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JOB 22: 1 Then Eliphaz the Temanite answered,

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Eliphaz reproves Job for his attempts to clear his character and establish his innocence, Job 22:1-4. Charges him with innumerable transgressions; with oppressions towards his brethren, cruelty to the poor, hard-heartedness to the needy, and uncharitableness towards the widow and the orphan; and says it is on these accounts that snares and desolations are come upon him, Job 22:5-11. Speaks of the majesty and justice of God: how he cut off the ante-diluvians, the inhabitants of Sodom and the cities of the plain, Job 22:12-20. Exhorts him to repent and acknowledge his sins, and promises him great riches and prosperity, Job 22:21-30.

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JOB 22: 2 "Can a man be profitable to God? Surely he who is wise is profitable to himself.

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Verse 2

Can a man be profitable unto God - God does not afflict thee because thou hast deprived him of any excellency. A man may be profitable to a man, but no man can profit his Maker. He has no interest in thy conduct; he does not punish thee because thou hast offended and deprived him of some good. Thy iniquities are against justice, and justice requires thy punishment.

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JOB 22: 3 Is it any pleasure to the Almighty, that you are righteous? Or does it benefit him, that you make your ways perfect?

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Verse 3

Is it any pleasure to the Almighty - Infinite in his perfections, he can neither gain nor lose by the wickedness or righteousness of men.

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JOB 22: 4 Is it for your piety that he reproves you, that he enters with you into judgement?

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Verse 4

For fear of thee? - Is it because he is afraid that thou wilt do him some injury, that he has stripped thee of thy power and wealth?

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JOB 22: 5 Isn't your wickedness great? Neither is there any end to your iniquities.

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Verse 5

Is not thy wickedness great? - Thy sins are not only many, but they are great; and of thy continuance in them there is no end, **אין קץ** ein kets.

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JOB 22: 6 For you have taken pledges from your brother for nothing, and stripped the naked of their clothing.

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Verse 6

Thou hast taken a pledge - Thou hast been vexatious in all thy doings, and hast exacted where nothing was due, so that through thee the poor have been unable to procure their necessary clothing.

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JOB 22: 7 You haven't given water to the weary to drink, and you have withheld bread from the hungry.

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Verse 7

Thou hast not given water - It was esteemed a great virtue in the East to furnish thirsty travelers with water; especially in the deserts, where scarcely a stream was to be found, and where wells were very rare. Some of the Indian devotees are accustomed to stand with a girbah or skin full of water, on the public roads, to give drink to weary travelers who are parched with thirst.

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JOB 22: 8 But as for the mighty man, he had the earth. The honourable man, he lived in it.

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Verse 8

But as for the mighty man, he had the earth - **איש זרוע** ish zeroa, the man of arm. Finger, hand, and arm, are all emblems of strength and power. The man of arm is not only the strong man, but the man of power and influence, the man of rapine and plunder.

The honorable man - Literally, the man whose face is accepted, the respectable man, the man of wealth. Thou wert an enemy to the poor and needy, but thou didst favor and flatter the rich and great.

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JOB 22: 9 You have sent widows away empty, and the arms of the fatherless have been broken.

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Verse 9

The arms of the fatherless - Whatever strength or power or property they had, of that thou hast deprived them. Thou hast been hard-hearted and cruel, and hast enriched thyself with the spoils of the poor and the defenceless.

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JOB 22: 10 Therefore snares are around you. Sudden fear troubles you,

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Verse 10

Therefore snares - As thou hast dealt with others, so has God, in his retributive providence, dealt with thee. As thou hast spoiled, so art thou spoiled. Thou art taken in a net from which thou canst not escape. There is an allusion here to the hunting of the elephant: he is driven into an inclosure in the woods, passing from strait to strait, till brought into a narrow point, from which he cannot escape; and then his consternation is great, and his roaring terrible. God hath hunted thee down, as men hunt down those wild and dangerous beasts. See on Job 18:21 (note).

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JOB 22: 11 or darkness, so that you can not see, and floods of waters cover you.

