

# Theology on the Web.org.uk

*Making Biblical Scholarship Accessible*

This document was supplied for free educational purposes. Unless it is in the public domain, it may not be sold for profit or hosted on a webserver without the permission of the copyright holder.

If you find it of help to you and would like to support the ministry of Theology on the Web, please consider using the links below:



Buy me a coffee

<https://www.buymeacoffee.com/theology>



PATREON

<https://patreon.com/theologyontheweb>

[PayPal](#)

<https://paypal.me/robbradshaw>

---

A table of contents for *Bibliotheca Sacra* can be found here:

[https://biblicalstudies.org.uk/articles\\_bib-sacra\\_01.php](https://biblicalstudies.org.uk/articles_bib-sacra_01.php)

## ARTICLE II.

## INTERPRETATION OF THE TWENTY-EIGHTH CHAPTER OF JOB.

By E. P. Barrows, Jr., late Prof. Sacred Literature in Western Reserve College.

IN the very beginning of the Book of Job, the reader is put in possession of the key which unlocks all its mysteries. He is, as it were, placed on a mountain illumed by the sunshine of Divine revelation, and from that high eminence he looks down upon Job and his friends, and sees them wandering in darkness and error. This position brings him at once into the deepest sympathy with the patriarch, and invests with an indescribable interest the conflict between him and his friends. He understands perfectly that Job is afflicted, not because he is the worst, but because he is the best of men; that the flood of calamity which has overwhelmed him, does not come as a punishment for enormous deeds of wickedness (which is the ground taken by his three friends), but that it is intended to show to the principalities and powers above, both good and evil, the reality of his piety, and put to shame the accusations of Satan; while, considered in the light of discipline, it will be made in the end subservient to the highest welfare of the patriarch himself.

But from Job and his friends this key is withheld, and they are left to interpret the terrible succession of calamities as they best can. In the mind of the patriarch, the predominant feelings are amazement and dismay, mingled always with a firm consciousness of his own rectitude. He is overwhelmed with a sense of the greatness and majesty of him with whom he has to do, whose invisible and almighty strokes he can neither escape nor endure. Hear how affectingly he expostulates with God on this point: "When I say my bed shall comfort me, my couch shall ease my complaint; then thou scarest me with dreams, and terrifiest me through visions: so that my soul chooseth strangling and death rather than my life."<sup>1</sup> "Thou huntest me as a fierce lion: and again thou showest thyself marvelous upon me. Thou renewest thy witnesses against me, and increasest thine indignation upon me; changes and war are against me."<sup>2</sup> "Wherefore hidest thou thy face, and holdest me for thine enemy?"

---

<sup>1</sup> 7: 13—15.

<sup>2</sup> 10: 16, 17.

wilt thou break a leaf driven to and fro? and wilt thou pursue the dry stubble? For thou writest bitter things against me, and makest me to possess the iniquities of my youth. Thou puttest my feet also in the stocks, and lookest narrowly unto all my paths; thou settest a print upon the heels of my feet."<sup>1</sup> From this last passage, as well as from many others in Job's discourses, it is manifest that he does not mean to take the ground that he is sinless. "I know," says he in the beginning of his reply to the first speech of Bildad, "that it is so of a truth: but how should man be just with God? If he will contend with him, he cannot answer him one of a thousand."<sup>2</sup> As a member of the sinful family of Adam, Job is deeply conscious that he cannot stand before God a moment, if he proceed upon the principle of searching out and punishing all his transgressions. *This* rule of strict retribution must grind to powder not only himself, but his three friends, and all the rest of mankind. But he denies most earnestly both the *doctrine* of his friends concerning God's providence, which is that signal calamities, like those that have befallen himself, are always the manifestation of Divine vengeance for formal deeds of iniquity; and the cruel *charges* which they bring against him of being a hypocrite and a gross oppressor of his fellow-men. He has the testimony of his conscience that his life has been one unsullied by crime, and abounding in deeds of goodness and mercy; and he will not admit for a moment the justice of their accusations, or the pertinency of their exhortations to repentance and amendment, which are founded upon the assumed truth of these accusations.

And, so far forth as his friends are concerned, he gains a complete victory. He overthrows them and their arguments by an appeal to undeniable facts, and is left undisputed master of the hard-fought field. But, though he has silenced them, he has made no progress whatever towards the solution of the mystery of Divine providence in general; much less of the unprecedented calamities which have befallen himself. Over all this subject there still broods the darkness of the shadow of death. It is, in Job's own expressive words, "the land of darkness, and the shadow of death; a land of darkness, as darkness itself; and of the shadow of death without any order, and where the light is as darkness."<sup>3</sup> Often, in the progress of the conflict with his friends, has he passionately appealed to God for a hearing. He has entreated his Maker to appear, not in overwhelming and consuming majesty, but as a just and compassionate Judge,

<sup>1</sup> 13: 24—27.<sup>2</sup> 9: 2, 3.<sup>3</sup> 10: 21, 22.

that he may argue his cause with him. "Behold now, I have ordered my cause; I know that I shall be justified. Who is he that will plead with me? for now, if I hold my tongue, I shall give up the ghost. Only do not two things unto me: then will I not hide myself from thee. Withdraw thy hand far from me: and let not thy dread make me afraid. Then call thou, and I will answer: or let me speak, and answer thou me. How many are mine iniquities and sins? make me to know my transgression and my sin."<sup>1</sup> "O that I knew where I might find him! that I might come even to his seat! I would order my cause before him, and fill my mouth with arguments. I would know the words which he would answer me, and understand what he would say unto me. Will he plead against me with his great power? No; but he would put strength in me. There the righteous might dispute with him; so should I be delivered forever from my judge."<sup>2</sup> But to these expostulations God has made no reply. All remains, as at the beginning of the argument, veiled in impenetrable darkness.

