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A table of contents for *The Expositor* can be found here:

https://biblicalstudies.org.uk/articles_expositor-series-1.php

Mere natural affection, on the other hand, if it be gratified without regard to moral considerations, becomes corrupted in the process. It is no uncommon thing for an unscrupulous love to pass into an implacable hatred. The man who commits a sin in order to please or benefit a friend, is really drying up the springs of his own best affections. Whereas, the man who, rather than sin against God, is willing to incur the displeasure or even to lose the friendship of those whom he loves, is thereby rendering himself capable of a diviner affection. Many are the evils wrought in the world by over-indulgent and self-indulgent love. The strongest and truest love is that which is capable of the courage and self-sacrifice involved in the infliction of necessary pain. And, therefore, just as he who "hateth his life in this world" really "keeps it unto life eternal," so he who, according to Christ's paradox, "hates" his friends, really loves them with a deeper, more abiding, and more unselfish affection. T. CAMPBELL FINLAYSON.

THE SOLILOQUY OF JOB.

SECOND MONOLOGUE. (CHAPTERS XXIX.—XXXI.)

FROM a purely literary point of view the Second Monologue is even more beautiful than the First. It has, indeed, no passage of such sustained grandeur, none so rich in instruction or so profoundly suggestive, as the disquisition on Wisdom and Understanding in Chapter xxviii.; but for grace and pathos, in charm of picturesque narrative, and pensive, tender, yet self-controlled emotion richly and variously expressed, it may be doubted whether Chapters xxix. and xxxi.

have ever been surpassed, while even their singular power is enhanced by the contrasts supplied in Chapter xxx. He must be dull and hard indeed who can read these Chapters without being touched to the very heart.

Even the style of the Poet changes and softens; it flows more clearly and composedly than in the First Monologue, though with equal volume and force. "The tender grace of a day that is dead" is in it, and the pathetic regret of the man who mourns his departed day. Its tone is plaintive and elegiac. In form and in substance, indeed, it *is* Job's elegy. "As good as dead already," he sings an elegy over himself, over his broken fortunes and wasted life. He has "become like dust and ashes" (Chap. xxx. 19), the song and by-word of men whom all men disdained (Chap. xxx. 1, 9); *he* who was once honoured by those whom all men held in honour! As he recalls feature after feature of his "golden days," so rich in various forms of good, its manifold dignities and enjoyments take a new value in his eyes. He feels how rare and precious were the felicitous conditions which he once regarded as the common and inevitable trappings of a man of his character and station.

For it so falls out

That what we have we prize not to the worth
Whiles we enjoy it; but being lack'd and lost,
Why, then, we rack the value; then we find
The value that possession would not shew us
Whiles it was ours.

As we study his description of himself, too, we come to understand the man and his conditions better, to form a larger and a clearer conception of him than we could possibly gather from the concise phrases of the Prologue; and to resent more keenly, as well as to

comprehend why he so keenly resented, the gross and unfounded charges of the Friends. Not only are the contents of the phrase, "A perfect man, and an upright, one that feareth God and escheweth evil," so expanded that we see how much they imply, but the very man himself is brought before us, in his habit, as he lived. We learn that he was the sheikh, not of a nomadic, but of a settled and civilized, clan; that, while he dwelt among his own people, on his own estate, this estate lay in the vicinity of a large well-ordered city, with its several ranks, orders, degrees, in which the public laws were administered with discrimination and equity, and from which, or from the site of which, the clan of Job had driven out the rude and savage aborigines who once possessed the land. We learn that in this well-ordered community Job—a great "lord" on his own estate, and a princely merchant sending out wealthy caravans to distant cities—was the man and statesman in highest repute, the judge most esteemed for an incorruptible integrity and for wise practical benevolence, the observed of all observers, held in reverence by men of every degree, but above all by the poor and needy, who rewarded him for his just and kindly dealings,

Not with fond shekels of the tested gold,
Or stones whose rates are either rich or poor
As fancy values them, but with true prayers,

and the heartfelt blessings of those who were ready to perish. As we read his fond and lingering description of his happy and honourable estate "in months of old," we feel both that Job might well

make moan to be abridged
From such a noble rate,

and that "the very stream of his life, and the business he had helmed, must, upon a warranted need, give him a better proclamation" than that we have heard from the Friends.

CHAPTERS XXIX.-XXXI.

- CHAP. XXIX. 1.—*Again Job took up his strain and said:*
 2. *O that I were as in months of old,*
 As in the days when God kept me,
 3. *When his lamp shone over my head,*
 And by his light I walked through darkness ;
 4. *As I was in my Autumn days,*
 When the favour of God was upon my tent,
 5. *When the Almighty was yet with me,*
 And my children round about me ;
 6. *When my steps were bathed in milk,*
 And the rock poured out for me rivers of oil !
 7. *When I went through the city to the gate,*
 And set up my seat in its spacious arch,
 8. *Then the youths saw me and hid themselves,*
 The old men rose and remained on their feet ;
 9. *Princes hushed themselves to silence*
 And laid their hand on their mouth :
 10. *The voice of the nobles died away,*
 And their tongue clove to the roof of their mouth :
 11. *When the ear heard me then it blessed me,*
 And the eye that saw me bare me witness,
 12. *Because I delivered the distressed who cried out,*
 And the fatherless, and him that had no helper ;
 13. *The blessing of him that was ready to perish came upon me,*
 And I caused the widow's heart to sing for joy ;
 14. *I put on righteousness and it clothed me,*
 My integrity was my robe and my turban :
 15. *I was eyes to the blind,*
 And feet was I to the lame ;
 16. *To the poor I was a father,*
 And I searched into the cause of the stranger ,
 17. *I brake the jaw of the wicked,*
 And plucked the prey from his teeth :