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Verse 11

Or darkness, that thou canst not see - The sense of this passage, in the connection that the particle or gives it with the preceding verse, is not easy to be ascertained. To me it seems very probable that a letter has been lost from the first word; and that **או** o which we translate Or, was originally **אור** or Light. The copy used by the Septuagint had certainly this reading; and therefore they translate the verse thus: **Το φως σοι εις σκοτος απεβη**; Thy Light is changed into darkness; that is, Thy prosperity is turned into adversity.

Houbigant corrects the text thus: instead of **או חשך לא תראה** **או** chosech lo tireh, or darkness thou canst not see, he reads **אור חשך לא תראה** **או** chosech lo or tireh, darkness, not light, shalt thou behold; that is, Thou shalt dwell in thick darkness. Mr. Good translates: "Or darkness which thou canst not penetrate, and a flood of waters shall cover thee." Thou shalt either be enveloped in deep darkness, or overwhelmed with a flood.

The versions all translate differently; and neither they nor the MSS. give any light, except what is afforded by the Septuagint. Coverdale is singular: Shuldest thou then send darcknesse? Shulde not the water floude runne over the? Perhaps the meaning is: "Thou art so encompassed with darkness, that thou canst not see thy way; and therefore fallest into the snares and traps that are laid for thee."

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JOB 22: 12 "Isn't God in the heights of heaven? See the height of the stars, how high they are!"

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Verse 12

Is not God in the height of heaven? - It appears, from this and the following verses, that Eliphaz was attributing infidel and blasphemous speeches or sentiments to Job. As if he had said: "Thou allowest that there is a God, but thou sayest that he is infinitely exalted above the heavens and the stars, and that there is so much dense ether and thick cloud between his throne and the earth, that he can neither see it nor its inhabitants." These were sentiments which Job never held, and never uttered;

but if a man be dressed in a bear's skin, he may be hunted and worried by his own dogs. Job's friends attribute falsities to him, and then dilate upon them, and draw inferences from them injurious to his character. Polemic writers, both in theology and politics, often act in this way.

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JOB 22: 13 You say, 'What does God know? Can he judge through the thick darkness?

JOB 22: 14 Thick clouds are a covering to him, so that he doesn't see. He walks on the vault of the sky.'

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Verse 14

He walketh in the circuit of heaven - He confines himself to those infinitely exalted regions and cares nothing for the inhabitants of the earth.

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JOB 22: 15 Will you keep the old way, which wicked men have trodden,

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Verse 15

Hast thou marked the old way - This is supposed to be another accusation; as if he had said, "Thou hollowest the same way that the wicked of old have walked in." Here is an evident allusion to the Flood, as is particularly noted in the next verse.

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JOB 22: 16 who were snatched away before their time, whose foundation was poured out as a stream,

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Verse 16

Whose foundation was overflowed with a flood - The unrighteous in the days of Noah, who appear to have had an abundance of all temporal good, (Job 22:18), and who surpassed the deeds of all the former wicked, said in effect to God, Depart from us. And when Noah preached unto them the terrors of the Lord, and the necessity of repentance, they rejected his preaching with, What can the Almighty do for us? Let him do his worst; we care not for him, Job 22:17. For למו lamo, to Them, the Septuagint, Syriac, and Arabic have evidently read לנו lanu, to Us. This reading quotes their own saying; the former reading narrates it in the third person. The meaning, however, is the same.

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JOB 22: 17 who said to God, 'Depart from us;' and, 'What can the Almighty do for us?'

JOB 22: 18 Yet he filled their houses with good things, but the counsel of the wicked is far from me.

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Verse 18

But the counsel of the wicked is far from me - Sarcastically quoting Job's words, Job 21:14, Job 21:16. Job, having in the preceding chapter described the wicked, who said unto the Almighty, "Depart from us," etc., adds, But the counsel of the wicked is far from me. Eliphaz here, having described the impious, among whom he evidently ranks Job, makes use of the same expression, as if he had said, "Thank God, I have no connection with you nor your companions, nor is my mind contaminated by your creed."

