

MESSAGE TO JOB



GIUSEPPE PETRELLI

INTRODUCTION

After Job had spoken at length, and Job's three friends, who were neither convinced nor able to convince had ceased speaking, Elihu spoke to Job.

Elihu as a type, Jesus in the Reality, are the last messengers, with a definite message.

Elihu spoke until Job was left face to face with the Omnipotent. After so many have spoken so much to us, Jesus Christ has the conclusive word and leads man to where he was before, and richer than before, to converse with God – rendering him partaker of the divine nature.

It seemed to Job that he knew everything, and nothing could be taught to him because he felt lacking in nothing. Thus it is for Christians. For a long time, it seems they are already in communion with the Son and with the Father in one spirit (if indeed they are) since they have been justified and blessed. For job, Elihu was needed – the last speaker; for the Christian, Jesus is needed, the last One to speak to us, after which there is Heaven and God Omnipotent – One – Triune.

Chapter 1 (Job 32:3-37)

Job's three friends had ceased speaking, since Job was saying he was just. It is useless to reason with someone who is sure of himself because he does not listen, centered as he is in himself, building argument upon argument in order to maintain his rights.

The three were confused and silent, but not convinced, and it was as if Job had concluded his speech.

Elihu was filled with anger (there is a holy anger) because of the affirmations of Job and the silence of the three. He had waited a long time and had heard much. Now it is time to speak, because the Word is tearing him apart. Open your mouth! He said, "I am young". This is understood not only in years, but in Elihu's having come recently.

With sagaciousness he exhorts, following as heaven does, the line of least resistance. One should remember the humble and progressive method of Jesus. One who listens will always speak - he will have something to speak of.

Elihu had listened. It is right to listen to others before we open our mouth. Elderly people imagine they know wisdom. Therefore, let them speak in order that others may see what their pompous and vain promises may be. They - those who believe they are wise - will cause one to know wisdom - they. But they have sought and not found "Wisdom," so much so that they have been struck dumb. Yes, Job expressed the difficulty to discover wisdom, but then he ventured to define it.

Let us read chapter 28:28: "And to man He said, 'Behold, the fear of the Lord, that is wisdom; and to depart from evil is understanding'." (NASB).

We should not marvel because even we, notwithstanding teachings accumulated over centuries, have repeated the same definition,

without going beyond.

Nothing therefore was lacking to Job, according to him. He thought he knew himself and that he was just. Elihu had suffered while listening and listening. Now he must speak. And his plan was that Job – although blessed, although he may have affirmed the truth about his actions, seen externally and not in the motives – Job deep down did not know, of an inner knowing, neither himself nor God. Therefore, be it of wisdom – as of understanding, he had only an elementary idea, and therefore an interpreter was needed, one whose spirit would be moved by the Spirit of God. Such a one would speak now.

Let us read chapter 32:20-22. Elihu speaks because he is forced to do so. He is not afraid, nor does he deceive anyone. All is from Above; the time and the method, the messenger, the Message.

Let us listen to him.

Chapter 2

Job, Hear My Speeches (Job 33)

We must proceed slowly in order to understand the message of Elihu. We will meditate in order: The one who is speaking – to whom he is speaking – what he is saying – what he promises him.

Elihu – a servant and type of Jesus Christ – does not exhort all four, that is, the patriarch and his three friends, but only one to listen. The three are not neglected. They too are dear to Heaven, but their turn will come later, and they will be renewed by means of Job.

Listen, Job. One speaker to one who is alone. Let us read verses 1 and 2 of chapter 33: “Wherefore, Job, I pray thee, hear my speeches, and hearken to all my words. Behold, now I have opened my mouth, my tongue hath spoken in my mouth”.

Let us limit ourselves to meditate on the word “Hear.” Later on we will occupy ourselves about who the messenger is, not that Elihu has not yet said anything concerning himself, because in the preceding chapter he gave some personal data. Later on after the first “Hear my speeches” he will portray himself. For now it is: “Hear my speeches.” Pay attention to the words – reasoning and voice – attentively gathering “all the words.” All, not in part, since hearing in part there is a partial effect, or entirely contrary to the aim of the one who speaks. We should hear all the counsel of God, not a part. Pay attention to how one listens – the incarnate Wisdom has said, admonishing that from the “how” (HOW!) one listens our responsibility is measured. Now, not before, Elihu has opened his mouth – determined not to speak lightly; and he himself tastes what he says. Each word costs... The tongue and the palate go together.

No one can hear if he does not have hearing suited to that which is being said. Job is a candidate for the school where one listens to the deep message of Heaven. The long and honest past qualifies him to be a listener. Go slowly in the things of the Spirit, so that we do not

confuse aspirations and faith with the “Reality,” effect of desires and faith which has become fact. It is a high privilege to be suited to listen, and to such a message. One speaks to a deaf person with signs – and God, who loves everyone, has signs for many. Job must listen and understand both voice and words: neither the voice nor the words alone.

In Proverbs 20:12 we read: “The hearing ear, and the seeing eye, the Lord hath made even both of them”. The words do not refer to the first creation, which also has its senses, but to the second creation, mentioning two senses (there are others), that is: hearing and sight.

Reader, do not be hasty, but hear, gather attentively. The new creature has its appropriate senses. They must be used. The ear to hear, the eye to see. One who has received such senses and does not use them remains in an infantile state, and in time will become deaf, blind and useless. By not growing one goes towards death. All is gradual (see Hebrews 5:14). Listening is first; “seeing” comes afterward. The saint is not satisfied with a confused seeing, but prays that his eyes may be opened, the visual organ that already exists, in order to go on discovering the mysteries of the Law – the will of God (see Psalms 119:18). There are cases in which eye salve is needed. There is much to meditate on the words “seeing-see-contemplate”. Although Job had seen and heard much, he is now exhorted to have a special hearing. Seeing is mentioned here and will be distinct and clear at the end. But let us not anticipate.

But Job is not disposed to be corrected and contradicted: therefore he resists, in secret – and does not open himself to listen. It is not easy, not even for Elihu, to give messages to people who have practiced religion for many years, because they imagine (we deceive ourselves) that they know and that they are. It is not easy. Jesus cried out many times – He who as a rule did not raise his voice – so those who had received ears to hear should dispose themselves to hear.

The cumulative message to the Churches portrayed in seven ways (Revelation 2, 3) has seven warnings: “He that hath an ear, let him

hear". The Holy Spirit said – has said – says – to the Churches so that they may become the Church.

Such a listening is so important that the contemplative St. John establishes by it who may or may not be of God. Let us read 1st John 4:6: "We are of God; he that knoweth God heareth us; he that is not of God heareth not us. Hereby know we the spirit of truth, and the spirit of error."

Let us return to Job, who, rather than opening himself entirely and quickly, was secretly looking for more arguments. Elihu read in Job's heart that he was not hearing, that he was wrapped up in his thoughts; and he addressed an advice, an invitation and warning, because there is a time in which God says "Enough" even to a Jacob, if he does not surrender, even to a Job if he does not listen.

Love and patience insist – but then there is an "enough". It is not up to us to presume what might have happened to Jacob, if at the end, in that night, he had not ceased fighting, and of Job, if he had not yielded – even though a little unwillingly, even though in part at first – to listen. We leave the hypothesis, the "ifs" to the Lord. But it is wise not to presume; it is devoutness not to abuse. Elihu, reading, hearing Job, silent in his mouth and not in his heart, concluded the "Hear my speeches" thus: Let us read Job 33:31-33.

It would require a volume to examine this subject, but we will be satisfied with a few hints. It is necessary that only one should speak. If Job speaks, Elihu will be silent; if Job is silent (of an inner silence), Elihu speaks. It is one of the methods of Heaven, that consideration and mercy are intermixed with rigor. Job had suffered much also for the words of those three, that even though they said much that was good, they had not applied it wisely. Elihu – Jesus – is merciful and even wants to listen to us, not in order to spy on every word and select those that can be used against us, but in order to justify us, leaving us forgiven and blessed. Those who have suffered much and by many remain frightened and fear that all are adversaries. We seem to see the benign, smiling face of Elihu, to hear the tender and

encouraging voice as if to say to the travailed one: I love you, I am your friend. I do not want to confuse and brutalize you. No. Quite otherwise: I want to see you justified. You will speak, if after having heard, you have something to say, and I will listen to you. If not, if you intend to listen – be silent – and I will speak to you. I – not others – will teach you what Wisdom truly is.

Chapter 3

The Messenger and the Message

(Job 33)

Many times Job had sighed for an opportunity to be able to reason face to face with his Creator. This needy cry of the soul is expressed now and then in the Scriptures that the Creator should come to the creature. We read in Isaiah 64: "Oh that thou wouldest rend the heavens". The blessed One – the Promised One – would have been the Emanuel-God with us. Elihu is one of the most expressive types of Emanuel. He is a man: therefore Job was not afraid of him. He is guided by the Omnipotent, and it is understood that he was able to justify and to help: therefore Job did not mistrust him. Man and God – God and Man are speaking to him.