On the one hand, Job is conscious of his own integrity, and will not for a moment admit the explanation which his friends give of his sufferings, that they are the effect of God's retributive vengeance for enormous deeds of wickedness. "God forbid," he says in the chapter immediately preceding the one now under consideration, "that I should justify you: till I die I will not remove mine integrity from me. My righteousness I hold fast, and will not let it go: my heart shall not reproach any of my days."<sup>3</sup>

On the other hand, he is as ready as his friends to ascribe righteousness to God. In the heat of debate, and under the pressure of extreme suffering, he has indeed manifested an impatient spirit, and said things which might bear another interpretation. But that he does not mean to bring against his Maker the charge of injustice, is manifest, as well from God's own testimony, as from the general spirit and tenor of his words. Though God, at the close of his trial, administers to him a severe rebuke for his presumptuous words — "Wilt thou also disannul my judgments? wilt thou condemn me that thou mayest be righteous?"<sup>4</sup> — yet he says to his three friends: "Ye have not spoken of me the thing which is right, like my servant Job;"<sup>5</sup> words which he would certainly not have used, if it had been the intention of Job to impeach the justice of his providential dealings with men.

The true position of Job, the only position, indeed, which he

<sup>1</sup> 13: 18—23.

<sup>2</sup> 23: 3—7.

<sup>3</sup> 27: 5, 6.

<sup>4</sup> 40: 2.

<sup>5</sup> 42: 7, 8.

could take, that should be opposed, on the one hand, to the doctrine of his friends; and, on the other, should be in harmony with God's righteousness, was that God's providence is one of inexplicable sovereignty; involving, for reasons beyond the comprehension of mortals, the righteous as well as the wicked in severe calamities. He himself sums it up in the following words: "This is one thing" (better, "It is all one" — all one in respect to exposure to destruction whether a man be righteous or wicked),<sup>1</sup> "therefore I said, He destroyeth the perfect and the wicked" — destroyeth them both alike; so that we cannot infer a man's character from God's providential dealings with him. In using these words the patriarch did not, of course, have in view the final and everlasting destruction of the soul, but such earthly destruction as had come upon himself. This, though an unguarded statement of God's providence, was still, for substance, correct. It was "the thing which is right" so far forth as that God does not deal with men in this world upon the simple principle of retribution, so that the wicked are uniformly punished, and the good uniformly exempted from suffering. The true key to God's providential dealings with men is, that *he is administering over a race of sinners*, every one of whom deserves at his hand any amount of suffering which he sees good to inflict, a *government of probation*, in the progress of which he dispenses to individuals good and evil upon a plan too deep to be comprehended by them in its particular allotments, but which, nevertheless, always has respect to the true end of probation, the trial and development of character with reference to a future retribution. But for this full knowledge of the cardinal principle, the hinge, so to speak, upon which Divine providence turns, we are indebted to the new light of the Gospel. The patriarch had but a dim and shadowy apprehension of it. He could only go so far as to plant his footsteps upon the ground of God's incomprehensible sovereignty in his dealings with men; and this was good and solid ground, on which he was able to maintain himself against all the assaults of his friends.

It is upon this very ground that Job plants his feet in the chapter under consideration. That *the ways of God are unsearchable* — this is the principal proposition developed in it. He has not, let it be carefully remembered, *denied* the justice of God; but he has maintained, and he maintains in this chapter, that, viewed on the side of the course of human affairs, it is enveloped in impenetrable clouds. With the wicked and their counsels he has no part; his integrity he will hold fast till he dies; most heartily does he acknowledge that

<sup>1</sup> 9: 22.

all true wisdom lies in the fear of the Lord. But this justice of God, and the final triumph of the righteous connected with it, is a matter of *faith* rather than of *sight*, to be maintained against all the perplexing events that occur in his providence.

The connection of this chapter with the preceding is obscure, and the difficulty of determining it is increased by the fact that to the last part of the twenty-seventh chapter (from the thirteenth verse to the end), two opposite interpretations have been given. Some (among whom may be named Barnes), following the example of Coverdale, who, in his version, supplies at the end of the twelfth verse, the word "*saying*," understand these words as a *repetition with disapprobation* of the arguments of his friends. But the majority of commentators maintain, and we think correctly, that they contain a statement of his own views.<sup>1</sup>

But, however this may be, the current of thought in the twenty-eighth chapter is very plain and simple, and may be stated in few words.

In penetrating into the dark recesses of nature, man accomplishes wonderful results. This is illustrated from the operations of the *miner*, who descends into the bowels of the earth, and brings to light her hidden treasures (vs. 1—11).

But to find wisdom (the *Divine* wisdom by which God made and governs the world, and which is here, as in the Book of Proverbs, personified), is a work which exceeds his utmost power. She cannot be gotten in exchange for gold and precious gems, neither can any man find the path to her house. God alone, who made and governs the world, understands her (vs. 12—27).

*Man's* wisdom lies in fearing the Lord and departing from evil (v. 28).

