expressed it: - For as long as I am in soch fearfulnesse, I can make no answer. A natural picture of the state of a penitent soul, which needs no additional coloring.

On the names of the constellations mentioned Job 9:9, and again Job 38:31, etc., much has been written, and to little effect. I have already, in the notes, expressed my doubts whether any constellation be intended. Dr. Hales, however, finds in these names, as he thinks, astronomical data, by which he ascertains the time of Job. I shall give his words: - "The cardinal constellations of spring and autumn, in Job's time, were Chimah, and Chesil or Taurus, and Scorpio; noticed Job 9:9, and again, Job 38:31, Job 38:32; of which the principal stars are, Aldebaran, the bull's eye, and Antares,

the scorpion's heart. Knowing, therefore, the longitudes of these stars, at present, the interval of time from thence to the assumed date of Job's trial will give the difference of the longitudes; and ascertain their positions then, with respect to the vernal and autumnal points of intersection of the equinoctial and ecliptic; according to the usual rate of the precession of the equinoxes, one degree in 71 years. See that article, vol. i. p. 185. "The following calculations I owe to the kindness and skill of the respectable Dr. Brinkley, Andrew's Professor of Astronomy in the University of Dublin. "In a.d. 1800 Aldebaran was in 2 signs, 7 degrees, east longitude. But since the date of Job's trial, b.c. 2338, i.e., 4138 years, the precession of the equinoxes amounted to 1 sign, 27 degrees, 53 minutes; which, being subtracted from the former quantity, left Aldebaran in only 9 degrees, 7 minutes longitude, or distance from the vernal intersection; which, falling within the constellation Taurus, consequently rendered it the cardinal constellation of spring, as Pisces is at present. "In a.d. 1800 Antares was in 8 signs, 6 degrees, 58 minutes, east longitude; or 2 signs, 6 degrees, 58 minutes, east of the autumnal intersection: from which subtracting as before the amount of the precession, Antares was left only 9 degrees, 5 minutes east. Since then, the autumnal equinox was found within Scorpio, this was the cardinal constellation of autumn, as Virgo is at present. "Such a combination and coincidence of various rays of evidence, derived from widely different sources, history, sacred and profane, chronology, and astronomy, and all converging to the same focus, tend strongly to establish the time of Job's trial, as rightly assigned to the year b.c. 2337, or 818 years after the deluge, 184 years before the birth of Abram; 474 years before the settlement of Jacob's family in Egypt; and 689 years before their exode or departure from thence." *New Analysis of Chronology*, vol. ii., p. 57.

Now all this is specious; and, were the foundation sound, we might rely on the permanence of the building, though the rains should descend, the floods come, and the winds blow and beat on that house. But all these deductions and conclusions are founded on the assumption that Chimah and Chesil mean Taurus and Scorpio: but this is the very point that is to be proved; for proof of this is not offered, nor, indeed, can be offered; and such assumptions are palpably nugatory. That עשׂ ash has been generally understood to signify the Great Bear; כסיל Kesil, Orion; and כימה Kimah, the Pleiades; may be seen everywhere: but that they do signify these constellations is perfectly uncertain. We have only conjectures concerning their meaning; and on such conjectures no system can be built. Genuine data, in Dr. Hales's hands, are sure to be conducted to legitimate conclusions: but neither he nor any one else can construct an astronomical fabric in the limbus of conjecture. When Job lived is perfectly uncertain: but that this book was written 818 years after the deluge; 184 years before the birth of Abram, and 689 years before the exodus; and that all this is demonstrable from Chimah and Chesil signifying Taurus and Scorpio, whence the positions of the equinoxes at the time of Job's trial can be ascertained; can never be proved, and should never be credited. In what many learned men have written on this subject, I find as much solidity and satisfaction as from what is piously and gravely stated in the *Glossa Ordinaria*: -

Qui facit Arcturum. Diversae sunt constellationes, varios status ecclesiae signantes. Per Arcturum, qui semper super orizontem nostrum apparet, significatur status apostolorum qui in episcopis remanet. Per Oriona, qui est tempestatis signum, significatur status martyrum. Per Hyadas, quae significant pluvios, status doctorum doctrinae pluvium effudentium. Per interiora austri, quae sunt nobis occulta, status Anachoretarum, hominum aspectus declinantium. "These different constellations signify various states of the Church. By Arcturus, which always appears above our horizon, is signified the apostolic state, which still remains in episcopacy. By Orion, which is a tempestuous sign, is signified the state of the martyrs. By the Hyades, (kids), which indicate rain, the state of the doctors, pouring out the rain of doctrine, is signified. And by the inner chambers of the south, which are hidden from us, the state of the Anchorets (hermits) is signified, who always shun the sight of men."

Much more of the same allegorical matter may be found in the same place, the Glossa Ordinaria of Strabus of Fulda, on the ninth chapter of Job. But how unreal and empty are all these things! What an uncertain sound do such trumpets give!