Presenting himself like this delineates the basis of his speech, in reference to the words of Job: "Thou hast spoken and I have heard." And I have listened not only to the nice words, but have gathered the voice, the meaning. But let us read: "Surely thou hast spoken in mine hearing, and I have heard the voice of thy words, saying, I am clean without transgression, I am innocent; neither is there iniquity in me. Behold, he findeth occasion against me, he counteth me for his enemy, he putteth my feet in the stocks, he marketh all my paths (vv. 8-11)."

Take notice: Job was boasting that he was "pure". Job did not know God. They are the two main points of the book – that is, to know God and to know oneself. Emanuel is needed, represented in Elihu, who as a heavenly messenger and interpreter, interprets Job to Job, and God to Job. All that may be desired in an enlightened and charitable ambassador is in the discourse of Elihu – that is, he himself has heard and he has weighed the voice of the words.

In scolding him, Elihu does not exaggerate. None of the harsh and unfounded accusations, or subtle insinuations that abound in the discourse of the three is in the words of this young messenger. Nonetheless, truth united with charity must be manifested. "Behold, in this

thou art not just: I will answer thee that God is greater than man.” (v.12). If the Holy Spirit gives – and He does give – the living image, the words are stressed clearly, while the tearful and benign aspect wants to say that the correction is necessary, but it is limited. “In this.” And he continues: “Why dost thou strive against Him? For he giveth not account of any of His matters” (v.13). The question that does not expect an answer is moved by love to indicate the cause of the lament, an unjust cause, but that attenuates. As if to say: I know, I know that you, not understanding the plan of God, in you and by means of you, are perplexed. You have stumbled because God does not always declare all His reasons – It is not an accusation of Job, but indicating to him that one of the first and saddest temptations of mortals is that of wanting in their own strength and not by Grace, for as much and how Grace gives – to want to know the motives, the reasons of Heaven.

But then it is not true that God has declared precisely nothing to you. He has not said everything, but something – and this is enough – He has said – and the one who waits shall be more and more enlightened with a progressive light. He speaks and confirms once and twice – but man – Job – had not waited. He speaks also in dreams, often severe admonitions. He works in the spirit of man. He often opens one’s ears that in the waking is inattentive and seals his punishment. The purpose is: “that He may withdraw man from his purpose, and hide pride from man. He keepeth back his soul from the pit, and his life from perishing by the sword.” (Vs. 17-18). God insists; pains that do not give him rest follow, and at the end man despises food (much in that food), his flesh is consumed, and his soul draweth near unto the grave” (v.22). The case is extreme. Therefore, an extreme remedy is needed. The Lord, in his various services, has always helped him, but now, when man is reduced to a desperate case – God works in the last condition – fine work of Redemption.

God has a man ready – His man. There are so many in His service, but for that extreme case a “Messenger” is needed – truly confirmed, sent, speaker, sacred orator, having His words in his mouth – one among a thousand – that is, selected from a multitude. The sick one

whose bones are sticking out (be careful of the bones), all afflicted and who has no rest, still has a free ear. And the messenger will declare unto him – precisely as he has not yet heard – “what is right for him” (NASB) – for him, without paying attention to others – as if these were the only two in the universe: man in his extremity, and the Creator”.

The Messenger is “The Interpreter”. The interpreter is between two, knowing the language. But since God knows everything, the interpreter works with man, declaring man to man – and having discovered his nothingness to him, shows him the greatness and the mercy of the Lord. And he thunders definitely and clearly: *You* pay attention to yourself, to that which is expected of you – yours – not that of others – duty. It is the last appeal, the last remedy. From now on, either ruin or a new beginning.

But Elihu is not a prophet of ruin to Job, rather of restoration. What he says afterward reveals the trust that God has – the faith of God. Oh, great God! As if to say: “Oh! Job, oh! Job, you will not resist, you will not reject the helping hand. You will listen. There is a future, a new and more glorious beginning: the Redemption: more than the first Creation.

Chapter 4

The Redemption

(Job 33:24-30)

The reprimands, the warnings and the teachings will come after. But now it is necessary that a ray of luminous hope descends upon the tra-vailed one, in order that he may grasp immediately the glorious future. Here it is:

God will administer *grace*. Let us hear the great words. All that man has obtained every time was obtained by “Grace”: in ancient times, Grace in the Christ who would come, even not knowing Him, and afterward, in the Christ who came. Grace and Truth (Reality – eternal Substance) have come, although always hidden, by means of Jesus Christ. Let us read: “then He is gracious unto him and saith, deliver him from going down to the pit: I have found a ransom. His flesh shall be fresher than a child’s: he shall return to the days of his youth.” (vv. 24,25). Another has paid: there has been a “Ransom”. Someone – the Redeemer has paid. There is nothing for nothing in the universe. Everything ultimately falls on the Redeemer. There is a new beginning. The old one who is consumed by travail is a new creature, and is ready for the Kingdom of God; he has been transformed into a little child.

And now there are two immediate effects. The first is of true penitence. Now he understands that he has never been truly, profoundly penitent – we are saying truly penitent. Now he will implore God. It can be noted that he does not even know how to express himself in his sorrow. Words are lacking and in place of them, there are groanings, sighs and tears. He has so much to say that he cannot say.

A great one who was portraying a penitent person tells us that the latter, after trying his best to speak of the past, added: “Now, let me cry, as I have no desire to speak.” Let us read: “He shall pray unto God, and He will be favorable unto him: and he shall see his face with joy, for He will render unto man his righteousness” (v26).

God is “placated”: a rich word that suggests not only pardon, but

joy; He will allow man to see His face. He has heard; now he will see. The man born blind heard Jesus, and after the great trial of faithfulness, he saw Him. To Job is pointed out the highest good: to see that Face, which is all good. More than happiness, now comes the “rejoicing.” Read Psalm 89:16: “In Thy name shall they rejoice all the day: and in Thy righteousness shall they be exalted.”

“And he will render unto man his righteousness” – the true one which belongs to him. The price of blood is paid. Righteousness by Grace – and then, in that Grace, we are put on the path so that we also may become righteous.

The resurrected Job has also become a true messenger: “He looketh upon men, and will say: I have sinned and perverted that which was right, and it profited me not.” (V27) – beginning to portray himself, and how God had mercy on him.

Elihu gives a warning after the glorious portrait, because Job must hear and understand: “Lo, all these things worketh God often times with man, to bring back his soul from the pit, to be enlightened with the light of the living.”(vv 29,30). That is, don’t be too sure of yourself. Two is the number of confirmation and three is the union with the Redeemer. But it is true that extreme cases for extreme remedies are at the most two or three.

The two prepare one for the three, the final message – Jesus face-to-face so that by means of Jesus, united to the Father, in one spirit, so that like Jesus is with the Father, thus will we be with the Father, with and by means of Jesus.

We have already considered the insistent appeal: Pay attention, Job – Listen – keep silence and listen. But now, after what we have attempted to say, the final, solemn appeal resounds! Created – Formed – more is needed. Psalm 119:73 tells us this. Jacob was formed Israel, and then prophet. Simon became Peter, and then he had the mind of Christ.

With a lively, smiling composure and a sure accent, Elihu affirms, promises: “I will teach you (I will teach to “You”) Wisdom.

Chapter 5
The Message
(Job 34, etc)

We cannot follow Elihu's discourse word by word, having to limit ourselves.

He – the Orator – the Interpreter, hammers again on listening, hearing and paying attention. The ear examines, being like a palate for the discourse. Keeping himself still to speaking in general, as if speaking also to himself, he exhorts: "Let us choose to us judgment: let us know among ourselves what is good." (v.4). It may not be easy to immediately live doing what is right, and to judge well: but it is necessary to aim for that which is right and clear. Realizing that which is good, we begin by aiming for it and desiring it. The answer will come from the Lord.

As though Elihu had an audience before him – Job's three friends were present – he announces one of the arguments of Job that he was obliged to contradict. Job, from the sum of what he perceives, has said that he is "just" and that God has denied him. God has taken away his rights and he is obliged to lament, wounded as he is, without having committed any misdeed; that no one has been drinking the waters of scorn like him, constrained meanwhile to be in the company of workers of iniquity and the ungodly – and has concluded – Job has concluded – that God has not taken his holiness into account, nor his martyrdom. Therefore, it does not pay to be grateful to God.

A reflection. Here and there, in the discourses of the three friends, and in the answers of Job, there reappears something of the sinister insinuations that the seducing spirit had whispered to Eliphaz (Chapter 4), that is, that God doesn't care for man. Elihu examines Job's lamentation – accusation, exhorting with a general appeal to man of reason, with the protest that God forbid that there may be wickedness or perverseness in the Omnipotent – because he gives to each one according to his work, and causes each one to find his own way; that is, in time, each one will find himself. It is a law – an undisputed axiom of the Kingdom of the Spirit – of cause and effect. And that is

because He, the Creator of everyone, is not unjust or partial with anyone, because all things and everyone are His creation. For this reason God cannot act against Himself, the Creation being the product of the Creator.