---

<sup>1</sup> "It should be considered that it was only in contending with his friends, who were continually depicting the calamity of the ungodly, for the purpose of showing the suffering patriarch that his present misery inferred a life of past sins, that Job was compelled to set forth in detail the opposing facts of experience, and show how with the wicked man himself things go well. This he did for the purpose of exhibiting the unfavorable conclusion of his friends in its true emptiness. Now that he has silenced his friends, he wishes to lead them to the right position for judging concerning his own sufferings. To this end he concedes to them their favorite doctrine concerning the misery of the ungodly. Only he wishes them to understand that nothing is thereby gained on their side; since his own innocence stands on as firm ground as the assertion of the unhappy consequences of viciousness. Since, then, the virtuous also suffers, there must be some other mysterious causes of human misery besides the commission of iniquity." — *Umbreit in loco*.

The foregoing simple train of thought, developed with unrivalled beauty and richness of imagery, and a wonderful freshness and glow of conception, gives us the passage under consideration, so enchanting, and so unique in its kind.

The only remaining question of a general nature which we shall consider, before entering upon the exegesis of the chapter, has respect to the use of the word "*wisdom*" in the last verse, as compared with that of the same word in the twelfth and several of the following verses. Is the wisdom which God commends to man in the last verse, the same wisdom of which the patriarch has been discoursing from the twelfth verse and onward; or is *this* a wisdom which belongs to God alone, while *man's* wisdom is of another kind, lying in the fear of God and the practice of righteousness?

One class of interpreters, of whom Sebastian Schmidt may be taken as a representative, understand the wisdom concerning which Job asks in the twelfth and twentieth verses: "But where shall wisdom be found?" "Whence then cometh wisdom?" to be the same which is defined in the last verse, as consisting in fearing the Lord and departing from evil. According to Schmidt the course of the argument is as follows:

Man has great skill in searching out and bringing to light the hidden treasures of the earth, a truth which the patriarch set forth elegantly and at large, in the first twelve verses; "while, on the contrary, wisdom or piety, as being a supernatural good, can neither be found in the frame of nature, nor known by man's own proper powers; but is given by God alone in a supernatural way, who, as his works (mentioned vs. 25, 26) show, possesses all wisdom, and imparts it to men; namely, the fear of the Lord, and departure from evil."<sup>1</sup> The distinction between *essential* wisdom (*sapientia essentialis*), which belongs to God alone, and *communicable* wisdom (*sapientia communicata*), does not, he thinks, belong to this chapter. God is said to understand the way of wisdom and to know her place (v. 23), not for *his own use* in governing the world, but for *the use of men* in guiding them to her, that is to himself, with whom alone wisdom dwells, and whose sincere worshippers alone are wise.

But the majority of commentators make the distinction above stated between the wisdom concerning which Job discourses from the twelfth to the twenty-seventh verse, and that which, in the last verse, God commends to man. So Mercer (who may stand as representa-

<sup>1</sup> Analysis of chapters xxvii. and xxviii.

tive of the other class of interpreters, in commenting on the twelfth verse), says: "It is properly the knowledge of all things" — *absolute or essential* wisdom — "and in this place, especially, that we may accommodate it to the course of the argument, the knowledge of God's secret judgments, as, for example, why he afflicts the pious and prospers the wicked; for this is what Job has affirmed, and what has given occasion to the present discourse."<sup>1</sup> And, in commenting on the twenty-eighth verse, he declares the meaning of Job to be "that God has revealed to man this particle of his own wisdom (*de sua sapientia Deum hanc particulam homini revelasse*), and has especially commended it to him, namely, that he should fear himself; while he has kept with himself the remaining parts of wisdom, has reserved them for himself, and concealed them from man, lest he should attempt things above his comprehension."<sup>2</sup>

Calvin takes substantially the same view of the passage now under consideration. "His scope is," he says, "to show that men will assume to themselves too much when they shall wish to comprehend the secret counsels of God, and to be ignorant of nothing. But that we may understand what this word *wisdom* means [the wisdom spoken of in the twelfth and twentieth verses], it is necessary to know that Job uses it to denote the knowledge of all things, and especially that which God would keep concealed from us, until he shall have given us that full revelation, which now he imparts to us only in a certain measure, and according to his knowledge of our wants."<sup>3</sup> And again: "From the conclusion, therefore, to which Job comes [in the last verse], we understand that the wisdom of men consists not in inquiring with a foolish and vain curiosity how they may know all things; but in keeping themselves within their own proper limits, and understanding what it is to worship God and be in subjection to him."<sup>4</sup> And once more: "Job, therefore, has, as it were, set these two things in contrast (*haec duo quasi e regione opposuit*), saying: Do men wish to be wise? It is not proper that they should seek to be wise in that way which is proper and peculiar to God."<sup>5</sup>

The same view is taken by Caryl, and also by the modern commentators generally; and we think with good reason: for,

*First*, it is in perfect harmony with the course of argument throughout the whole book.

*Secondly*, it is especially commended by verses 28—27, which

<sup>1</sup> Commentary on Job in loco.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid.

<sup>3</sup> Concio CII. in Librum Jobi.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid.

plainly describe that wisdom by which God made and governs the world. Compare 9: 1—10. xxv. xxvi. 36: 24—37: 24; and the whole of Jehovah's address to Job.