18. *And I said, " I shall die in my nest,
And shall lengthen out my days like the phoenix ;*
19. *My root is open to the waters,
And the dew lieth all night on my branches ;*
20. *My glory is fresh upon me,
And my bow reneweth its spring in my hand."*
21. *Men gave ear to me, and waited for me,
They silently awaited my counsel ;*
22. *After my words they added no more,
And my speech distilled on them like dew ;*
23. *They waited for me as for the rain,
And opened their mouth as for the harvest showers :*
24. *If I smiled on them, they could not believe it,
Yet did they not suffer the light of my countenance to fall :*
25. *I chose their ways, and sat as chief ;
I sat like a king among a host,
Like one who comforteth the mourners.*

CHAP. XXX. 1.—*But now they that are younger than I mock me,
Whose sires I disdained to rank with the dogs of my flock !*

2. *What to me was the strength of their hands ?
Men who brought nothing to perfection !*
3. *Lean through want and famine,
They gnaw the desert,
The land of darkness, waste and desolate,*
4. *Plucking up salt-wort in the thicket
And the roots of the broom for their bread :*
5. *They are driven forth from among men—
Men cry after them as after a thief—*
6. *To dwell in the gloomy gorges,
In caves of the earth and rocks ;*
7. *They bray among the thickets,
And huddle together among the bushes :*
8. *Baseborn and base,
They are scourged out of the land.*
9. *But now have I become their song,
I am a by-word to them ;*
10. *They loathe me :
They stand aloof from me,
And spare not to spit in my face !*

11. *Because He hath let loose the rein and humbled me,
They also cast off the bridle before me;*
12. *A rabble of them riseth on my right to trip up my feet :
They cast up their causeways against me ;*
13. *They tear up my path,
They help on my hurt,—
They who themselves are helpless !*
14. *They come on as through a wide breach,
They sweep up through the ruins :*
15. *Terrors are turned upon me ;
They chase mine honour like a storm-blast,
So that my welfare passeth like a cloud.*
16. *And now my soul poureth itself out within me,
For days of misery take hold upon me !*
17. *The Night pierceth and rendeth my bones within me,
And my torment knoweth no pause ;*
18. *By its great force it is changed into a garment,
It girdeth me like the collar of my tunic.*
19. *He hath cast me into the mire,
And I have become like dust and ashes.*
20. *I cry to Thee, and Thou answerest me not ;
I stand up, and Thou eyst me :*
21. *Thou art changed and become very cruel to me,
And dost press me hard with thy strong hand !*
22. *Thou hast caught me up and made me to ride on the blast,
And causeth me to vanish in the crash of the storm ;*
23. *For I know that Thou wilt bring me to death,
To the house of assembly for all living.*
24. *Prayer is vain when He stretcheth forth his hand,
When men cry out at his calamity.*
25. *Have not I wept with him whose day was hard ?
Hath not my soul been grieved for the needy ?*
26. *Yet when I waited for good there came evil,
And darkness when I looked for light !*
27. *My breast boils and is unquiet ;
Days of anguish have overtaken me.*
28. *Dark, but not from the heat of the sun, I pass along,
I stand up, I cry aloud in the assembly :*
29. *I have become a brother to jackals,
And a companion to the ostrich brood :*

30. *My skin blackeneth and peebleth off,
And my bones burn with heat.*
31. *My harp is changed to mourning,
And my pipe to notes of grief.*

CHAP. XXXI.—1. *I made a covenant with mine eyes :
How, then, could I look upon a maiden ?*

2. *What then would have been my portion from God above,
And what my inheritance from the Almighty on high !*
3. *Doth not calamity overtake the wicked,
And misfortune them that do evil ?*
4. *Doth not He behold all my ways,
And count up all my steps ?*
5. *If I have walked with falsehood,
Or my foot hath hasted after deceit,—*
6. *Let Him weigh me in an even balance,
And God will know my integrity ;—*
7. *If my step hath turned out of the path,
And mine heart hath gone after mine eyes,
And any stain hath stuck to my palms,*
8. *Then let me sow and another eat,
And let my harvest be rooted up.*
9. *If my heart hath been ensnared by a woman,
And I have lain in wait at my neighbour's door,*
10. *Then let my wife grind for another,
And let others enjoy her embraces :*
11. *For this is a great infamy.
Yea, it is a crime for the judges ;*
12. *It is a fire which eateth down to Abaddon,
And would have rooted up all my increase.*
13. *If I had despised the cause of my manservant,
Or of my handmaiden, when they strove with me,*
14. *What then could I have done when God arose,
And when He visited, what answer could I have made Him ?*
15. *Did not He that made me in the belly make him ?
Did not One fashion us both in the womb ?*
16. *If I have withheld the poor from their desire,
And caused the eyes of the widow to pine ;*