A reflection. The most simple truths are those that escape us for a long time, and are not considered. If we were allowed a broader consideration, we would examine how the last appeal of the saint is to the "Creator" – as if to say: "Lord, I am your creature; I did not create myself." Even a worm has a right to redemption; also a puppy has a right to a little food. In the Sermon on the Mount, so elevated in holiness and so simple, the strength of the appeal of Jesus to make us trust is that the One who has created cannot neglect His own creation.

The book of Revelation, final Revelation, emphasizes the Creator, creature and Creation. Without this light it is impossible to understand both the case of Job and the message of Elihu. Please read again attentively all of the scriptural passage, especially from verse 13 and on. Weigh the question: "Who hath given Him a charge over the earth? Or who hath disposed the whole world? If He set his heart upon man, if He gathers unto Himself his spirit and his breath?" (vv 13,14). How could he govern badly that which is His - all works of His hands? Nothing escapes Him, and no darkness can hide from Him, neither the steps nor the ways of men. His justice weakens the powerful ones, and hears the cry of the poor. He alone can absolve and send in peace.

After speaking along general lines, the Interpreter follows with an appeal to Job. "Surely it is meet to be said unto God, I have borne chastisement, I will not offend anymore. That which I see not teach thou me: if I have done iniquity I will do no more." (vv 31,32).

To Him – to your Creator – you should have turned, and acknowledging your limitations, asking Him who has no limits, light for that which you do not see, still without confessing perverseness, supposing that there may have been some and promising to do better in the future. A pause.

Job was surprised and marveled at the words, if I have done iniquity..." thinking: "I... iniquity? I?" Elihu read his mind and addresses him with a challenging question: "Should it be according to thy mind? He will recompense whether thou refuse, or whether thou choose, and not I: therefore speak what thou knowest. Let men of understanding tell me, and let a wise man hearken unto me" (vv 33-34). It's a penetrating question that makes one tremble. You are lamenting that you have not been recompensed as you merited. Indeed, do you want to be examined by His measurement? Yes-No? Decide. It seems to be the anticipated echo of the questions – affirmations of Jesus: "Now—You—believe?" And the fearful answers of respectful men to the affirmation concerning the betrayal! Lord, is it I?"

Oh! How little or poorly we know ourselves! Then as if turning from Job towards others, and there are invisible listeners and witnesses, besides the three that were there – Elihu continues: "Let men of understanding tell me, and let a wise man hearken unto me. Job hath spoken without knowledge, and his words were without wisdom" (vv. 34-35). Take note of the moderation in the language of Elihu: he has not denied the good done by Job, not qualifying him with insulting titles or sinister insinuations as his three friends had done. Corrections and teachings follow sober but precise lines. Job is sure of himself and does not humble himself, therefore he does not speak with knowledge – of himself – of God; therefore he does not have understanding: a rich word that suggests comparing and meditating.

But Job is either not listening yet or is silent as though he is forced to be. There is an interruption – far be it from us that it be of the flesh that is not an index of true charity that afflicts in order to do good at the end.

Elihu interrupts himself and audible to Job, lifting his head, turns to God with a prayer that seems to be cruel but is not, but rather expresses the intense love and interest of the Interpreter. Elihu prays: "My desire is that Job may be tried unto the end because of his answers for wicked men. For he addeth rebellion unto his sin, he

clappeth his hands among us, and multiplieth his words against God” (vv 36-37). It is not that God does not know the consequences that one who does not listen multiplies misdeeds, sins, and proud affirmations; it is Job who does not know. One of the methods of correcting is that of praying in the hearing of the one who must be corrected.

A pause is needed between such a prayer and resuming. A little silence and then Elihu continues.

Chapter 6 (Job 35)

The insistence of Elihu, in “continuing his reasoning” reveals the patient love that had discovered the good root in Job, who was neither rebellious nor yielded to the message that stirred-up conflict between that which he saw of himself, and the consciousness that the interpreter loved him and understood him. It is not easy to shake those who have for a long time been established in a good position in a state that is respectable to himself and to others. It is not easy to preach to saints. Elihu continued presenting the fact that although Job had decided that he would not even look upon anything that was not his and had not received recompense from God, rather precisely after an exemplary life he had been made the butt of afflictions and ruin. Elihu invites him to look-up above. Only one who looks up high, above his head, learns the relative values and measurements of Heaven.

A first lesson is that man, whoever he may be, see himself as insignificant or nothing, and that therefore neither the good things nor the bad things that he does can change He who is above all the heavens. A drop of water in the ocean, a grain of sand in the desert have more importance in their environment than man in relation to the universe, except if the Creator condescends to him.

Elihu uses a sort of duplicate method: sometime it is the “you” directed to Job, and sometimes he gives general examples in which Job is included. The oppressions exist – but the oppressed cry out,

whereas they should turn to the only One who can listen to them. “But none saith, where is God my Maker, who giveth songs in the night?” It means that the oppressions have a purpose of leading us to the Creator -Maker.

The oppressed should say “God is – He wants to be my Maker (Modeler)”. He creates and forms, and then He also gives understanding – a threefold process. Creator – Modeler – and Wise One who gives a new mind (Psalm 119:73). The oppressions are a means to an end. One who turns to Him who wants to form him receives grace to sing in the night, in the time that according to man is the most unsuited for song, night – being in this case a figure of fearful solitude and ruin. We are reminded of the promise to the virtuous woman (Church) of Proverbs 31:15 and above all in Acts 16:25: “And at midnight Paul and Silas prayed, and sang praises unto God: and the prisoners heard them”. One who rises above the evils that oppress him and cries to the Creator is enabled to sing and is taught.

One who speaks to an afflicted one, if he is an “Interpreter” – one among a thousand – if he is like Elihu knows how to teach the tired one without deceiving or humiliating him, because he uses charity and truth. Elihu continues with general affirmations to state: “Surely God will not hear vanity, neither will the Almighty regard it” (v. 13). “Surely” – as if to say that it is not necessary to demonstrate it.

“Vanity” is the lens that magnifies even the smallest objects. The world is subject to vanity. Both nobles and plebeians are vain, soap bubbles that disappear in the moment they show themselves. Vanity tempts even the most saintly, when they bind themselves to their experiences, and make an idol of them. Job had spoken at length about himself listing many praiseworthy acts. It is dangerous to speak of ourselves, especially praising ourselves. An apostle of Jesus Christ, protesting that he had been constrained to speak of himself, says that in speaking thus, he was not acting wisely.

From the general affirmations, Elihu – teacher – addresses Job directly: “How much less when you say you do not behold Him, the case is before Him, and you must wait for Him!” (v. 14 NASB) as to

say: “You have been vain, because by praising yourself you have not regarded He who has created you and given you breath (helped you). You have judged yourself to be independent from Him, as if by your own strength you created yourself and kept yourself alive. But now: Judge yourself in His presence and then wait for Him” (silence). And he adds: “And now, because He has not visited in His anger, nor has He acknowledged transgressions well” (v. 15 NASB).

“Chastisement.” The sufferings of Job arose from a challenge between God and Satan – but they had lasted a long time and were still ongoing. Above all there was the increased suffering in the insistent insinuations of the friends and the insults of others which were also chastisement. Chastisement means a disciplinary process; because God chastises those He loves. He disciplines the children. However, the chastisement, proportionate to the actions of Job, was as nothing, because God is not a man who wants the last farthing, and Who exceeds always in rigor. God intertwines mercy with wrath.

Then, softening his voice, looking around trying to persuade him to surrender in the spirit, Elihu closes this part of the discourse thus: “So Job opens his mouth empty; he multiplies words without knowledge” (v. 16 NASB).

And wanting to allow time for calm reflection, even not having finished, for the moment Elihu is silent.

Chapter 7
Wait for Me a Little
(Job 36)

Wait for me a little – thus Elihu had said. He had also said “Wait for Him”. It is possible that one may be disposed to wait for Him, whereas he has not been disposed to wait for Him, whereas he has not been disposed to be taught by one whom God uses. We have heard some say – and alas! perhaps we ourselves have said it – “God will guide me: He has begun and He will bring to perfection – I will hear His words” – while He wants to work in them by means of someone.

Just as an able strategist carefully examines places exposed to the enemy, the sacred orator – especially if he is of the class of the interpreters, final messengers – foresees the doubts and perplexity of one who listens, as well as the traps of the enemy, and erects a wall of protection.

Elihu has promised that he would teach Job “Wisdom,” but had not yet delineated that which leads to Wisdom, but only hinted. Job had barely listened, having been subjugated many times by the aspect of the messenger that was pleasing but also severe. It seems that after the last words that he heard he could bear no more, and was about to say “Enough”. Someone might add: “I will see – I will pray about it, etc.” But Elihu exhorts him to have patience because he has not finished. “Suffer me a little, and I will show thee that I have yet to speak on God’s behalf (v.2).”

The great trial was from God; but Job had received partial chastisement in the indifference and the contempt of those from whom he expected comfort. Many times it is thus that God chastises us in order to lead us to Him who alone is able, knows, and wants to comfort. “I will comfort you.”