No one has more clearly expressed the scope of the whole chapter than J. D. Michaelis, in the words so often quoted by succeeding expositors: "But to man this wisdom [by which God made and governs all things] must remain inscrutable. To him God said: Trouble not thyself with inquiring how I govern the world; why I permit the tyrant to be victorious, or innocence and truth to be oppressed: decide not what evil I can or cannot suffer to exist in the world. This is too high for thee: let thy wisdom consist in fearing me, upon whose will all things depend, and provoking my wrath by no sins: for these I shall assuredly punish; and can, moreover, punish in this world, as often as I find it necessary to do so."<sup>1</sup>

To this general view of the course of thought in the chapter, we subjoin a

*Translation with Exegetical Notes.*

V. 1. For there is a vein for silver, and a place for gold which men refine.

There is no ground for neglecting as superfluous the particle **וְ**, which stands as the beginning of the verse, after the manner of J. D. Michaelis, Kessler, and others; or of weakening it down to a mere word of affirmation — *surely*, as is done by Mercer, Umbreit, Rosenmüller, and many others. The remark of Rosenmüller: "**וְ** h. l. non rationem proximorum indicat, sed latine est *sane, profecto, red-dendum, ut alias saepissime,*" is wholly unwarrantable. Such a use of the word is doubtful, and, at the best, exceedingly rare. It has here its true causal force — *for*. Beyond doubt Job means to *confirm* his previous course of argument; as much as to say: "*For* man, who has such skill in bringing to light the hidden treasures of the earth, is unable to comprehend the wisdom by which God made and governs the world; and, therefore, rash assertions respecting the inscrutable designs of God in afflicting men do not become him: *his* wisdom is to fear God and depart from evil." So, for substance, Ewald, Hirzel, and others of the recent commentators. — **מִיַּצֵּן**, here rendered *vein*, signifies (1) *the act of going forth*; (2) *the place whence a thing goes forth*, as **מִיַּצֵּן מַיִם**, *a going forth, i. e. fountain*,

<sup>1</sup> Deutsche Übersetzung des alten Testaments, mit Anmerkungen für Ungelehrte. Vol. IV. in loco.

of water; (3) *the thing which goes forth*, in the expression  $\text{מִן־הַמַּיִם}$   $\text{מִן־הַמַּיִם}$ . Here it seems to be used in the second of the above senses to denote a place whence silver comes, a mine. —  $\text{לְמַעַן יִרְדּוּ בָּהֶן יְהוּדִים}$ , for gold [which] men refine, by a common ellipsis of  $\text{יְהוּדִים}$ . The addition, *which men refine*, seems to indicate simply the high value which they set upon it.

V. 2. Iron is taken from the dust, and stone is melted into brass.

We may take  $\text{קָצַף}$  as a passive part. Kal from  $\text{קָצַף}$  (for  $\text{קָצַף}$  is sometimes masc.), *stone is poured out brass*, i. e. poured out as a melted mass, thus becoming brass; or, perhaps better, as fut. Kal from  $\text{קָצַף}$ , *one pours out stone brass*, i. e. melts stone into brass, or copper. The double accusative here comes under the case of making one thing into another, as in the example given by Rödiger (§ 186, 2),  $\text{וְתַעֲשֶׂה אֹהֶל אֶת־הַשֵּׁן בַּשֵּׁן}$ , and thou shalt make it into an oil, Ex. 30: 25. *Stone* means, of course, *stone-like ore* of copper.

V. 3. He putteth an end to darkness, and searcheth to every extremity: the stones of darkness and death-shade [he searcheth].

The subject of the first clause is *man*, i. e. *the miner*. By penetrating with his lamp into the recesses of the earth he puts an end to the darkness which has dwelt there from the beginning of the world. — The words  $\text{לְכָל־תְּהִלָּתֶךָ}$  may be rendered, *to all perfection*, i. e. *most perfectly* (*ad exactissimam usque rationem*, Schultens; *auf's vollkommenste*, De Wette, Ewald; *completely*, Barnes); or, with Gesenius, Noyes, and others, *to every extremity, to the deepest recess*. In truth, the distinction between the two significations, *end* and *perfection*, is very evanescent. Like the colors of the rainbow they melt into each other. The words of Zophar: "Canst thou find out the Almighty unto perfection?" ( $\text{עַד־תְּהִלָּתוֹ}$ ), might be equally well rendered: "Canst thou find out the Almighty to the end?" i. e. of his being, or attributes. — *The stones of darkness and death-shade*, are the stones (*stone-ore*) that have lain for ages in the dark recesses of the earth.

V. 4. The stream bursts forth from where the [underground] stranger is — [the men] who are forgotten of the foot [above], they dwindle [from view], they wander [far] from man.

The above translation of this exceedingly obscure verse agrees mainly in the first clause with that of Umbreit. We give also the one proposed by Gesenius, which in several important respects had

been long before advocated by Schultens, and which is followed by almost all of the recent commentators.

He [the miner] breaketh a shaft (i. e. forms a shaft by breaking through the earth) away from where men dwell: forgotten of the foot (i. e. not supported by the foot) they hang down far from men, they swing to and fro.

This version agrees well with the context. The only question is, whether the *usus loquendi* will admit it. We will take up the original, clause by clause.

נִחַל פָּרַץ, rendered by Umbreit, a stream bursteth forth, a version which gives to both words their ordinary meaning; by Gesenius, *He breaketh a shaft*, i. e. forms a shaft by breaking through the earth (the "*Accusativus factitivus*").— פָּרַץ, with the Accusative, means to break down, demolish; to break asunder, disperse; but in no passage to form by breaking through or into, unless the present be the passage. Again, נִחַל means both a stream of water, and a water-channel, or valley watered by a stream; but nowhere, unless here, a shaft, passage through the earth.

מִן-צֵדִים, literally, from with the stranger or sojourner. This Gesenius explains to mean, from where men dwell, i. e. sojourn above ground; and he approves of R. Levi's interpretation, מִן-צֵדִים אֲשֶׁר גָּר, for the fuller מִן-צֵדִים אֲשֶׁר גָּר אֲשֶׁר גָּר, from where man dwells. Umbreit renders the words, at the stranger's side (an des Fremdlings Seite). This translation is justly criticised by Hirzel, as sinking the force of the preposition מִן. The particle מִן expresses the idea that the stream breaks out by the miner, the other particle מִן, that it flows off from where he is into the passages of the mine. The miner is called a stranger, as being not at home in the bowels of the earth, but only, as it were, a visitor there.