17. *If I have eaten my morsel alone,
That the fatherless should not partake thereof :*
18. (*But from my youth hath he grown up with me as with a father,
And her have I guided from my mother's womb :*)
19. *If I have seen any perish for lack of clothing,
Or the needy destitute of covering,*
20. *And his loins have not blessed me
When warmed by the fleece of my flock :*
21. *If I have shaken my fist at the orphan
When I knew the judges would favour my suit,—*
22. *May my shoulder fall from its socket,
And mine arm be broken at the joint !*
23. *For calamity from God was my dread,
And I could not do it because of his Majesty.*
24. *If I have made gold my hope,
And said to the fine gold, " O thou my trust !"*
25. *If I have exulted that my wealth was great
And that my hand had gotten much ;*
26. *If when I beheld the sun as he shone,
And the moon as she walked in splendour,*
27. *My heart was secretly beguiled,
And my hand kissed my mouth :*
28. (*This, too, were an offence for the judge,
For I should have denied God above :*)
29. *If I have rejoiced in the adversity of him that hated me,
Or exulted when evil found him out :*
30. (*Nay, I did not suffer my mouth to sin
By invoking a curse on his life :*)
31. *If the men of my tent have not exclaimed,
" Who is there that is not sated with his viands ?"*
32. (*The stranger did not lodge in the street,
I opened my door to the wayfarer :*)
33. *If, after the manner of men, I have covered my sin,
Hiding my wickedness in my bosom,*
34. *Because I feared a great assemblage,
And the scorn of the tribes affrighted me,
So that I kept silence, and left not my tent. . . .*
35. *" O that I had One who would hear me !—
Here is my signature !—that the Almighty would answer me !
That my Adversary would write out his indictment !*

36. *Would I not carry it on my shoulder,
And bind it about me like a chaplet ?*
37. *I would tell him the very number of my steps,
I would draw near Him like a prince !*
38. *If my land hath cried out against me,
Or any of its furrows have wept ;*
39. *If I have eaten its fruit without payment,
Or have caused its owners to sigh out their life :*
40. *Let the thistle spring up instead of wheat,
And instead of barley noisome weeds !*
- The pleas of Job are ended.*

Of all his losses, that which touches him most deeply, which therefore he puts in the forefront of his complaint, is the loss of that habitual and intimate communion with God which had been his chief good. This loss he laments again and again in the opening Verses of his Elegy (Chap. xxix. *Verses 2-5*). "O that I were as in months of old !" he cries—in months *of yore*, that is, as the Hebrew indicates, which lie far back in the distant past : so far are they removed from him now that he looks back on them through a blinding mist of grief, now that his eyes are dimmed by that crowning sorrow, "remembering happier things." The happiest he remembers, the sum and origin of all his happiness, is that God was with him, that God's lamp shone over his head, shedding a light on the darkest windings of his path, so that he neither fell nor strayed.

In thinking of the days that are no more,

too, the days that he most fondly recalls are not—and this lends a new touch of pathos to his lament—the days of careless and all-enjoying youth, but the more sober, settled, and steadfastly happy days of his ripe manhood ; not the *Spring* days, when he was sowing

his seed, but the golden *Autumn* days (*Verse 4*), when he was beginning to reap the fruit of all the works his hand had wrought, and to get "the profit of all his labour under the sun." *Then*, most of all, in the fruitful and honourable maturity of his life, he felt that his tent stood full in the sun of the Divine favour, and that he was admitted to that sacred fellowship with the Giver of all good which is both life and better than life.

In studying the details of the pathetic description, which commences with *Verse 6*, we must bear in mind, on the one hand, that Job lingers on the details of these happy Autumn days mainly because he finds in them tokens and proofs of the goodwill with which God then regarded him; and that, on the other hand, in this description of his past felicity there is a constant sub-reference to his present distress. He never forgets the tempest, the catastrophe, which hurried him at a stroke from the wealth of an early Autumn into the cold and poverty of a sudden Winter. Even when he does not draw out the contrast, he has it in his thoughts, and is for ever saying to himself—

Then was I as a tree
Whose boughs did bend with fruit; but in one night
A storm
Shook down my mellow hangings, nay, my leaves,
And left me bare to weather.

Remembering this, the Verses will go far toward interpreting themselves, so little is there in them to give us pause.

The images of *Verse 6*—milk, or cream, flowing in streams wherever he went, and the rock yielding him oil in lieu of water—are of course common Biblical

metaphors (Comp. Deut. xxxii. 13) for the lavish abundance of his Autumn days, when all nature was at peace with him, and loaded him with its richest gifts.

Verses 7-17 place him before us as a statesman and judge, as chief ruler and magistrate of his clan. When, as Boaz went up to Bethlehem, he left his estate and entered the adjacent city, he was received with the profoundest respect, all classes of the citizens vying with each other to do him honour. As he took his seat in the *broadway*, the spacious chambered recess in the Gate—answering to the Greek *agora* and the Roman *forum*—where public law was administered and public business despatched (*Verse 7*), the young men drew back and “hid themselves” in reverence, as unworthy even to salute a man so great: even the elders of the city rose as they saluted him, and “remained on their feet” till, *primus inter pares*, he sat down among them (*Verse 8*). The very princes “sat still with awful eye,” as if they knew their “soveran lord was by;” while the nobles hushed the loud voices of authority or strife, and sat waiting in attentive silence for his words (*Verses 9, 10*). But while nobles and princes were hushed, the poor and the distressed, all who had suffered wrong or feared oppression, broke forth in his praise, for they knew his tried and unstained integrity, his resolute and considerate benevolence (*Verses 11-13*). Justice, always a rare virtue with Eastern magistrates and potentates, was his delight, and made him the delight of the wronged and defenceless, nay, of the whole clan; insomuch that every ear that heard him blessed him, and every eye that saw him bore witness to him, while those who

had been ready to perish blessed him, and the widow's heart sang for joy. The world has long felt and confessed the charm of this wonderful passage. And *it must be felt*: to expend words on it would be but to mar or weaken it.