Elihu continues. There is more. Reasoning according to God is quite different from that according to man. We have disciplined ourselves to a logic that seems to be infallible, but does not succeed most of the

time. Elihu searches for the secret motives of the one to whom he is speaking, and hearing always from Above, he is concerned about the one who must hear him. He must foresee the reasoning from a distance, from a point of view that seems out of place, and must establish on an indisputable basis that “God is Just”. Other corollaries will follow this, that is that He is powerful and likewise Merciful and condescending.

An obstacle in one who listens is often the doubt that the one who is speaking to him is either lying or ignorant of that which he assumes.

Elihu has insisted and insists that he is sure of what he affirms, and it is strictly true. We are reminded of the “verily-verily” of Jesus – and the words “truth-truthfulness” that abound in the writings of St. John – that he knew how to report the truth.

A great conflict in Job was that God being Owner does that which pleases Him and therefore he, poor mortal, was not able to reason, much less litigate with Him. From hereafter one of those brief pauses, his eye fixed on the hearer, Elihu *stresses* these words, briefly and solemnly: “Behold, God is mighty, and despiseth not any: He is mighty in strength and wisdom.” (v.5)

Knowing God is one of the basic fundamentals of the faith – therefore the Son of God – this is life eternal. It is necessary to meditate on this. The rich and suggestive text tells us that the Infinite Power is bound to the “Infinite Heart”. And that is not enough, but it is united to Wisdom which is also infinite. Therefore, God is Power-Love-Wisdom. From that we deduce that all that He does answers to a plan of love, power and wisdom. One should not doubt that He sees everything. He admonishes everyone, but there are “godless in heart” who increase in anger and they do not cry to the Lord when He binds them (v.13). However the afflicted ones are delivered.

After the teaching in general terms, Elihu appeals to Job: “Even so would He have removed thee out of the strait into a broad place, where there is no straitness; and that which should be set on thy table

should be full of fatness” (v.16). He would have taken even thee out of the affliction... Even thee... And then – with the aspect and demeanor of one who is forced to speak, he adds: “But thou hast fulfilled the judgment of the wicked; judgment and justice take hold on thee”. Far be it from us to suppose that Elihu should suspect Job of wickedness – oh no! But Job had spoken in a manner to imitate the judgments of the wicked, in the manner that the wicked think and speak, and how they must be treated. The wicked, the false religionists, attract to themselves the treatment they deserve. To be meditated: Judgment and Justice from the wicked, and to the wicked.

You – Job – you imitate the wicked! Don’t continue. Don’t constrain the Lord to prostrate you, and then there will be no ransom for you. I, who am His messenger, will not even be able to continue to exhort you and intercede for you. God has His limits, His “Enoughs”.

Then as if reading that which assails the mind of Job, he answers the two extremes in him: one, the confidence that the praiseworthy past must be worth something to him – the other, that when everything turns for the worst, it is better that one should die – or yield to vanity. Even the most saintly, as long as they are in these tabernacles, arrive, in extreme cases, to such conflicts. Pay attention, meant Elihu, that nothing of your past, even the good works (riches) – gold (faith and faithfulness – and power (firm decisions) – certainly good things – mind you that they cannot take the place of the Ransom – Redemption. It seems that we are reading the message of St. Peter in anticipation: that the ransom is not by means of anything, but only by the blood of the Lamb. Desire not the night when people are cut off in their place. Take heed, regard not iniquity: for this hast thou chosen rather than affliction” (v. 20, 21).

Let everyone examine himself, and he will find himself in at least one of the above-mentioned affirmations. Some have arrived at the extremity of desiring death, and even in what manner they should obtain it!

But – oh! Wise and gentle messenger of the Wise and Kind Lord – Elihu comes closer to portraying God and His heaven more clearly.

You, reader, read the rest of the chapter from verse 22 to the end! Each line would require a meditation. God is great, but we cannot know Him. Mention is made of two among the acts of His government; water-clouds-at His disposition. Light, thunder, His voice and Providence. The fire and the flame are in His hand. Instead of rising, flame and fire – special servants – are turned downward in the direction that He wants. Up, up, Job, lift yourself up above your head. Heaven, and all that is in it, is speaking to you – voices of Thunder.

Chapter 8

Lightning and Thunder

(Job 37)

Things and events, whatever they may be, act and influence us in different ways, according to the times, occasions and sentiments with which we see them. That which seems imposing and stable when seen up close, can become insignificant or disappear when seen from a distance or from above. That is what the great apostle meant as we read in II Corinthians, chapter 4:16-18. It is written even of Jesus in Hebrews 12:2. Therefore, turn your eyes and heart upward: from that which is visible to the Invisible; from time to eternity; from earth to Heaven.

Let us return to Elihu. The interpreter was about to conclude his discourse, admitting however that he had not said everything – and no one can, also because the candidate for Heaven can hear only in part, and that also gradually. Since the most effective way of receiving instruction is in seeing the Reality in the one who is teaching, the Spirit of God led the servant Elihu to feel more and more that fear that is reverence and like a tremor, the more we rise toward Heaven.

Elihu exclaimed: “At this my heart trembleth, and is moved out of his place” (v.1). Keep silent, oh man, oh men. God is speaking. We would like to have the capacity, and with it the command together with the opportunity to write a book on the “voice and Word of the Omnipotent”. It is a voice and word that is different from that which we are used to hearing. God speaks and in order to know the “Words” it is necessary to know the Voice behind the words. Blessed is he who hears and distinguishes, and therefore obeys the voice of His words. There are luminous hints in the scripture on His Words and Voice. He often speaks without speaking. Often the voice can barely be heard like a very light puff. But, when necessary, His voice is also majestic and imposing. Psalm 29 is all about His voice that shakes and adjusts. Psalm 19 mentions silent witnesses in outer space that speak of Him - Creator – Modeler.

Before Job hears, Elihu continues to invite him to hear the voice of the thunder, in that thunder. In St. John, chapter 12, we read that the Father answered the Son from on high, but some of the people said that an Angel had spoken, others had heard thunder. The Creator governs, by means of intermediary agents, millions of angels; only after a long discipline in His school do we begin to understand and have reverence for the Creator and the creation, and to hear and see Him in that which, with presumption, we have qualified as simple material manifestations. God speaks in many ways; even in the thunder and the hurricanes. There is lightning, there is thunder. To St. John, led to a new and higher stature, a more arduous ministry, God wanted to impress something personal upon him by means of seven thunders that had voices. They were thunders and voices that were comprehensible to the apostle, but that had to be for him alone. Each one that is destined for the Kingdom of God is visited by thunders and lightnings. Be careful, Elihu energetically exhorts, "Hearken unto me". Hearken unto me! Snow, rain and clouds have a purpose. They keep man at home, isolating him between him and the Creator, in order to know himself. The beasts – contrary forces – tremble and hide themselves. No, they do not die, but they are as if paralyzed. Ice has a mission, as well as the blowing here and there of the clouds. Nothing is without a purpose, either of punishment or of immediate benefit. Punishment is likewise a benefit.

Job is the main listener of Elihu, the man of high destiny, who now turns and says: "Hearken unto this, oh Job: stand still and consider the wondrous works of God. Dost thou know when God disposed them, and caused the light of his cloud to shine? Dost thou know the balancing of the clouds, the wondrous works of Him which is perfect in knowledge" (vv. 14-16).

A pause: He has balanced the clouds! All are equal and are treated equally. It does not seem to be so because we measure by the outward appearance, whereas He weighs the spirits. There is much that makes a child cry, leaving him perplexed, but which is absolutely indifferent to an adult. Some are as if crushed by a little trial, whereas others are able to suffer much to be only a little afflicted. We marvel

that some are saddened or become enthusiastic by a mere trifle. And we marvel that some are able to tolerate many misfortunes, or be insensitive to that which makes others happy.

There is an intimate and secret difference in the spirits. The clouds are balanced. Trials, tears and punishments are measured according to the receptive capacity. For some even a light glance is severe admonishment; for others the bridle and more is needed. The Omnipotent has balanced the clouds. He treats everyone equally, although by means of unequal exterior means. From this we can deduce how and how much He tolerates in some, and how and how much He requires in others. He is the Way, but He has His ways (methods).

Elihu continues and asks Job if he has spread out the sky with God. He turns to Him: "Teach us what we shall say unto Him; for we cannot order our speech by reason of darkness" (v. 19). That is, you cannot teach us any "hows." No one can. His Spirit, only He can do it. This is it: we men cannot look at the sun when it is shining without clouds. The great light takes our light away. When Saul of Tarsus was knocked down and blinded by light, he was not able to see the light. It is necessary to conclude. Elihu speaks to Job and to the three: "Touching the Almighty, we cannot find Him out: He is excellent in power, and in judgment, and in plenty of justice: He will not afflict. Men do therefore fear Him: He respecteth not any that are wise of heart" (vv. 23, 24). And he is silent, as though signifying that the message of the Interpreter is finished, but the work is not complete. He is saying: I have guided you up to here, but now I must entrust you to other hands. Just as later on John the Baptist closed his ministry with the "Behold the Lamb of God", thus Elihu closed his. He has pointed the way and spoken, but now he is silent and steps aside, leaving Job face to face with the Omnipotent, since only up to this point can even the most profound ministry reach: to lead man to intimate communion with God, face to face, each one alone with God alone. When man is silent, God speaks.