Though Gesenius does not adopt the above interpretation, he nevertheless states it in his Thesaurus, under the word צֵדִים, in as lucid and satisfactory a manner as any one of its advocates could wish.<sup>1</sup>

הַנִּשְׁכָּחִים מִן-רֶגֶל, who [the miners] are forgotten of the foot; the article before the participle is to be resolved into the relative in English. The plural number has reference to רֶגֶל, which has a collective sense. According to Schultens, Gesenius, and many others, the miners are said to be forgotten of the foot, because the foot has,

<sup>1</sup> "Prorumpit torrens a latere peregrini, pro ab eo ubi peregrinatur, sc. fossor, ita ut intelligantur aquae e cuniculis subterraneis subito juxta fossorem in terras penetralibus peregrivantem erumpentes specusque metallicos inundantes."

as it were, forgotten to perform its office for them, that is, they hang in the shaft unsupported by the foot. Ewald supplies after *foot*, the words *that treads upon the mountain* (*der den Berg betritt*). The meaning will then be that they are forgotten by the foot that treads the mountain above them — *foot* for *foot-traveller*. This is the simpler interpretation of the two.

גָּלוּ מֵאֲנָשׁוֹת נָעוּ, generally rendered, *they hang down far from men, they swing to and fro*. The appositeness of this sense is a strong recommendation of it. The commentators quote here the words of Pliny: "Is qui caedit funibus pendet, . . . pendentes majore ex parte librant, et lineas itineri praeducunt. Itaque insistentis vestigiis hominis locus non est"<sup>1</sup> — although the reference is here to men hanging over the sides of precipices. But that in all ages the miners, in descending to their subterranean toil, have "hung down far from men, and swung to and fro," is a fact too well known to need the support of quotations. Still it were desirable that for the verb גָּלוּ the meaning *to hang down* could be made out more clearly. Only two passages are adduced by Gesenius, the present, and the doubtful passage in Prov. 26: 7, where he himself admits that the reading should probably be גָּלוּ = גָּלוּ, from גָּלוּ. The argument, however, from the cognate languages has weight, and this may be the true idea here. — That the verb נָעוּ admits in Kal the meaning *to vibrate, swing back and forth*, may be maintained from 1 Sam. 1: 13, הִסְתַּחֲפֶהָ נָעוּ, *her lips were moving*, i. e. back and forth; and Isa. 7: 2: "and his heart was moved (וַיִּנְעַב לִבּוֹ) and the heart of his people, like the moving of the trees of the forest (בְּנוֹעַ עֲצֵי-יַעַר) before the wind;" though we may understand the word in this latter passage of the *trembling* of the heart and the leaves of the trees. In Hiphil the verb signifies *to swing*, in a causative sense, *to shake back and forth*; and if we give to the first verb the meaning, *to hang down*, this will naturally (though not necessarily) take that of *swinging to and fro*.

We have proposed in the translation another sense, which may perhaps be derived from the admitted usages of the word. We assume for the proper meaning of the root גָּלוּ, *to be thin, attenuated* (compare גָּלוּ, *tenuis, macer*; then, *pauper, humilis*). Applied to the body, or the eyes, this will mean *to pine*, and to streams, *to dwindle away, dry up*: "the streams of Egypt וַיִּלְלוּ וַיִּבְּרוּ — *dwindle away, and dry up*."<sup>2</sup> Taking this last sense of the word, with only such a modification as the subject requires, and taking, with Ewald, נָעוּ in the com-

<sup>1</sup> Hist. Nat. L. XXXIII. § 21.<sup>2</sup> Isaiah 19: 6.

mon signification, to *wander*, we may, perhaps, render the clause thus: *they dwindle* [from view] (that is, to the eyes of those above, they grow smaller and less distinct as they descend, till they vanish in the darkness); *they wander* [far] *from man*. This explanation approaches to one suggested by Schultens: "*attenuantur prae homine, in profundum demissi, ut non amplius homines videantur, sed Manes et Umbrae mortuorum.*" But he connects אֵץ with מְאֹנֵץ in the sense of *more than man*, so as no longer to appear men. If this connection of the words be preferred, we may render: *they vanish away from men, they wander about*; i. e. in the recesses of the earth. The punctators, however, have closely connected the words מְאֹנֵץ אֵץ by the conjunctive accent *Munahh*, while they have attached to אֵץ the distinctive *Tiphha*.

To the interpretation of Umbreit, which is, in its most essential features, the one which we have advocated above, Hirzel objects (1) That it makes the subordinate (*with*) in אֵץ the main idea. This objection is obviated by the modification — *away from where the sojourner is*, which retains the true force of both prepositions. (2) That the whole connection requires the discourse to be concerning what the miner *does* (von einer *Thätigkeit* des Bergmannes). And so it is. For the implied idea is that the bursting forth of the subterranean stream is in consequence of *his work* underground, and that it takes place where he is at work. (3) That this interpretation destroys the progressive character of the description — first the *sinking* of the shaft, then the *entering* it. In the rugged and abrupt style of the book of Job, this objection is of little account. The order of thought, moreover, in the interpretation advocated, is entirely natural. The mention of the miners as *strangers* in the deep recesses of the earth, leads the speaker to think of their lonely condition, forgotten of the foot that walks over their heads; and how, in descending to their work, they vanish from the sight of those above, and wander far away from the abodes of man.<sup>1</sup>