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JOB 22: 19 The righteous see it, and are glad. The innocent ridicule them,

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#### Verse 19

The righteous see it, and are glad - They see God's judgments on the incorrigibly wicked, and know that the Judge of all the earth does right; hence they rejoice in all the dispensations of his providence.

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JOB 22: 20 saying, 'Surely those who rose up against us are cut off. The fire has consumed their remnant.'

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#### Verse 20

Whereas our substance is not cut down - We, who fear the Lord, still continue in health and peace; whereas they who have departed from him are destroyed even to their very remnant. Mr. Good thinks that קִימָנוּ kimanu, which we translate our substance, is the same as the Arabic (Arabic) our people or tribe; and hence he translates the clause thus: "For our tribe is not cut off; while even the remnant of these a conflagration consumed." The reference here is supposed to be to the destruction of the men of Sodom and Gomorrah. A judgment by a flood took off the world of the ungodly in the days of Noah. Their remnant, those who lived in the same ungodly way, were taken off by a judgment of fire, in the days of Lot. Eliphaz introduces these two examples in order to terrify Job into a compliance with the exhortation which immediately follows.

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JOB 22: 21 "Acquaint yourself with him, now, and be at peace. Thereby good shall come to you.

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#### Verse 21

Acquaint now thyself with him - Perhaps the verb חָסַן hasken should be translated here, treasure up, or lay up. Lay up or procure an interest now with him, and be at peace. Get the Divine favor, and then thou wilt be at peace with God, and have happiness in thy own soul.

Thereby good shalt come unto thee - בָּהֶם bahem, "in them," shall good come unto thee. That is, in getting an interest in the Divine favor, and in having thy soul brought into a state of peace with him; thereby, in them, that is, these two things, good will come unto thee. First, thou wilt have an interest in his favor, from which thou mayest expect all blessings; and, secondly, from his peace in

thy conscience thou wilt feel unutterable happiness. Get these blessings now, for thou knowest not what a day may bring forth. Reader, hast thou these blessings?

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JOB 22: 22 Please receive instruction from his mouth, and lay up his words in your heart.

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#### Verse 22

Receive, I pray thee, the law from his mouth - Some, who wish to place Job before the law given by Moses, say that this means the Noahic precepts; others, that the law of nature is intended! Stuff and vanity! The allusion is plainly to the law given by God to the children of Israel, called here by way of emphasis, תורה torah, the Law, which contained אמריו amaraiv, his Words, the words or sayings of God himself; consequently, it is not the Noahic precepts, nor the law of nature, neither of which were ever written or registered as the words of God's mouth.

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JOB 22: 23 If you return to the Almighty, you shall be built up, if you put away unrighteousness far from your tents.

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#### Verse 23

Thou shalt be built up - God will restore thee to thy wonted state of prosperity; and thou shalt again have a household, not only of servants, but of children also. So much may be Implied in the words, Thou shalt be Built Up. See my sermon on Job 22:21-23.

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JOB 22: 24 Lay your treasure in the dust, the gold of Ophir among the stones of the brooks.

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#### Verse 24

Then shalt thou lay up gold as dust - The original is not fairly rendered in this translation, ושית על ושיית על veshith al aphar batser, which Montanus renders: Et pone super pulverem munitionem, "And fix a tower upon the dust;" ובצור נחלים אופיר ubetsur nechalim Ophir, et in petra torrentes Ophir, "and in the rock, the torrents of Ophir." The Vulgate is widely different: Dabit pro terra silicem, et pro silice torrentes aureos, "He will give thee flint for earth: and torrents of gold for flint;" which Calmet thus paraphrases: "Instead of brick thou shalt build with solid stone; and for ornaments, instead of stone as formerly, thou shalt have massive gold!" All the versions are different. Mr. Good translates: "Then count thou treasure as dust: then shall he make fountains to gush forth amidst the rocks."

Coverdale is different from all: We shal give the an harvest which, in plenty and abundance, shal exceade the dust of the earthe, and the golde of Ophir like ryver stones.

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JOB 22: 25 The Almighty will be your treasure, and precious silver to you.