That this rare virtue *was* the secret of the favour and reverence in which he was held, he himself tells us in the fine phrase of *Verse 14*: "I put on righteousness, and it clothed me;" or, "*I put on, justice, and it put me on*" (So Gesenius: "Justitia indui, eaque me induit")—a phrase the meaning of which seems to be that, when he assumed the robe of justice, the man was lost in the judge, no private, and much less any corrupt, motive being suffered to influence his decisions. Voluntarily clothing himself with justice as with a garment, justice in its turn clung to him, became habitual to him, a second nature against which he could not sin. So far from having been guilty of the charges alleged against him by Eliphaz (Chap. xxii. 5-9); so far from having taken advantage of his brother's need, stripped the naked, withheld water from the faint and bread from the famishing; so far from sending widows away empty, and breaking the arms of the orphan, and favouring the cause of the strong and insolent, he had won the blessing of the widow and the fatherless; he had been eyes to the blind, and feet to the lame, and a father to the poor; he had even "*searched*"—expending much thought and labour and pains—into the cause of the alien, who had no claim save that of a common humanity; and he had smitten down insolent wickedness, and snatched its prey—the poor man's heritage—from its teeth (*Verses 15-17*).

Of a life so unsullied, illustrated and distinguished by a justice and beneficence so rare, it was no marvel that this honoured magistrate, this incorruptible judge, foreboded no evil, assumed that to-morrow would be as to-day, and even more abundant than to-day. Was not God with him, and for him? Was not the fear of the Lord the secret and inspiration of his justice? Why, then, should God desert him? With a conscience void of offence, why should he fear that God would desert him? So far from tormenting himself with any such fear, he had said within himself, "I shall die in the warm spacious nest which God has given me; and even death is far off."

If, however, our translation of it be correct, there is a curious metaphor in *Verse 18*: "I said I shall die in my nest, and multiply my days *like the phoenix*." The Authorized Version reads, "I shall multiply my days *like the sand*." And the Hebrew substantive, strange to say, will admit of either rendering, as in the original manuscripts the difference between the two meanings is indicated simply by a "jot" or dot. In the Babylonian copies the word is so pointed as to signify "phoenix," while in the Palestinian MSS. it is so pointed as to signify "sand." The only arguments, so far as I am aware, in favour of reading "sand" are these: (1) that the computation of the vast total of atoms—or "grains of sand," as the phrase then was—of which the world is composed was a favourite problem with the thinkers of antiquity; and (2) that in the Bible "the sands upon the seashore" is a common emblem of a vast and interminable number. Neither of these reasons carry much weight: the first can hardly, indeed, be called a reason at all; while the second loses its force directly we remember that the

Book of Job, though *in* the Hebrew Scriptures, is hardly *of* them, but holds a place apart. On the other hand, the common objection to the "phœnix" reading, that the phœnix is a purely fabulous bird, and that therefore no allusion to it is likely to be made in Holy Scripture, will hardly bear examination. For (1) we shall find that more than one fabulous creature, or, at the lowest, creatures so exaggerated as to become fabulous, are described in the closing Chapters of this very Poem. (2) The legend of the phœnix had a special vogue in Egypt, with which, as we have seen, our Poet had a close and intimate acquaintance; and in Arabia, with which he was connected by blood. (3) The legend found its way into ancient Hebrew tradition, which affirms the phœnix to be the most favoured of all creatures, because, when Eve offered the forbidden fruit to them all, the phœnix alone refused to eat of it; or, again, because, when Noah fed the creatures in the Ark, the phœnix alone sat still and mute, instead of clamouring for its food, that it might give the tasked and busy patriarch as little trouble as possible.¹ Nor does it seem reasonable to conclude that, while our Lord constantly illustrated "the things pertaining to the kingdom of God" by parables of fictitious persons and events, no inspired writer could have been suffered to draw an illustration from a fictitious and apocryphal bird. And (5) in the Verse itself there is one very strong reason why we should prefer this rendering: viz., that it falls in with and completes the figure—that it puts a bird into the nest—of the previous line:

I said, "I shall die in my *nest*,
And multiply my days like *the phœnix*."

¹ For the authorities for these traditions see Delitzsch *in loco*.

On these grounds most recent Commentators accept the rendering, and make Job, in his happy forecast of many days and much good, allude to the fabulous bird which, for its courtesy to Noah, received, according to the Hebrew legend, the gift of immortality, and, according to the Egyptian legend, lived for a thousand years, and then, setting fire to its nest, renewed its youth in the funeral pyre.

With *Verse 19* the figure changes, and we see the righteous man like as a tree planted by ever-flowing rivulets, and refreshed by the dew that lies all night on its branches, whose leaf withers not, whose fruit fails not. It was Job's hope that he might resemble such a tree as this, and that whatsoever he did would continue to prosper.