V. 5. The earth — out of her cometh bread; and under her it is turned up as fire.

So with Barnes we understand this verse. The passive form אֵץ אֵץ

<sup>1</sup> The common English version gives the above verse as follows: "The flood breaketh out from the inhabitant; *even the waters* forgotten of the foot: they are dried up, they are gone away from men." The translators probably understood these words of a stream bursting out from where men dwell, and then flowing off into an uninhabited desert, where its waters are *forgotten* (unfrequented) of the human foot, and where they soon dry up and disappear.

contains in itself an indefinite subject for which it is not necessary to find any specific name; and this subject — the bowels of the earth, of course, for substance — is compared with fire, not absolutely, but with reference to the action expressed in the verb; i. e. the bowels of the earth, *as turned up by the miner*, sparkle like fire with precious gems.<sup>1</sup> The following verse speaks expressly of gems, and these are called by Ezekiel, “stones of fire,” 28: 14, 16. Compare also the examples given by Gesenius from Latin poets: “*arcano florentes igne smaragdi*,” and “*scythici ignes*” pro smaragdis scythiacis.<sup>2</sup> With the above interpretation, agree for substance the English version, and the Septuagint: ὑποκάτω αὐτῆς ἐστράφη ὡσεὶ πῦρ.

Almost all the commentators render the last clause: *underneath she is turned up as by fire* (אֶל מִן הַמָּוֶה, *as fire* [turns up]). “This verse,” says Umbreit, “must be treated as a sentimental reflection. It is as if man could be called ungrateful toward the bounteous earth in laying waste and destroying her bowels out of which she yields him nourishment.” But such a sentimental conceit ill becomes the heavy, massive character of the thoughts in this book. If one prefers this translation, the sense will be: the earth from her surface yields bread, while her recesses are turned up as by subterranean fires, for the sake of the treasures which they contain.

V. 6. Her stones are the place of the sapphire; and it has clods of gold.

We refer the word מְקוֹם-סַפִּיר to מֶלֶךְ. The place of the sapphire also furnishes clods of gold, i. e. *gold-ore*. Some refer it to the miner: *he has*, as the reward of his toil, *lumps of gold-ore*.

Vs. 7, 8. [His] path — the eagle hath not known it; and the vulture's eye hath not seen it.

The sons of pride (proud wild beasts) have not trodden it; the lion hath not passed over it.

A poetic amplification of the miner's power in penetrating into the dark interior of the earth. Respecting the species of birds here mentioned there is doubt (see the lexicon); but all agree that they are birds of prey distinguished for keenness of vision. The beasts specified, on the other hand, are those preëminent for strength and daring. From the deep recesses to which neither the *keen eye* of the eagle and vulture, nor the *strength and courage* of the lion can penetrate, the miner brings up his rich spoils.

<sup>1</sup> Compare Krüger's Latin Grammar, § 298, and the examples there given, as: *Cato senex mortuus est; cecinit ut vates*.

<sup>2</sup> Thesaurus, art. מֶלֶךְ.

V. 9. He putteth forth his hand upon the flint; he overturneth mountains from their roots.

According to Schmidt, the subject of this verse is God, who alone is able to perform so great a work; and he says: "It is well-nigh ridiculous that some should dare to refer this to miners." But from the celebrated passage in Pliny's Natural History, so often quoted, from Schultens to the present day (L. XXXIII § 21), it appears that this was literally true in the mining operations of the ancients. He describes *three ways* in which gold is obtained; (1) in the sand washed down by streams (*fluminum ramentis*); (2) by sinking shafts (*putei*), bruising and grinding the ore that is brought up from them, and washing it upon layers of a rough furze called *ulex*, which retains the particles of gold. The furze is then dried and burned, and the ashes are washed; (3) by the demolition of mountains (*ruina montium*), of which he says: "The third method may be said to have surpassed the works of the giants." The process, according to his description, is as follows: The mountains are first hollowed out (*cauantur*) by passages (*cuniculi*) carried in (evidently in a lateral direction from their bases) to a great distance by the light of lamps. Frequent arches (*fornices*) are left for supporting the superincumbent mountains. When their work is completed, they cut away the necks of the arches at their extremity (*cervices fornicum ab ultimo caedunt*<sup>1</sup>), and give a signal to the workmen to retire; when the mountain breaking falls, separating itself to a great distance from the remaining mass (*mons fractus cadit ab se longe*), with a crash beyond the power of the human mind to conceive, and an incredible wind.

He immediately adds, that another work remains of equal labor and greater expense, which is to bring streams from the ridges of the mountains to wash this ruin (*ad lavandam hanc ruinam*). And he describes at some length the labor of bringing these streams from the highest parts of the mountains, over valleys in canals, and along impassable precipices, where the workmen are suspended by ropes. At the brows of the mountains, whence the water is to be sent down, pools are hollowed out, the dimensions of which he states at two hundred feet square and ten feet deep. When the pools are full, the water is let out through openings of about three square feet each,

<sup>1</sup> The following is the explanation which Harduin gives of these words: "Terrena fornicum fulcra, seu fulcimenta, summa ipsorum parte, qua fornices proxime attingunt ac sustinent, ibi caedunt: ut fulcris deficientibus mons substat."

with such force that it hurls along rocks in its course (*tanta vi ut saxa provolvat*). A further labor remains on the level ground below. Ditches are dug through which the water may flow off, and these are spread with layers of the furze mentioned above, which retain the particles of gold.