Chapter 9

The Message of God to Job (Job 38)

The message is to Job, not yet to his three friends. Even though perhaps they were even able to hear, they must be prepared later on, and by means of the same Job that they had afflicted and misunderstood.

You, oh reader, will do well to accept in faith all that God has for you. Potentially, consider yourself already seated in heavenly places, but know that for you, for me, there is an ascending, by means of your descending, and that it all comes from God. When you are completely absorbed in the nothing of yourself you will be a throne of Intercession. It is one of the highest examples under Heaven: one who was portrayed holy at the first information, but precisely because he was such, he was a candidate suited for the highest summit of the spirit, and therefore to be made dust before being completely formed and with understanding for the highest service: Intercession. But let us not anticipate.

We also, asking for grace, will enter silently, barefooted, with head bowed into the Sanctuary. Let us hear! The Holy Spirit informs us: "then the Lord answered Job out of the whirlwind".

Then, not before. God has His time which is divided into times in us although with God there is no "Time". Time is a word subject to change. When the work is finished there is no longer time, and thus it was announced to St. John (Revelation 10). Meanwhile there is time and times. Then, God is patient and waits that He may be able to speak to us directly. It has always been He; however reflected, by secondary agents, in various ways – until at the end He speaks face to face in the Son, Sole final Messenger – by a clear, definitive message. Oh! Then!

God said: "Who is this that darkeneth counsel by words without knowledge?" (v.2). Only in Him is there weight, number and measure. The message is resolute and severe, but never unjust or exaggerated.

There was not one word, be it even indirect that would deny the good that was in Job; nothing that would cast doubts on the motives of that great soul. The key of the whole message is that Job was ignorant of the Counsel of Heaven, but that, being ignorant of his own ignorance, instead of reaching the light, he had, more than clouded, obscured – to himself and to others – the Counsel of God. Confessing that we do not know is an index of increasing holiness, and to say: My Lord, Thou knowest,” or “I am blind; open my eyes so that I may see the marvels of Thy law”.

The question: “Who is this...” reminds us of the first commandment to the first man to not take the fruit of the tree of knowledge of good and evil. Without the grace directed to a specific light, one errs because judging by the appearance, evil seems good, and the good evil. The ignorant one – and such we all are in ourselves – speaks without science that is intimate knowledge or an intimate relation between cause and effect. It is Grace, when received in disposed hearts, that leads from ignorance to knowing, from darkness to light, from ruin to restoration, from the first to the second creation.

The divine voice is not limited to interrogation that of itself stirs up and does not enlighten; rather it invites Job to gird up his loins, gathering up his own energy, because he will be asked questions, giving him the opportunity to answer, rather to teach.

We do not intend to comment on the message word for word, but to try to look at the principal lines. The first is: that Job may know in relation to the creation of the earth, and what is connected to it, creation that supposes that there already was one before: “When the morning stars sang together, and all the sons of God shouted for joy.” (v. 7). The brief parenthesis of verse 7, so much information of such a mystery is not examined; intended to remain as one of the glorious affirmations that touch the spirit, and that wait for light in the beyond.

“The morning stars sang; the Sons of God shouted” during the creation of the earth. Prophetic words that point to other stars and other sons who will sing for joy.

“Where wast thou?” and questions upon questions follow. The foundations of the earth were being laid; the measures thereof were laid, and on the basis of unknown to man. The message descends to that which is on earth and governs it. The seas, the waves, extremities, mornings are all ready.

A parenthesis follows: “it is turned as clay to the seal; and they stand as a garment” (38:14). There is light on these things, given how much and how the Creator wants; such a light is denied to the wicked, the false religionist; and the arm – strength – of the proud is broken.

The waves, the abyss have whirlpools unknown to man. Death has its gates and they are not discovered. Light penetrates and dissipates darkness; but what is its way – as to say – from what does it proceed, or by what means is it discovered? Snow and hail are “reserves” that contain a hidden good. Flames of fire and winds have their way, their limits. The waters have courses and lightnings, announcers of thunders, their ways. Thus the rain comes without you knowing its immediate origin, that is to say the second cause, the Creator being the cause of all the causes. Although the message is directed to man in relation to the earth, Heaven is indicated. The stars, the orders of Heaven have a beneficial function. They have their regimen on the earth. Can you, man, command the clouds and the lightning?

Coming directly to the hearer, to Job, the Lord asks: “Who hath put wisdom in the inwards parts, or who hath given understanding to the heart? (38:36). We speak of Inner wisdom. We remember the affirmation of David in Psalm 51. Wisdom leads to understanding. Truth is known by intuition, and then, in the time and in the measure of God, it is revealed. There is a perception – an inner knowing – impossible to put into words that reaches the mind gradually. There are clouds, and they signify much. There are barrels in the Heavens. God has and uses clouds and gathers tears in His barrels. But who will number them? Dust that seems to be dispersed, metal that seems to be unchangeable, are at His command. What does man know, what can he do?

A pause is needed to prepare considerations about the creatures that are physically stronger than man and against which he can do nothing without divine help.

Chapter 10
Man and the Beasts
(Chapter 39)

Man, without God, is nothing in comparison with the forces that surround him, be it those that we call inanimate as well as living beings. Confusion and fear dishearten him, except if by that inner wisdom he turns to the Creator.

It is not in the capacity and the design of this writing to analyze word for word the message of God to Job, only advising that the various beasts that are mentioned are all figures of something in the invisible. The intention is to show Job that he is ignorant and likewise he can do nothing regarding that which surrounds him. It is opportune to remember the state of man in his innocence. Let us read in Genesis 2:20 that Adam gave names to all cattle, and to the fowl of the air and to every beast of the field. There is much to be considered in the word "cattle" (domestic animals). Not knowing the particulars of the life of Adam in Eden, we do not know what is meant by "domestic animals," except that there were those that were closer to him. However, everything was subject to him, since "naming" has a broad meaning. That was then, but afterward it was quite otherwise. The earth and all that is in it, instead of being subject, became – permit us to say it – hostile to man, who found himself struggling with all that was previously subject to him. The earth produced thorns and thistles: a sort of fight began between man and the environment. Adam must return to dust, and everything will cooperate to make him such; death first and then life, so that he may return to the Creator humbled and repented. In the measure that man draws close to Heaven, the Creation frightens and confounds him less and less, until he sees in it the glory of the Creator. But when one is far from God and rebellious, even the boldest live in continuous preoccupations and fears. Every bush seems to be an enemy; every wind is like a

wave of poison, and even the slightest zephyr is a frightening voice. He wanders in a world of privations and misfortunes while the Creator is looking for him in order to bring him back where he was before, in a Redemption, a new creation that will make him more blessed and privileged than before.

God speaks to Job, and it is a great privilege that God speaks to him – and he had to be prepared, put face-to-face with the Creator. The lions and the young lions are mentioned first – lion, king of the beasts – and then immediately there is mentioned from among the birds the one that more than all is a figure of evil, the raven. But even the ravens, like the lions, need food. The young ravens cry to God because of lack of food. Do they know Him; do they know what those cries mean? However that may be, it is the voices that have a meaning for God.

Then the mountain goats are mentioned, and then a beast that is a symbol of stubbornness, the ass. Among all the animals it is the only one whose firstborn, like the firstborn of man, had to be redeemed with a lamb (Exodus 13:13).

Then follows a mention of the unicorn (wild ox), that cannot be tied and domesticated. After that mention is made of the peacocks and of the ostrich that has beautiful wings and a poor intellect. The ostrich, that is strong and runs swiftly, is senseless. And as though to stop every possible act of marveling or disdain for the senseless beast that abandons its eggs in the sand, the divine voice comments: “Because God hath deprived her of wisdom, neither hath He imparted to her understanding “(39:17). It is like He is saying that we should not judge the creation and the creatures. God is the cause of all the causes. Why does God render some stupid and senseless? Acknowledge it and don't ask for the reason. The time will come that you will know. Meanwhile bend your neck and adore! God is the cause of all causes. Be it far from us to qualify the three friends of Job, because perhaps we are not even like them in what they said about Job that was true, because they affirmed much that was good, only they did not apply it with justice and measure. Far be it to judge

that if someone does not act with us as we desire, it is God Himself who permits it. Alas! Sometimes He has taken our understanding away, we have if not mistreated, at least neglected even the persons that should be closest and dearest to us. Sad memories remain that worry the soul! Job is exhorted not to pay attention that men had not understood him. God has understood and understands.