With *Verse 20* the figure changes again. And now he tells us he had trusted that his "glory," all that made life bright and honourable to him, would abide in undiminished splendour; and that his manly vigour, his power to defend and enjoy his "glory," would remain unimpaired, like the unstrung "bow," which renewed its strength and elasticity in his hand.

With *Verse 21* he passes from the bright hopes bred in him by his happy conditions, and resumes his autobiographical sketch, dwelling once more, in order to prepare us for the contrast of Chapter xxx., on the profound and loyal reverence in which he had been held by men of every degree. With patient and silent deference, he tells us, they waited for his counsel, or his decision, in their debates and disputes; his words being sweet and fruitful to them as morning-dew or summer-showers; his words being as final and decisive

as they were welcome, since, when *he* had spoken, they added no after-words to his (*Verses* 21–23). If he smiled on, or toward, any of them, they could hardly be persuaded that the condescension was intended for them; and yet, despite their bashful incredulity, they took good heed to intercept the smile, to catch it up and appropriate it, before it reached the ground (*Verse* 24).

The blending of kindness and authority in the two figures of *Verse* 25—the king and the comforter—is obvious; but to feel the propriety of the phrase, “*I sat . . . like one who comforteth the mourners,*” we must remember that among the Arabs, as among the Jews, the friend who assumed the office of “comforter” occupied a raised seat, while the mourners crouched on the ground around him.

Taken as a whole, the Chapter indicates a simple and primitive organization of the aristocratic type, not unlike that which we find in Homer, but in full accordance with the deference to pure descent and noble birth which has always characterized the Arab race; while it also denotes a social condition much more complex and advanced, and in form much more civic and municipal, than we commonly associate with the habits of that race, although a tolerably exact parallel to it may still be found in the large and populous cities of Central Arabia.

As we pass to the opening Verses of *Chapter xxx.*, we may well ask :—

What are these,
So wither'd, and so wild in their attire,
That look not like inhabitants o' the earth,
And yet are on't ?

They *are* men, but men "whom the vile blows and buffets of the world" had made vile, and "so incensed, that they were reckless what they did to spite the world;" men

So weary with disasters, tugg'd with fortune,
That they would set their life on any chance,
To mend it or be rid on't.

From the earliest times Commentators have agreed that we have in Verses 1-15 a graphic sketch of an abject troglodyte race, driven by superior force to take shelter in dens and caves of the earth. But Ewald was the first to suggest that these troglodytes were *the aborigines* of the Hauran, who had been invaded, conquered, and dispossessed by the superior race among whom Job sat as chief. "The men of whom Job here complains," says Ewald, "were the aboriginal inhabitants of these regions, who had long before been subjugated by the race to which Job's family belonged, and were reduced at length to such degradation, that those who would not be enslaved fled to the wilds and the natural coverts of the land, where they led a stunted and miserable life; and who, whenever they ventured near in quest of relief, were driven forth from society with abhorrence, as worthless despicable creatures." The suggestion was so happy, and tallies so exactly with all the details of these Verses, that it is now generally and gratefully adopted.

Dispossessed, despised, and despicable aborigines such as these are to be found in every region of the East. We are having our own troubles with them to-day in the lofty passes and branching valleys of the great mountain-range which separates Hindostan from Afghanistan: we find them, indeed, a constant trouble

and peril in all the border-districts of India. As a rule, these aboriginal races are of an inferior strain and stature to the races that have conquered them and seized their ancient haunts ; they are commonly driven to take refuge in the hills, while their conquerors settle on the well-watered fruitful plains ; their language is rude and harsh, and often a differentiated strain, speaking a different tongue, may be found in the adjacent valleys of the same great mountain-range. Aliens in form, aspect, language, customs, complexion, incapable of any settled industry, robbers by necessity as well as by choice, repulsive in appearance, fierce and intractable in temper, they are at once feared, hated, and scorned by the more civilized races who have displaced them.

All these features, common to many tribes, come out in the vagabond and villainous, but most miserable, race—base by birth and base by habit (Verse 8)—depicted by Job in Verses 1-15. But why does he depict them so carefully ? Why does he break off from the exquisite and flowing description of his Autumn days in order to depict them ? Mainly, no doubt, to enhance the effect of his description by force of contrast ; to paint in the dark background against which the figure of the upright judge and beloved philanthropist will stand out more distinctly. The position and public esteem he once, and long, enjoyed, will impress us the more deeply if we see him for a moment as he lies on the *mezbele*, and learn how

all indign and base adversities
Make head against his estimation ;

how utter and miserable a change has passed upon him.