From Pliny's description, of which we have only given the chief heads, it is manifest that the object of the miners in thus "overturning the mountains from their roots," is to break them in pieces by the concussion, in order that (after a further comminution, as we may well suppose), they may subject them to the washing process which he describes. The account bears the air of exaggeration in respect, at least, to the amount of the mass thrown down at one time. This cannot extend far back into the mountain; otherwise it must be supported by many columns one behind another, and how could these be all cut away? Moreover, the mass would not in that case fall "*ab se longe*,"<sup>1</sup> but settle directly down, and nothing valuable be accomplished for the miner. It is evidently an exaggeration of the same process by which we see banks undermined and demolished at the present day, by successive falls from their outer edges; only that here the operations of the miners are upon a vast scale.

V. 10. He cleaveth streams in the rocks; and his eye beholdeth every precious thing.

*He cleaveth streams*, i. e. cutteth out channels for streams; whether for the purpose of conveying away the water that it may not hinder him in his labors, or of using it in the operations of mining, is uncertain. But, however this may be, there is no good reason for departing here from the usual signification of the word *אֲרָרִים*, as is done by Gesenius and others, who render it *shafts*, acknowledging, at the same time, that no other instance of this signification can be adduced.

V. 11. He bindeth up the streams from trickling; and that which is hid he bringeth to light.

Gesenius's interpretation of the first clause is the following: "*he stoppeth up streams*, rills, *that they trickle not*, spoken of a miner shutting off water from flowing into the pits;" and in this we may acquiesce as satisfactory. Of another proposed interpretation: *he bindeth*

<sup>1</sup> We follow the reading in Harduin's edition. In the quotation as given by Schultens, Rosenmüller, Umbreit and Barnes, we read "*mons fractus cadit in sese longo fragore*," etc.

together (collects) streams from the trickling, i. e. collects from the trickling rills larger streams, we may say that it is unnatural and unnecessary. In the expression, אור מצא אור, אור is a *definitive accusative* answering to the question, *whither?* (Nordheimer, § 841; Rödiger, § 116, L). With such an accusative the intransitive form *Kal* is sometimes used; e. g. הִשְׁתַּדֵּד מִצַּד, Gen. 27: 8. The *transitive Hiphil* may of course take, as here, a double accusative.

V. 12. But wisdom — whence can she be found? and where is the place of understanding?

In הִיחָדָהּ, the *Vav* is properly rendered adversatively — *but*, although it is not in the *particle itself* that the adversative power lies, but in the *nature of the thoughts* which it connects. In other words, the Hebrew, in innumerable cases, simply indicates the connection of thought by the particle ו (and), leaving the reader to gather the particular nature of the connection from the context. See *Gea. Lex.* art. ו, 2. — מִמָּצְאוֹתֶיהָ תִּמְצָא, *whence can she be found?* a sort of pregnant construction, for *where can one find wisdom, that he may bring her thence?* — וּמִיָּדָהּ מִקוֹמָהּ בִּינָה, literally, *and which [of all places] is the place of understanding?* For the combination יָדָהּ מִיָּדָהּ, see *Gea. Theaurus*, art. יָדָהּ; Nordheimer's *Gram.*, § 891, 2. *b*; Ewald's *Gram.*, § 581. To seek for a subtle distinction between *wisdom* and *understanding*, as some have done, is foreign to the spirit of Hebrew poetry.

By *wisdom* we are here to understand *wisdom in the absolute sense*, that unsearchable wisdom by which God made and governs all things. She is personified as a female, whose dwelling-place no man can find. To find her home would be to *comprehend* her, which belongs to God alone. The question implies, of course, a strong negation; and coming, as it does, after so glowing a description of man's power in searching into the hidden recesses of the earth, it has a wonderful force.

V. 13. Man knoweth not her price; and she cannot be found in the land of the living.

As *wisdom cannot be found*, so also she *cannot be bought* for any price. These two figures are carried out at length in the verses which follow. — *The land of the living*, is the habitable world in opposition to *the abyss*, v. 14, and *the place of the dead*, v. 22.

V. 14. The abyss saith, she is not in me; and the sea saith, she is not in me.

The habitable world and the sea, taken together, include all the places to which living men can penetrate. These, with united voice, affirm that wisdom dwells not with them.

Vs. 15—19. Treasured gold shall not be given in her stead; and silver shall not be weighed [as] her price.

She cannot be weighed along with gold of Ophir; with the precious onyx and sapphire.

Gold and glass cannot compare with her; and her exchange [shall not be] vessels of pure gold.

Coral and crystal shall not be remembered [in comparison with her]; yea, the price of wisdom is above pearls.

The topaz of Ethiopia cannot compare with her; she shall not be weighed along with pure gold.

We first notice certain syntactical constructions which occur in the above verses. — The words *לֹא יִעֲרֹךְ לָהּ* occur twice. These Gesenius explains as equivalent to *לֹא יִעֲרֹךְ לָהּ*, *one cannot compare to her* (comp. Isa. 40: 18, *מִהֲיִדְמֶנָּה תִּצְרְכֶנּוּ-לּוֹ*, *what likeness will ye compare to him?*). On this use of the verbal suffixes, see Nordheimer, § 859, 3; Rüdiger, § 119, 4. Perhaps it would be better to consider the suffix pronoun as a *direct*, and the following nouns as *definitive accusatives*, *man shall not compare her in reference to gold and glass; man shall not compare her in reference to the topaz of Ethiopia*. Compare *הִבִּיתָהּ אֶת-לֵב-אֹיְבֵי לָהּ*, *thou hast smitten all mine enemies in respect to the cheek bone, on the cheek bone*, Ps. 3: 8. — In the last clause of the 17th verse, the particle of negation must be supplied from the first clause, as in Ps. 9: 19. 1 Sam. 2: 8, etc.