Mention is made of the horse that is one of the most beautiful among the animals, suited for running and for battle. In other pages of the scripture we will know that it is vain to run or to flee on horses, because we have enemies that are swift; and that is vain to trust in the strength of the horse. Mention is made of the hawk that flies in directions without the guidance of man. And above all a hint to the eagle, called the royal bird, a bird with strong wings that enable it to fly above the clouds in search of light, and that lives in high places, that, looking from afar, spies the prey, and the little eagles suck up the blood. Let the one who reads, meditate and learn from the eagle, and also look from afar, rising to the light, and seek Blood, Life.

A question to Job follows the rapid mention of some animals and figures: "Shall he that contended with the Almighty instruct Him? He that reproveth God, let him answer it" (40:2).

Instruct the Omnipotent, contend with Him? Having been put on the spot, Job feels that he must say something. And he opens his mouth and said: "Behold, I am vile; what shall I answer? I will lay mine hand upon my mouth. Once I have spoken; but I will not answer: yea, twice; but I will proceed no further" (40:4,5).

Is Job truly persuaded, convicted, and humbled? Weakened and rendered silent he is – and it is already much to be rendered silent – but in Job's answer there is the note that he feels oppressed and inept, and he withdraws, if not exactly desperate or annoyed, at least forcibly resigned. But this is not the terminal point to which the Lord wants to bring him. Therefore, the Lord continues to speak to Job.

Chapter 11
You, Man, Fight If You Can
(Job 41)

Oh vanity and human pride, by which, closed and dominated by egoism, we put ourselves and not God at the head and center of the Creation, referring everything to ourselves, according to how we want to profit by it, arriving to that which we thought would never happen, to condemn – although we do not say it – even God, while justifying ourselves! This, in conclusion is our way of acting until we are not drawn to the Lord. The Lord (Lord-Owner) spoke again. Infinite Love, Condescending and Patient, spoke again to Job. God bombards him with questions intermixed with descriptions.

With general information, the Lord has described forces and arrogance, against which Job can do nothing, because there is a monster that can stop a river from flowing and can drink up the Jordan, even the Jordan, in his throat. They go beyond every experience of man. Literally such a beast does not exist, therefore the picture given of it suggests evil forces able to deviate the regular course of a river, and even swallow the waters so that they cannot supply water and bring benefits. Job cannot, but it is implicit that the Omnipotent, only He, is able to govern that which He has created. He has placed limits on the waves of the ocean. After this the message is more direct between Job and the enemy forces. The Leviathan mentioned in Chapter 41 is supposed to refer to the crocodile. Since the visible is a figure of the invisible, it is necessary to know what one sees, in order to rise to that which one does not see. The obstinate Pharaoh, among other titles, is also called ‘Crocodile’. This big and ferocious beast that can live in two elements – both on land and in water – arouses fear, nor can anyone catch it. From this a brief parenthesis, a question of the Lord that sounds a warning: that is, if a created thing is so strong, who is it that can present himself before Him, Creator, that is to present himself in order to oppose Him?

Meditating and considering the various members of this monster is a lesson that brings to mind the acts and means used by someone who is the Monster above all the monsters. Fire, smoke and

destroying sparks are produced from the throat, nostrils and breath of the monster. He has a hard neck and a solid, massive heart. He is not afraid of the spear or other weapons, esteeming them as straw. The picture closes informing us that there is no beast like him, and it is understood that he regards that which is lofty with contempt, and he is king over all the wild beasts. We would like to know more about the origin and the reason for this monster, but there is no direct word regarding this, rather there is indirectly.

Man, having lost the communion and the face of the Lord, was faced by much that had to and must make him return to his senses. Abandoned to himself, man is weak, rather overcome. Evil, denial of good and man's inability suppose, by way of contrast, that Good exists and there is a force that controls and dominates all forces. The invitation is: Oh man, do not trust in yourself. Abandon yourself to the Creator. We have left verses 31 and 32 for last. They say: "He maketh the deep to boil like a pot: He maketh the sea like a pot of ointment. He maketh a path to shine after him; one would think the deep to be hoary." From this description, more than from the rest, we conclude that it's a question of the monster of monsters. We read that the day will come when there will be no more sea. And this does not refer as much to the aqueous element, as to that which the sea represents; that is, when the sea is calm it is never still and is turned upside down all of a sudden by storms able to undermine even the rocks, and to swallow fleets. There is one who makes it boil. One who, when permitted, makes it boil. It seems that all may be lost, because the monster causes a path to shine after him, and the abyss seems to be hoary. These words are incomprehensible if they do not illustrate the outbursts of storms in the lives of the most consecrated ones, by which they reach the edge of desperation, seeing before themselves only a "path" as though the benevolent Creator was not in control, but the monster.

But it is God who has permitted all this, because while no one can, He laughs at the Leviathan, and in a language that says much, He toys with it. That is, precisely that which is bad, He uses for a good purpose. All is at His command. In the extreme hour when the wind was tossing the weak ship, and the waves were threatening to

swallow it up, Jesus stood up. He rebuked the inimical forces of the wind, the waves quieted down, and the lake-sea become calm. The One whom the wind and the sea obey had risen.

The divine message – the extreme description of the enemy – is finished. Job must decide.

Chapter 12
Job Humbled
(Job 42:1-6)

Like one waking up from a long and painful dream, who opens his eyes to the light and is blinded by it, gathering his thoughts the best that he can, speaks at first incoherently and then gives a definite conclusion, Job answered: “I know that Thou canst do everything, and that no thought can be withholden from Thee” (v.2). The spectacle has subdued him: he affirms the Omnipotence of God. But his first words resound to him – and Job reproves Job: “Who is he that hides counsel without knowledge?” He declares that he has neither the strength nor the right to continue on the principle of his answering – on the *I know...* with which he has begun to answer.

I know? But what do I know? I know nothing – and he adds, after reproving himself: “therefore have I uttered things that I understood not” (v.3). Reading without the words in italics, the language is stunted, incoherent, of one who would like to say much and does not know how. There is like a pause after every word, seeking how to continue. “Therefore have I uttered...I understood not...” Things too wonderful for me...Which I knew not.”

His Name, among others, is “the Admirable One” – “The Marvelous One” – by which we are blinded by such brightness of light, we do not know how to say anything. I should answer? Oh, no! I cannot understand. How can I answer? I must ask. And he appeals: “Hear, I beseech thee, and I will speak: I will demand of thee, and declare

Thou unto me (v.4)". I will ask questions of You and You will answer me. But he does not even know how to ask. Coming to his senses he exclaims: "I have heard of Thee by the hearing of the ear; but now mine eye seeth Thee" (v.5).

Heard – Seen.

We must move slowly. In the new Creation there are spiritual senses, and they must be exercised. Two are mentioned first that help and cooperate with the others: hearing and sight; the ear and the eye. Hearing is first – seeing is afterward. One should pay attention to what, and how one hears. When the ear is open, pay attention to gather the sound, the voice and the words; the purified eye sees clearly. The man born blind, of whom is written in that very rich chapter nine of St. John – heard Jesus and obeyed Him. Afterward he was exposed to trials until he was isolated and cast out. Then – not before – he saw Jesus, and worshipped Him as the Son of God.

Job does not boast of having heard the Lord directly himself; he said that he had "heard of Him" (about thee); not from Thee. Between the "of" and the "from" there is an abyss! But now...Now...I have seen Thee.

We would like to portray the feeling and the aspect in Job's words, and to contemplate his countenance disfigured by disease and suffering, irradiated now by a calm light with a look from the past to the present so that nothing will escape him.

"Now my eye sees You" (NASB 42:5). He has seen of a loving seeing of contemplation the effect of which remains.

We would like to enlarge upon the words, but sobriety warns us to be brief, permitting us only to conclude that there are three affirmations in the words. It is Job and not another who has seen – and he has seen in a way that nothing else remains to be seen. And he has seen Him – You – in an intimate language, as if to say "now, finally I know who You are". Seeing leads to knowing in the mind and in the heart.

Should I say more? I cannot, because I don't know any more. And he added: "Wherefore I abhor myself, and repent in dust and ashes (v.6)."

Reading the verse without the italics, one has: "I abhor" – "and repent in dust and ashes." The text is greater than any translation, and requires more than one word. "Abhor", "loathing" – the sense or meaning is that he is rejecting as unreasonable and unjust, but likewise it has caused him nausea and disgust.

We seem to see that disfigured aspect, expressing more than words. Abhor what? He doesn't say it, because he cannot make any excuse for himself, as if to say that there may be something good. Nothing! I repent, and he does not say how much or how. The thought is more than words; and the profound emotion is more than the thought. In order to give a faint idea of the manner of repentance, he adds, stressing the brief speech, supplementing the brevity of his words by the emphasis, Job concludes with two examples: in the first there is the implied history of having returned to his earthly origin; and in the other, he has had to be reduced by fire into dust and ashes – Dust and Ashes.

He adds nothing and asks for nothing. Dust and ashes have no right to anything. He was silent.