And surely nothing could feelingly persuade us of that change if the contrast he now dashes in does not. Once, the young men of his own tribe, even though they were nobles or princes of the tribe, had drawn back in reverence, as unworthy of his salute ; but now "they that are younger" than he, lost to the immemorial respect for age, make him their derision, even though they be the sons of "sires whom he had disdained to rank with the dogs who watched his flocks" (*Verse 1*), sons of the miserable outcasts who, for lack of steadfast purpose and settled industry, could do nothing well (*Verse 2*), nor even be trusted as men trust a dog. If there is a tone of contempt in these Verses, we must not therefore assume that Job had never looked with an eye of pity on the abject and irreclaimable outcasts who now made him their mock ; for these, too, were among the perishing and helpless whom he had habitually befriended (Chap. xxix. 12, 13) and delivered. From Chapter xxiv. Verses 4-8, we learn that he had often brooded over their miserable fate ; that their misery had been a prominent factor in that standing problem of the Divine Providence which had engaged and engrossed his thoughts ; that he had often wondered why, under the rule of a God both just and kind, any race or class of men should have been condemned to conditions so hopeless and degrading ; that he had even resented the misery and oppression to which they were exposed. And from *Verse 3* onwards, after this brief touch of contempt provoked by their unprovoked insults, his description of them blends many strokes of pity and compassion with his natural resentment of their insolence and malignity. It is "want" that makes them lean and pithless ; it is

“famine” that drives them to “gnaw the desert,” as if they were brutes rather than men, and to snatch from it a scanty and innutritious sustenance ; it is

For fear that day should look their shames upon,
that

They wilfully themselves exile from light,
And must for aye consort with black-brow'd night,

in “the land of darkness, waste and desolate,” hiding themselves in the secret places of the earth, in the shadows of the hills, in the caves of the rock, in “rough caves cut out in the precipitous sides of nullahs, or dried-up watercourses.”¹ Here, in the hills and on the steppe, they are driven, for lack of better food, to browse on the buds and young leaves of the “sea-purslain,” or “salt-wort,” a shrub which still grows both in the desert and on the sea-coast, and is still eaten by the abject poor of the East ; and to devour the bitter but edible root of “the broom,” or *genista*, as the Indians of Florida do to this day (*Verses* 3, 4).

The art of our necessities is strange,
That can make vile things precious,

even things so vile as these.

If, moreover, weary of their hard lot, they venture near the cities or estates of civilized men, these miserable pilferers are instantly driven back to the gorges and caves from which they emerged ; men shout after them as after thieves, which in very deed they are (*Verses* 5, 6). Their very language is an offence to

¹ The village of Raghā Migana, among the Afghan hills, is described as consisting of such “caves” in the “Daily News” of the very day (March 11, 1879) on which these sentences were written.

civilized ears, as the language of most savage races, with its growling gutturals and sharp clicks, commonly is. Herodotus compares that of the troglodyte Ethiopians to the screech of the night-owl, just as Job compares that of the troglodytes of the Hauran to the "bray" of the ass (*Verse 7*). Their customs, of which Job marks one, are no less offensive, no less sure to disgust all cleanly livers; they "huddle together in heaps among the bushes," without distinction of age or sex, seeking a miserable warmth by close contact with each other. With so much to disgust and repel a race like that of Job, singularly cleanly in its habits, singularly proud of the purity of its blood and of the soft picturesque beauty of its language, what wonder that these abject creatures, "baseborn and base," should be scourged out of the land so often as they ventured to set foot within it (*Verse 8*)?

Yet even these miserable wretches, whom he regards with a strange yet natural mixture of compassion and aversion, now turn against Job, and make *him* their by-word, loading him with the most extreme and filthy insults (*Verses 9, 10*)! Because God has let loose his anger against him, they also throw off all restraint, all fear, all decency even (*Verse 11*). This allusion to God as the real author of all his woe and shame is a quiet stroke of art, preparing the way for the second section of this Chapter (*Verses 16-31*), in which Job makes his last appeal against the apparent injustice and cruelty of the Almighty. But, for the present, his mind is mainly occupied with the cruel injustice of man, of those who, though they wore the form of man, he could hardly deem worthy of the name. His soul is exceeding filled with the contempt,

not of the proud—that were a less intolerable fate—but with the contempt of the abject and contemptible. As he broods over their dastardly and unprovoked insolence, his imagination stirs and works, till their insolent enmity presents itself to him under the form of a military siege.

In his time, and for many a long century after, those who attacked a walled city threw up a military “causeway” before it. Commencing at a distance from the walls, and sheltering themselves under cover of their shields and tortoises, they gradually built up a broad slope to the level, or nearly to the level, of the lofty wall. Along this slope, when it was complete, the troops advanced to the assault, clambering over the wall when they reached it, or, if it were still too high, battering it down with their beetles and rams. This is the image elaborated in *Verses* 12–15. The horde or rabble of outcasts, who were themselves helpless, advanced against him, who, like them, had no helper; the sense of their own destitution breeding no ruth in them, but rather inflaming their cupidity and insolence. “They cast up their causeways” against him; they make breach on breach in the wall; they sweep up through the ruins which they themselves have made; and, as he flees in terror from the irresistible attack, they chase him from street to street like a blast. All refuge is closed against him, all hope of escape taken away; so that his “welfare” vanishes like an unsubstantial and passing cloud.

Of course we must not take all this literally. It is but a figure, but it is a figure which shews how deeply Job had been wounded by the insolence of men who but a little while since would not have dared to brook his mere glance.

At this point Job passes from the anguish caused him by the spurns and insults of the aboriginal hordes, to dwell once more on the foul and piercing torment of his loathsome disease. And as many critics find Verses 16-31 entirely out of place, and pronounce the tone of despair by which they are pervaded utterly inconsistent with the calm and pensive beauty of this exquisite Elegy, and with the convictions and hopes to which he had now attained (*Cf.* Chap. xix. 23-27), it is necessary that we should briefly consider what force there may be in this suggestion. But little force will be left in it, I submit, when the following considerations have been duly weighed.