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 Verse 25

Thou shalt have plenty of silver - Here again the versions and critics vary. The critics may disagree; but the doctrine of Eliphaz is sufficiently plain: "To those whom God loves best he gives the most earthly good. The rich and the great are his high favorites: the poor and the distressed he holds for his enemies." In the above verses there seems to be a reference to the mode of obtaining the precious metals:

1. Gold in dust;
2. Gold in streams from the hills and mountains;
3. Silver in mines; כסף תועפות keseph toaphoth, "silver of giddiness," of mines so deep as to make one giddy by looking into them. See Mr. Good.

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JOB 22: 26 For then you will delight yourself in the Almighty, and shall lift up your face to God.

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 Verse 26

For then shalt thou have thy delight - Thou shalt know, from thy temporal prosperity, that God favors thee; and for his bounty thou shalt be grateful. How different is this doctrine from that of St. Paul and St. John! "Being justified by faith, we have peace with God, through our Lord Jesus." "Because ye are sons, God hath sent forth the Spirit of his Son into your hearts, crying, Abba, Father!" "The Spirit himself beareth witness with our spirits that we are the children of God." "We glory in tribulation also, knowing that tribulation worketh patience; and patience, experience; and experience, hope: and hope maketh not ashamed, because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost, which is given unto us." "We love him because he first loved us." Tribulation itself was often a mark of God's favor.

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JOB 22: 27 You shall make your prayer to him, and he will hear you. You shall pay your vows.

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 Verse 27

Thou shalt make thy prayer unto him - תתיר tathir, thou shalt open or unbosom thyself. And when the heart prays, God hears; and the person, being blessed, vows fidelity, prays on, is supported, and enabled to pay his vows.

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JOB 22: 28 You shall also decree a thing, and it shall be established to you. Light shall shine on your ways.

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 Verse 28

Thou shalt also decree a thing - Whatsoever thou purposest in his strength, thou shalt be enabled to accomplish.

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JOB 22: 29 When they cast down, you shall say, 'be lifted up.' He will save the humble person.

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#### Verse 29

When men are cast down - There is a great difficulty in this verse; the sense, however, is tolerably evident, and the following is nearly a literal version: When they shall humble themselves, thou shalt say, Be exalted, or, there is exaltation: for the down-cast of eye he will save. The same sentiment as that of our Lord, "He that exalteth himself shall be abased; but he that humbleth himself shall be exalted."

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JOB 22: 30 He will even deliver him who is not innocent. Yes, he shall be delivered through the cleanness of your hands."

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#### Verse 30

He shall deliver the island of the innocent - The word יא ai, which we translate island, is most probably the Arabic particle (Arabic) whosoever, whatsoever, any, whosoever he may be, as (Arabic) ai rajuli, whatsoever man he may be. And it is most probable that both words are Arabic, (Arabic) or (Arabic) any innocent, chaste, pure, or holy person; for the word has the same meaning both in Hebrew and Arabic. The text may therefore be translated, He shall deliver every innocent person: He, the innocent person, shall be delivered by the pureness of thy hands; i.e., as thou lovest justice, so thou wilt do justice. Instead of כפיו cappeyca, thy hands, the Vulgate, Syriac, and Arabic have read כפיו cappaiv, his or their hands. Mr. Good thinks that יא ai signifies house, as (Arabic) and (Arabic) in Arabic signify to reside, to have a home, etc.; and therefore translates the passage thus: "The house of the innocent shall be delivered; and delivered by the pureness of thy hands." The reader may adopt which he pleases; but the word island must be given up, as it cannot make any consistent sense.

Thus ends Eliphaz the Temanite, who began with a tissue of the bitterest charges, continued with the most cruel insinuations, and ended with common-place exhortations to repentance, and promises of secular blessings in consequence: and from his whole speech scarcely can one new or important maxim be derived. Blessed be God for Moses and the prophets! for Jesus, the evangelists and the apostles! Their trumpet gives no uncertain sound: but by that of Job's friends who can prepare himself for the battle?