Chapter 13

The Lord

“For I know that my Redeemer liveth, and that He shall stand at the latter day upon the earth (19:25).” Job said this in a moment of light, like a flash of lightning, which, like lightning, had quickly disappeared, rendering the darkness of the night more gloomy. The prophetic portrait is now a reality. Therefore: The Lord. Let us read: “And it was so, that after the Lord had spoken these words unto Job, the Lord said unto Eliphaz the Temanite, My wrath is kindled against thee, and against thy two friends: for ye have not spoken of me the thing that is right, as my servant Job hath. Therefore take unto you now seven bullocks and seven rams, and go to my servant Job, and offer up for yourselves a burnt offering; and my servant Job shall pray for you: for him will I accept; lest I deal with you after your folly, in that ye have not spoken of me the thing which is right, like my servant Job (42:7,8)”.

When the Lord accepts a person, most of the time He does not begin by speaking to that person, rather to others. The incident of the woman who was a sinner at the feet of Jesus comes to mind (Luke 7:36-50): that before He pronounced comfort and salvation to her, He reduced the fastidious and malicious Pharisee to silence. In the theme of this writing, the Lord began by dealing with the three friends of Job. Much of what they said was correct and true, but the error was in how it was said and how it was applied. The comparison is between the “how” of the three, and the “how” of Job. The motive and the conclusion are in the “how” of the language. In the three, the motive of the words was a mixture motivated largely by their vanity, assuming themselves to be teachers and better than Job. The conclusion was that their talking disheartened Job. It does not seem, by a superficial examination, that their criticisms were destroying and not edifying; but the fact that the Lord mentions Eliphaz the Temanite tells us that he, who had spoken first and narrated that a spirit had frightened him and had whispered mistrust of the Creator to him, that insinuation had influenced all the talking of the three. The motive, getting to the heart of it, was vanity intermixed with a religious veneer.

The object, perhaps even though unconsciously to whom it was aimed, notwithstanding disconnected phrases that appeared to encourage – was: ‘desperation’.

The ‘how’ of Job had been quite different, both in the motive and in the purpose that was to square his accounts with God.

Strictly speaking, even Job had not spoken entirely well. But the comparison is the relative versus the absolute.

But God loves everyone, in the measure that each one is open to the ocean of His love; therefore He wanted to help even Job’s three friends. And He commanded them to take sacrificial animals –two types, symbols of two needs, seven for each type, perfect and confirmed sacrifice – and they should turn to Job because he, Job, should intercede for them as a priest. In the words to the three, Job is qualified by the Lord four times as “My servant.” Four is the highest expression of identification with the Lord. The New Jerusalem is a city foursquare, remaining the same from every base that it is observed. The narrative is brief, but the Holy Spirit invites us to meditate the words, which enlarge in the measure they are considered. The three were united, having come to accord when, each moving from his place, found themselves together near the great sufferer. They had, so to speak, spoken together, and together – it pains us to say it – as though enjoying the spectacle of humiliation they were imposing. Two ages together: a great force in good, and alas even in that which is not good. Now, the report having come – that everything goes to judgment – they must also move together. It is not enough that they humble themselves to God, which is not difficult, but they should humble themselves to the one they had offended, which is difficult. It is easy to beat one’s breast, each one alone with God, and to call oneself with scornful titles; but true humiliation is when men, especially those we have offended, see our public humiliation. Let us read: “So Eliphaz the Temanite and Beldad the Shuhite and Zophar the Nanmathite went, and did according as the Lord commanded them: the Lord also accepted Job” (v.9).

Take note of the specific mention of the three names.

One could have said that the three went; but no, they each had their own name – and the name of each one, confessed – who must present himself to the Judge – Savior. They went and did as they were told. And the Lord accepted Job.

Chapter 14
The Intercessor
(Job 42:9; Hebrew 7:25; 8:1; Isaiah 53:13).

He, Jesus is at the right hand of the Majesty. He lives to intercede – the only Savior. We ask for grace in order to follow Him in the spirit, beyond the curtain, and contemplate Him. He, Chief Intercessor, forms and uses intercessors. Intercession is the culminating ministry. There was a first example of it in chapter 14 of Genesis: Melchisedec in reference to Abram. The Church of Christ is destined to the ministry of intercession. But as it was for Jesus and thus for His people, there is a long preparation that leads to Interceding. There are various scriptural passages, scattered here and there. We will limit ourselves citing Isaiah 53:13 and 61:3, 4. However, in order to understand it better it is necessary to take a step backward and revisit that “I have heard *of* Thee by the hearing of the ear”. The *of* Thee in comparison to *from* Thee does not fully explain the *hearing* just as the “by the hearing of the ear” does not describe everything and by what means one can hear. There is a hearing of the heart that is humbled and full of light, and there is a hearing that is more than *of* someone or *from* someone. We may even have heard *from* God, and not even have heard Him. We may have even heard some command or teaching from Him, and not heard Him, without reference to that which He wants from us. Hearing Him leads to seeing not about Him, but He Himself. One who hears Him and sees Him, dies to himself and lives from now on for God.

Now we are a little more able to understand why the Lord neither spoke quickly to Job, nor healed him after the great confession. The primary emphasis in Job’s *life* had to be for others, not for himself. And Job was so immersed in God that he did not ask for healing or anything else. In that annihilation of himself, with a serene and

contemplative spirit, he was not preoccupied about himself, absorbed as he was in the divine Nature.

A word now on the passages cited from Isaiah. In chapter 53, after the picture of the tender plant in dry ground up to the elevation to the Throne, the great lines of the Redeemer are pointed out. Let us read in verse 12: "Therefore will I divide Him a portion with the great, and He shall divide the spoil with the strong; because He hath poured out His soul unto death: and He was numbered with the transgressors; and He bore the sin of many, and made intercession for the transgressors." "Great and strong" are understood in the language of heaven that qualified Jacob a prince after God crippled him and gave him a new name. The step of ascent is: "He both poured out His soul unto death," the soul and not only the body. He had already offered Himself in the spirit. Now it is the long agony of the soul, not death by a sudden blow, but the long crucifixion of the soul. Who can measure the suffering of the great soul (humanity) of Jesus Christ? "He was numbered with the transgressors." He was numbered from the census in Bethlehem while in the bosom of the mother, of that mother, to the day of crucifixion. He had those who were most despised as close friends. "This man," scorned His enemies, "receives sinners and eats with them."

And on that day there were three crosses. The command was given to have one cross for one thief, one for the other thief, and the cross in the middle for the One that according to the Accusation of earthly Jerusalem seemed to be the worst of all: the cross for the "Blasphemer". If this is true, He had committed the greatest sin and He was the greatest sinner. And then "He bore the sins of many." In conclusion, He Himself became "sin" so much so that He experienced a separation from Heaven, expressed in that cry: "Eli, Eli..." "He made intercession for the transgressors" completes the picture. Take note that "transgressors" supposes a law, since without a law there is no transgression. And this indicates help to a people that ought to know the law of God.

Melchisedec, the intercessory type of whom we have the first notice, was sent to help Abram, a saint in danger. There is also preventive

intercession. The immediate purpose of intercession is to help and restore those who are already considered people of God. For others, all dear to God, there are other means. He works intensely with the few in order to reach the many. Joel 2:17 describes from whom and for what intercession exists. Let us read: “Let the priests, the ministers of the Lord, weep between the porch and the altar, and let them say, Spare Thy people, O Lord, and give not thine heritage to reproach, that the heathen should rule over them: wherefore should they say among the people, Where is their God?”

In Isaiah 61: 3,4 we see the preparation for intercession, and what the intercession may be. Let us read: “To appoint unto them that mourn in Zion, to give unto them beauty for ashes. The oil of joy for mourning, the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness, that they might be called trees of righteousness, the planting of the Lord, that He might be glorified”. Those who mourn are candidates for the high ministry – not others – and they are prepared by means of ashes (reduced to ashes) of mourning, of spirit of heaviness – and they become trees of righteousness, planted to glorify the Lord (the Lord) – and “they shall build the old wastes, they shall raise up the former desolations, and they shall repair the waste cities, the desolations of many generations (v.4).” These were places that had been flourishing and became ruins. Oh! The restorers of ruins. It costs in order to become “restorers of ruins.”

The Redeemer is assisted by redeemers (Obadiah, last verse); an ancient Chief Priest was assisted by priests. The highest ministry of Jesus is to be at the Throne as Intercessor. He lives, *in order to* intercede. He can save to the uttermost.

God had His eye on Job who was already holy. He wanted to make him an intercessor, hence the great trial. And the first act of Job after he had seen God, was to intercede, not for strangers, but for the transgressors, his three friends who were not strangers, but who needed pardon and restoration.

“And the Lord also accepted Job”.

What ministry Job had after that is not written. One should not assume that in his earthly life – lengthened so much for him – that he might not have served God both as intercessor or in other ways, since just as the Omnipotent has many servants, so it is true that the same individual can serve Him in various ways. The scriptural information we have is what happened to Job after he interceded.

Chapter 15

Let us read: And the Lord turned Job from captivity when he prayed for his friends. Also, the Lord gave Job twice as much as he had before (v.10).”