1. If the power of this Elegy was to be enhanced by an explicit, as well as an implicit, contrast between Job's former happiness and present misery, it was but natural that, as he brooded over the insults of the "baseborn and base," and the foul torment of his terrible leprosy, he should once more appeal against the hard injustice of his doom.

2. The presence and favour of God, which he so fondly recalls, had been the sum and crown of his felicity in the happy Autumn days which he "prizes to their worth" now that they are gone. How, then, could he fail to bemoan the absence and disfavour of God as the source of all his misery? how fail to feel, and to accentuate, the "change" in Him who, once always with him, would not now so much as answer when he cried to Him, and only eyed him with stern and cruel indifference when he stood up and mutely implored relief (Verses 20, 21)?

3. The very despair of Job reminds us of the real and standing problem of the Book. When he com-

plains that he has no hope but in death, and even longs to die, "that he may look on death no more" (Verse 23), we cannot but remember that this despair of all relief on this side the grave was the very condition of his trial. The charge made against him was that he did not serve God for nought; and how should his pure and disinterested piety be made apparent if all hope that he should be saved were not taken away? On the other hand, the fact that he was persuaded that God had determined "to bring him to death" (Verse 23), and that it was vain to try to turn Him from that purpose (Verse 24), by no means excludes the hope so splendidly and solemnly expressed in Chapter xix.; for that hope was that *by death* he should be saved from death, that even in Hades God would shew him a path of life.

4. And, after all, a careful study of these Verses shews that, on the whole, they are a plaintive lament over a happiness irredeemably and mysteriously lost, rather than a fierce outburst of passionate resentment such as we have often heard from Job before. It is no wild mutiny against the authority of Heaven, no crude and reckless impeachment of the Divine Rule, which meets us here; but, rather, a pathetic complaint of the cruel change in the attitude of God toward him (the "Thou art *changed*" of Verse 21 is the keynote of the whole passage), a change the more cruel because unaccountable and unprovoked. God had been moved against him, as God Himself confesses, "*without cause*;" and any one who will carefully study the Verses (Verses 20-24) in which the effects of this causeless but fatal change are most strongly expressed, and mark how they are led up to, and softened, and

toned down by the Verses which precede and follow them, will feel that, instead of charging God foolishly, Job is bewailing a change of which he can neither give nor hope to give any reasonable account.

This lament over the harsh and inscrutable contrast between the present and the past commences with *Verse 16*, in which he exclaims that, as the days of his misery come back and take hold on him once more, his very soul is poured out within him; *i.e.*, his soul, yielding itself without resistance to the intense pressure of his misery, is, as it were, crushed and dissolved into a mere stream of sorrow. There is no cessation to his pain. It rends him by night as well as by day (*Verse 17*), rends and gnaws his very bones; for the phrase translated, "My torment knoweth no pause," means literally, "My gnawers"—*i.e.*, my gnawing pains—"sleep not." The word is only used here and in *Verse 3*, and it implies that as the hungry aborigines "gnawed the desert," suffering nothing to escape them, so his cruel pains "gnaw" him. The allusion is, of course, to his foul disease, the *lepra Arabica*, which eats through the flesh, and feeds on the very bones, till the limbs fall off one by one. An Arabian historian, quoted by Wetzstein, says of Job: "God had so visited him that he got *the disease which devours the limbs*, and worms were produced in the wounds, while he lay on a dunghill, and, except his wife, who tended him, no one ventured near him."

Verse 18 is one of the most difficult, though one of the least important, Verses in the Poem. Most Commentators, however, are content to take it as denoting such changes and symptoms of disease in Job's out-

ward form as distorted his very mantle, and made his tunic cleave round his throat as though it would strangle him. The reading is so tame and prosaic at the best, and so nearly borders on the grotesque, that I venture to suggest that Job draws a bold figure from the foul and cleaving incrustations of his leprosy, and represents his very torment as becoming a kind of garment to him. Those who have suffered extreme and long-continued pain know very well how their torment seems to cover them, to cleave to them, and even to yield them a certain foul and miserable warmth. There are moods of pain, though perhaps few men know them, in which no figure would seem more natural and expressive than this :—

By its great force it is changed into a garment,
And girdeth me like the collar of my tunic.

And (*Verse 19*) it is *God* who has sent this cleaving choking torment upon him, which, casting him on the *mezbele*, has reduced him to “dust and ashes,” *i.e.*, brought him down to death.

Verses 20–24 contain that “outburst of despair” which has been thought inconsistent with the calmer tone of Job’s Soliloquy, and with any settled hope of life beyond the grave. But though there is deep pain in the passage, and poignant, or even passionate, regret at the changed and inexplicable posture which God has assumed towards him, I find no wild and reckless “outburst” in it, no bold and insolent impeachment of the Divine Justice; and though there is a settled despair of *life* in it, there is, I think, no such despair of death, or of what death may bring. In *Verse 20* Job simply asserts what was undeniably true—that if he called on God, God did not answer him; that if he “stood up.”

in mute and meek appeal, hoping that God would "look with an eye of pity on his losses," He did but regard him with cold indifference or stern displeasure—as an offended Eastern monarch might look on a disgraced courtier who stood up in the Divan, humbly reminding his lord of his presence, and suing for some sign of grace; just, indeed, as Saul, when he found that David was accepted in the sight of all the people, "*eyed* David from that day and forward" (1 Sam. xviii. 9). It is this *change* in God that Job accentuates in *Verse 21*. The Friend in whose favour alone he truly lived was turned to be his Foe, pressing him down with the strong hand and outstretched arm which had once been his defence and support; and hence he could say—

O that is gone for which I sought to live,
And therefore now I need not fear to die.

