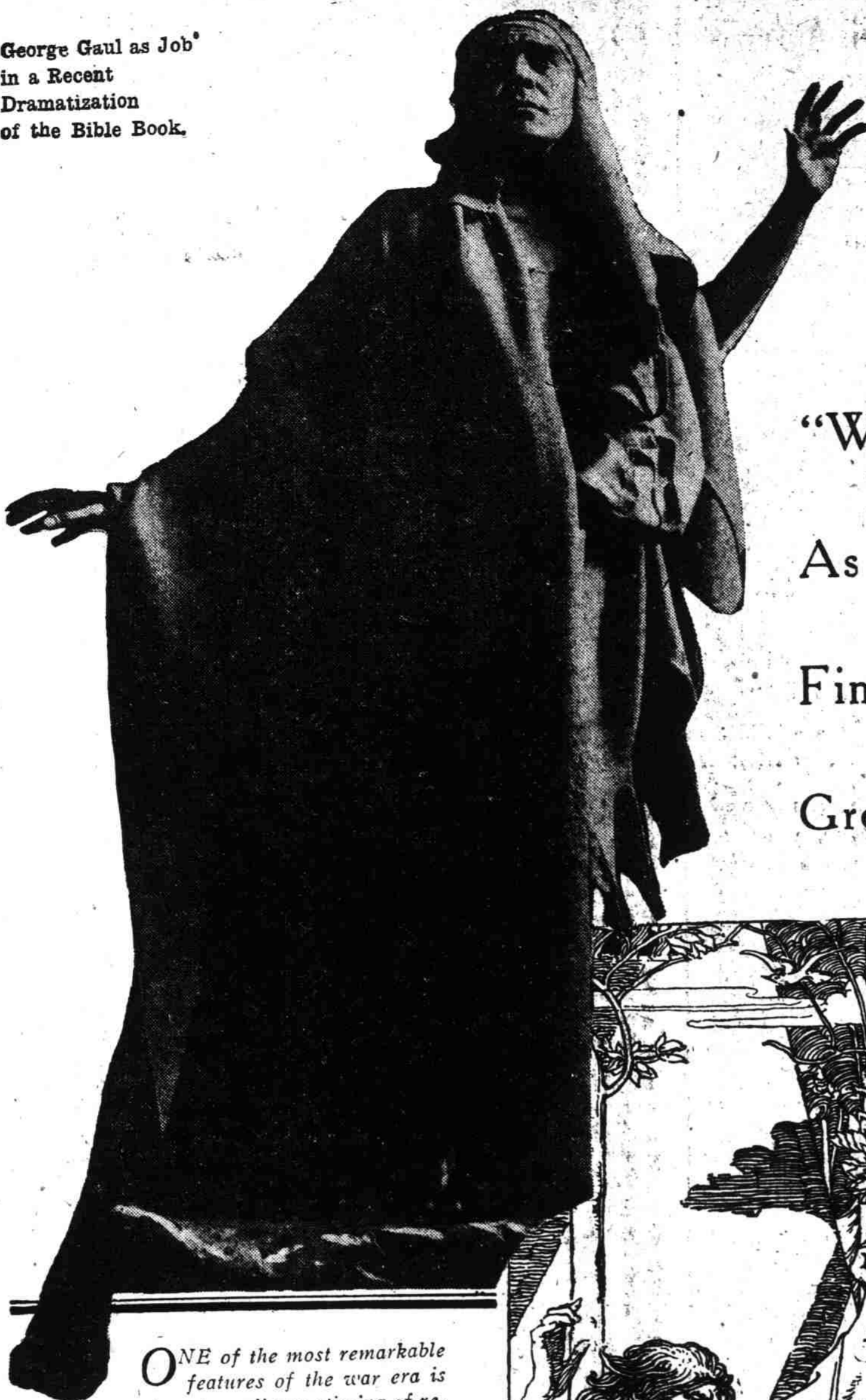


George Gaul as Job
in a Recent
Dramatization
of the Bible Book.



Does the Bible Martyr Job Answer a Suffering World?

"Why Should the Innocent
Be Afflicted?"
As Art, Drama and
Literature Are
Finding It Asked and
Answered in the
Great Hebrew Poem.

ONE of the most remarkable features of the war era is the extraordinary stirring of religious thought, not only in art and in literature, but in the common life of the time. Inevitably a bitter question has arisen, skepticism has found fresh fuel in disaster, and religion has turned again in eager search for the consolations of holy writ. At such a time the Bible is called upon to answer the cries of distraught humanity, and a book like that of Job, depicting both sides of the controversy over suffering, is resought with significant interest.

Painters are turning to the Scriptures. Novelists like H. G. Wells are writing of new conceptions of God. Stuart Walker recently conceived the idea of dramatizing the stupendous spiritual drama of Job, and his reverent work has been received with profound evidences of appreciation.

The pictures on this page vividly suggest the imaginative significance of the Bible work, the wonderful allegorical range of its lines. The designs by the distinguished English artist, Herbert Granville Fell, depict some of the many phases he has touched in the course of a powerful series. In his volume, "The Book of Job," Joseph Jacobs says of Job's gospel, "Never was such a gospel needed more than at the present day."

Mr. Jacobs says that it is Job's "soul's drama that constitutes the Poem of Job. The strenuous optimism of the Hebrew finds in him its most typical representative."

By Dr. Clifton Harby Levy

CALL the Book of Job a poem if you will; it is actually the drama of life played out before the minds of men to console them for their sufferings. It is an attempt to answer the eternal question, "Why do the righteous suffer?"



"Job Rebukes His Wife," as Drawn by Herbert Granville Fell.