“Turned Job from captivity” – therefore Job was in prison. Now, finally he is free. Go slowly! Go slowly! “Liberty” is the conclusion of hearing, of being taught, of knowing the truth. One is free only when the Son frees (St. John 8:36). There is no danger that someone may abuse the freedom, using it for the flesh, when it is the Son, in a conclusive act – has cut all the ties and has made him free. We do not deny that final liberty for us is only at death, because we tremble that who knows, we may become presumptuous. But a freedom there is, although relative, even before leaving this body.

“Turned” – a word that supposes vigor and power – like one who descends into the abysses to imprison that which he had kept in prison, and brings it out, up high, as a trophy, and then he fills the void with gifts. To the superficial eye, reading only the first two chapters of the book, it seems that Job did not need to be freed from anything, but one who reads and meditates how much was being discovered in Job, and known by intuition under the insinuations of his three friends, it can be seen that Job was still a prisoner of himself, of his own reputation. In order to free him, the great trial was needed, and then the work of the Redeemer.

There is an abyss between the past and the future. Job is delivered from the greatest, rather the only true enemy - from himself. From now on he is so immersed in God that he no longer sees himself,

neither to lose heart, nor to become puffed up. He doesn't see himself at all. Job has lost Job, but he has seen God. Always forgetting what is behind, the past that flees, and always consigning himself to the Lord, having become simple, he has only one line, forward. He is always empty of himself, in order to be always filled with God. The shakings created new voids, followed by other inundations of grace. Forward, therefore, between void and fullness until the end, when there will be no more end. One does not lose with the Lord, because when one is in a condition to receive, the Lord entrusts more than before: Redemption is greater than Creation.

The Lord increased Job – of a continual increasing – twice as much. We should not be limited by the “two.” The steps and blessings are not numbered, but they follow each other, and it is always a doubling of the last number. But we limit ourselves. We are reminded of the portrayal of Jesus in Philippians 2:5-8, highly exalted, after the extreme humiliation. Let us ask Him for sobriety on the vast and difficult themes. There is a doubling after the captivity. We do not attempt to explain it, rather only to contemplate Jesus, highly exalted, with a Name above every Name.

Such is He, and such, in the measure that is possible to them, are the intercessors.

Chapter 16**The Others****(Job 42:11; Romans 8:19; Mark 10)**

Let us not qualify these brothers, sisters and acquaintances of Job as evil. May the day come for each of us, looking at the past, knowing ourselves, that we will conclude that people, even those who have afflicted us most, deserve mercy and not anger, love and not hatred.

It is God who permits enemies as unpaid guardian of our souls, and who, as Caleb said, become our bread, our support. It is God who procures and gives us friends. We have erred, often forming associations that God has not consecrated, or suspected some that God has destined as our benefactors. Let us return to Job.

Let us read: “then come thereunto him all his brethren, and all his sisters, and all they that had been of his acquaintance before, and did eat bread with him in his house: and they bemoaned him and comforted him over all the evil that the Lord had brought upon him: every man also gave him a piece of money, and every one an earring of gold (42:11)”

A confession: The writer has until today read verse eleven saying thus: Now that Job is in prosperity many who neglected or despised him have come forward. But our impressions change in the measure that we too see ourselves and God. Even Job's three friends, behind whose back we have perhaps laughed, even those three acted better than we would have if we were in their shoes. The news that Job was sitting on ashes, covered from head to toe with boils and worms spread quickly. The horror and the nausea of the disease defies description. And yet the three stayed with Job a long time, not running away horrified as we would have done. Oh! How we err by not putting ourselves in the shoes of others by not considering them, each one in his environment and circumstances. We read that they comforted him and sympathized with him. This also is not easy; especially if we consider that it is not easy to truly cry with those who cry, and to rejoice with those who rejoice. The scripture says the

truth: therefore, they truly sympathized and comforted, and were not pretending. If it is not easy to sympathize for the pain of another, it is much less easy to rejoice for their good. Therefore, God spread good also on those who visited Job. “They did eat bread with him in his house;” a banquet – in the house – this is a figure of Communion and of the Church.

What shall I give to the Lord? Love wants to give. We offer the cup of salvation; but if we are truly touched in our heart, we open our hand even in earthly goods, knowing that He Himself has given them to us. Therefore let us consider it, the notice that “every man also gave him a piece of money, and every one an earring of gold.” There is a reciprocal enrichment. Job opened his house and prepared a banquet. The visitors brought gifts.

The saints will be glorified in Jesus Christ and Jesus Christ in His saints in the *Kingdom of Light*.

That which follows the information about the increased possessions, the ten children of Job, and the closure of his long earthly life – seems to be but is not excessive and superfluous. Let us meditate on it.

Chapter 17
Prosperity of Job
The Children of the Barren
(Job 42:12-16; Isaiah 54)

Everyone did not visit Job. There were two peoples, and each of the two was subdivided. Many do not care for Job nor for other children of God. Others fear God, but they bind themselves, some to Job and some to others. There is only one Pastor, and various servants under him, each in his limit. Three groups that came to Job are mentioned, and they are specified – “all his brethren, and all his sisters, and all they that had been of his acquaintance.” We feel that the names were not by chance, each representing a different class. Brother: communion of service; sisters: communion of gentleness; acquaintances, those who are like the spokesmen, witnesses who bring the testimony to others. Everybody. None were missing of those who were “his,” of Job. One loses nothing with God, since He knows how to restore in everything.

Three different groups are as though united at a single table. They ate – all in the house of Job, he becoming a type of Jesus – center of attraction and union. Different among themselves, they acted in an equal manner toward Job, in mourning, in rejoicing, in giving gifts. Our mind and our heart race to Jesus Christ, center of the Universe. Everyone, everything, consist and is held together by Him, in Him (Colossians 1:17).

The narrative continues: “So the Lord blessed the latter end of Job more than his beginning: for he had fourteen thousand sheep, and six thousand camels, and a thousand yoke of oxen, and a thousand she asses. He had also seven sons and three daughters. And he called the name of the first, Jemima; and the name of the second, Kezia; and the name of the third, Kerenhappuch. And in all the land were no women found so fair as the daughters of Job: and their father gave them inheritance among their brethren (vv. 12-15).

Two lines of prosperity made him richer than before – sheep, camels, oxen, asses, all double than before. Earthly goods are destined from

now on, more than before to the service of the intercessor. The numbers themselves are symbolic. Fourteen (twice seven as in Jacob). Six thousand: six, number of man; thousand, multitudes. Two classes of animals, two pure: sheep and oxen; two impure: camels and asses. All is sacred in the service of Job.

That which God has purified, we must not call unclean. He still had children; ten, not twenty. The ten that perished in the ruin of the house even they were alive and safe, the family on high. Ten are on the earth. For the sons the names are not given, of the daughters yes – special names of adornment and gentleness. All is instructive and symbolic.

And after all this good, for one alone, a prolonged life with other descendants without number. And at the end the information that he died, being “old and full of years”. Nothing else.

But there is more for us, and that is that we are ready to read again Chapter 54 of Isaiah, a portrait of a desolate woman who seemed to be barren, inert, and without a husband, but who had an intimate rapport with God. Whereas neither she nor others were expecting fruit from her, she is amazed, and it is an astonishment to others, when blessed multitudes come from her, and she asks herself from whence they came. They are the surprises of Heaven.

The glory follows the cross. In fact, the portrait in Isaiah 54 follows that of Isaiah 53, the humiliation and glory of Jesus Christ. The cross first, the ashes, and then the glory.

And meanwhile the prophetic encouragement of which is in Isaiah 54:11-13, goes to many who are neglected and perhaps despised.

We move from “time” to no time: Eternity. From the limits of space, knowledge and imperfection, to the Perfect and Infinite.

Lord, make us faithful!

We say: Amen

The End

INDEX

	Page
Chapter 1..... (Job 32:3-37)	1
Chapter 2..... Job, Hear My Speeches (Job: 33)	3
Chapter 3..... The Messenger and the Message (Job: 33)	7
Chapter 4..... The Redemption (Job 33:24-30)	10
Chapter 5..... The Message (Job: 34, etc)	12
Chapter 6..... (Job 35)	15
Chapter 7..... Wait for Me a Little (Job: 36)	18
Chapter 8..... Lightning and Thunder (Job 37)	22
Chapter 9..... The Message of God to Job (Job: 38)	25

	Page
Chapter 10.....	28
Man and the Beasts (Job: 39)	
Chapter 11.....	31
You, Man, Fight If You Can (Job: 41)	
Chapter 12.....	33
Job Humbled (Job 42: 1-6)	
Chapter 13.....	36
The Lord	
Chapter 14.....	38
The Intercessor (Job 42:9; Hebrew 7:25, 8:1; Isaiah 53: 13)	
Chapter 15.....	41
Chapter 16.....	43
The Others (Job 42:11; Romans 8:19; Mark 10)	
Chapter 17.....	45
Prosperity of Job, The Children of the Barren (Job 42:12-16; Isaiah 54)	