Life being gone—for with him life no longer than God's love would stay, since it depended on that love—there was no hope but in death; and the sooner *that* came the better. It could not but come soon. Caught up by the bitter wind of the Divine displeasure, he must vanish in the crash of the storm (*Verse 22*). The persistent silence of God, his dumb indifference to one on whom he had lavished every mark of grace, shewed that it was his settled purpose to put Job to death, to bring him down to Hades, which—surely not without some latent indication of hope—Job here calls "the house of assembly for all living" (*Verse 23*). Death, says Schiller, is universal, and cannot therefore be an evil; and surely all light, all hope, cannot be excluded from the house into which *all* the living pass at death. If, however, it be the Divine decree that he is to die,

it is vain to appeal against it; God is not to be moved by the outcries of men from the steadfast purpose of his will: when the word has gone forth out of his mouth, none can turn it back. So, at least, I understand *Verse 24*. But there is an alternative reading which demands consideration. Delitzsch, following Ewald, reads the Verse thus:—

Doth not one, however, stretch forth his hand in falling?
Doth he not, when being ruined, cry out for help?

and connects it with the context thus: "I must soon die. May I not, then, lift up my hand in appeal, and cry out for help before I die? I who have wept for others, may I not weep for myself?" Taken thus, the Verse yields a perfectly good and congruous sense. It is an appeal to the natural instincts and habits of men which justify Job in uttering his lament. But the former rendering carries the greater authority with it, I think, and yields a sense equally good and equally congruous with the general strain of thought.

To the merciful, God shews Himself merciful; to the unmerciful, without mercy. The cruel change in Him, then, which is the theme of Job's lament, might be accounted for had Job himself been wanting in sympathy and compassion. But (*Verses 25, 26*) his soul has been habitually "suffused with the tender hues of charity." It was because he had been generous and pitiful, as well as just, that he had cherished the hope of dying in his nest, and of renewing his vigour as the unbent bow renewed its spring in his hand. It was because when, on this competent warrant, he looked for good, evil came upon him, and darkness when he looked, and thought he had a right to look, for light, that his heart boiled within him, and he was overtaken

by days of anguish (*Verse 27*). It was not simply the defeat of his hopes, but their unjust defeat, which he resented; it was not simply his misery, but the unreasonableness of his misery—the mystery of it and the iniquity of it—which he mourned.

And that misery was so abject, as well as so inscrutable, that he might well cry out against it (*Verse 28*). Dark, not from the heat of the sun,¹ but from the fatal and corroding heat of his leprosy—which burns up his very bones, and blackens his skin till it falls off from him (*Verse 30*)—he is driven to outcries which he knows to be vain (*Verse 29*); outcries which to the by-standers are harsh and dissonant as those of the ostrich and the jackal, than which nothing can well be more harsh and dolorous. The howl of the jackal is one of the most tormenting discords of an Eastern night; while Dr. Shaw affirms that the ostrich also makes night hideous with the most doleful cries and groans; and Dr. Tristram adds that the cry of the ostrich, which even Hottentots have mistaken for the roar of the lion, sounds more like the hoarse lowing of an ox in pain. One of the Hebrew names for the ostrich means, according to some authorities, “daughter of the loud cry,” while another name for it is undoubtedly derived from a verb which means “to emit a tremulous and stridulous sound.”

This lament over the terrible ravages, and still more terrible moral effects, of his fatal and loathsome disease, closes with a Verse (*Verse 31*) of idyllic beauty and sweetness, which, so far from being out of place, is obviously and conspicuously appropriate, both as de-

¹ For a similar construction see Isa. xxix. 9: “Drunken, but not with wine:” i. e., not with wine, but with the Divine wrath.

noting the more softened tone and plaintive mood into which Job has fallen, and as fitly introducing the sweeter and purer strain of pensive recollection contained in the following Chapter. No careful reader of the Hebrew, or even of the English, can fail to notice the melodious close in which this section of Job's Elegy dies away. The Verse has a tender and a "dying fall." The harp and the pipe are instruments of mirth: and by the words,

My harp is changed to mourning,
And my pipe to notes of grief,

Job at once recalls his delights, and affirms that all his delights are now "converted to their opposites." The festive and joyous music of his life has broken into harsh discords; instead of merry tunes, nothing is to be heard but doleful and dissonant cries. In fine, as in the previous Chapter we have seen him in all the happy wealth and abundance of his Autumn prime, so in this Chapter

That time of year we may in him behold
When yellow leaves, or few, or none, do hang
Upon those boughs which shake against the cold,
Bare ruin'd choirs, where late the sweet birds sang.

S. COX.

A WORD STUDY IN THE NEW TESTAMENT.†

PART II.

It will be seen from this cursory survey that Greek philosophy was in some respects by its contents an anticipation, in others by its deficiencies a premonition, of the Biblical ethics of "blessedness." Not in *inwardness* shall we find the difference, but rather in the fun-

† See *Part I.* of this article in THE EXPOSITOR for May.