The Evil One is permitted to afflict Job with every possible type of pain, from that of the loss of his dear ones to the personal suffering of physical agony, but he is still steadfast in his faith.

We speak of the patience of Job, yet he was the most impatient of men, for he cursed even the day of his birth, questioning the value of life itself, under the stress of suffering. The common idea that Job was patient is due to a popular misapprehension, derived from one of the headings in an edition of a Latin Bible, where the reader found "Job Patiens," the suffering Job, and he transferred the Latin into the English and spoke of patient Job.

At a time like this in the world's history, when every one is asking over and over again the soul-searching questions, which always begin with the word "Why," we are asking "Why the innocent must suffer?" "Why the ambition of kings must plunge millions into mourning?" "Why God does

not stop this awful war and punish those who deserve worse than death?"

Many millions are going to their Bibles in search of consolation, and as they turn the pages and read the Book of Job they begin to find some spiritual light upon the questions which have surged up from overflowing hearts.

Job stands forth as the great sufferer, the world's protagonist of martyrdom, and his three friends come with rapid consolations which only stir him to violent outbreaks against them. They have the old-fashioned idea that if a man suffer it must be for some sin which he has committed, and in vain does Job refuse to admit his sinfulness. He casts back the imputation, and reasserts his innocence. He rises far above their primitive ideas of God and his dealing with men and shows them the depth and power of his faith which "Knows that his Redeemer liveth."

Here is the struggle of the soul of a good man

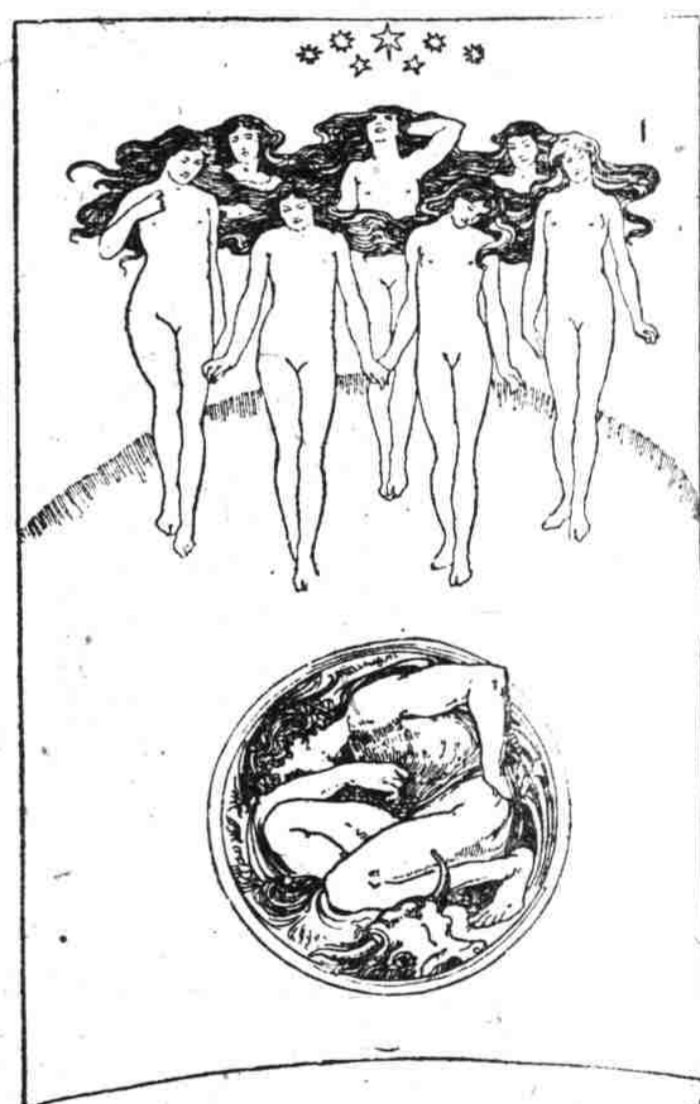


Satan Showering Ills Upon Job. One of the Celebrated Series of Designs for "The Book of Job," by Herbert Granville Fell, Depicting Every Phase of the Remarkable Bible Narrative.

to reconcile his personal sufferings with the wisdom and goodness of God, and he finds the only possible solution in his recognition that all must be done well and wisely, even though he cannot understand, and not for a moment does he lose hold upon his faith in God or his belief in his goodness.

To Job life is a test, not of God, but of man, and this is the real purport of the book, though there are many other aspects of it. Life is an opportunity for man to attain true faith, notwithstanding all doubts and sufferings, to ascend above the temporal and the transient to the contemplation of the power of God as evinced in the universe, the glories of which appear "When the morning stars sang together."

The form in which the Book of Job is cast has naturally placed a high test on the discernment of the reader, in which respect it does not differ from other great works, as expressions of spirituality in which the elements of poetry and philosophy are blended with elements of drama. Of its literary significance there can be no question. As one commentator has remarked, "Here all can meet on common ground. Jew, Christian or Free-thinker can recognize in Job one of the great world poems. Not a word is wasted, and every word tells. When one reflects how much ground is covered by the 35 verses preceding the opening course of the poem—the description of Job, the prologue in heaven, the three catastrophes, the reopening of the divine dispute, the personal infliction on Job, the temptation by his wife—we cannot refrain from admiration at the writer's skill. Nor is our admiration lessened when we come to the poem itself."



"Canst thou bind the sweet influences of the Pleiades, or loose the bands of Orion?"

Scene from the Dramatization of "The Book of Job." The Figures on the Sides Are the "Narrators" Who Repeat Lines of Text from the Book Preliminary to the Action and Dialogue.



"And the Lord blessed the latter end of Job more than the beginning."