With regard to the names of some of the precious articles enumerated in these verses, there is much uncertainty. — *כְּנֹזֶה* is plainly the equivalent of the more common *זָהָב כְּנֹזֶה*, *aurum clausum, treasured*, i. e. *precious gold*. Comp. *מִטְמוֹן*, *treasure*, from *מָתַן*, *to hide*. So Rosenmüller and Gesenius. There is no occasion to seek an explanation from the Arabic, as is done by Ewald and others. — *זָכִיכִית* is generally thought to mean *glass*, which was known to the ancients for ornamental purposes, and was in high esteem. Others render it *crystal*, for which, however, another word occurs. — *טָהוֹר* is rendered by Gesenius, *aurum purgatum, pure gold*, though he also gives as probable the interpretation of Rosenmüller, *aurum solidum, massive gold*. See the arguments for each rendering in the Thesaurus. — *רְאִמֹת*, *red corals*; so the Rabbins. — *פְּרִיָּיִם*, according to some, *pearls*; according to others, *red gems*, as the sardius; others

still, render the word, *red corals*, and of this Gesenius approves (see Thesaurus); but there is no certainty in respect to the meaning of the word.

V. 20, 21. Wisdom, then—whence comes she? and where is the place of understanding?

Seeing she is hidden from the eyes of every living being; and concealed from the fowls of heaven.

These two verses answer to the 12th and 13th above. There they introduced the argument to show that wisdom is above the ken of mortals; here they *sum it* up with wonderful strength and majesty. The *Vav* which stands at the beginning of the 21st verse, may be best explained from the negative contained in the 20th; as much as to say: "wisdom cannot be found by mortals; and (an additional proof of her unsearchable nature) she is hid from every living being," etc.

V. 22. Destruction and death say: With our ears have we heard her fame.

A master stroke, worthy to complete the patriarch's description of the inscrutable nature of Divine wisdom! It leaves her invested with awful majesty; yet, to *man's* apprehension, shrouded in impenetrable darkness. By *destruction and death* we are to understand *Sheol* or *Hades*, the place of the dead, where death and destruction, the destruction of natural life, and, along with this, that of the body, reign. This, a comparison of the parallel passages clearly shows. "Sheol is naked before him; and destruction hath no covering," 26: 6; "Sheol and destruction are before the Lord: how much more the hearts of the sons of men?" Prov. 15: 11; and, especially, Ps. 88: 10—12: "Wilt thou show wonders to the dead? shall the dead [שְׁמַיִם, the shades], arise? shall they praise thee? Selah. Shall thy loving-kindness be declared in the grave? thy faithfulness in destruction? Shall thy wondrous doing be known in the darkness? and thy righteousness in the land of forgetfulness?" Above, it has been affirmed that wisdom can be found neither in the land of the living, nor in the abysses of the sea. Now the search is carried into the dark realms of *destruction and death*. But they can only answer: *With our ears have we heard her fame*. Like the lightning, which shineth from one end of the heaven to the other, while after it a mighty voice roareth, so the glory of Divine wisdom fills the earth, and her fame penetrates to the inmost recesses of the spirit-world;

but no one there can guide the anxious inquirer to her abode, and put him in possession of her.

We are left, then, to turn our eyes to the only remaining place—the throne of God, with whom perfect wisdom dwells as his own incommunicable possession.

Vs. 23, 24. God understandeth her way; and he knoweth her place.  
For he looketh to the ends of the earth; under the whole heavens he seeth;

The way of wisdom is the way to her dwelling-place. This the eye of God discerns, because it *looketh to the ends of the earth*. The contrast between man's vain and laborious search for wisdom and God's immediate discernment of her, is exceedingly forcible and beautiful.

V. 25. That he may make for the wind a weight, and the waters he apportioneth by measure.

We follow Ewald in connecting this verse with the preceding, and we refer both clauses to the *present* operations of Divine wisdom, while the two following verses carry us back to the same wisdom as directing the great Architect in the *creation* of the world. According to this view, the  $\text{ל}$  in  $\text{וַיִּשְׁׁרֶה}$  expresses the *end* of God's omniscient survey, which is (two of his present operations standing here as the representatives of all the rest), that he may make for the wind a weight, i. e. weigh it out in the proper quantity, and may apportion the waters—the rains which come in connection with the winds—by measure. To this construction Hirzel objects that the finite verb (which, according to a well-known idiom of the Hebrew, follows the infinitive with a prefix preposition), ought to stand in the *future*, instead of the *past* tense. But the past tense, not less than the future, may be employed to express *continued present action*. Ewald, however, assumes in the second clause a transition from the present to the past.

The commentators, with but few exceptions, connect this verse with the two following, thus: “when he made ( $\text{וַיַּשְׁׁרֶה} - \text{וַיִּשְׁׁרֶה}$  as in the following verse) for the wind a weight, and apportioned the waters by measure; when he made for the rain a statute, and a way for the thunder-flash; *then* he saw,” etc. To this construction it may be objected (1) that the use of  $\text{ל}$  before the inf. to denote *the time when* is infrequent. Besides the set phrases  $\text{בַּקֶּרֶב הַבֹּקֶר}$ ,  $\text{בַּקֶּרֶב הַלַּיְלָה}$ , *at the morning dawn, at even-tide*, Rosenmüller adduces but one example, 2 Sam. 18: 29; (2) that the infinitive ought, like that in the

following verse, to have the suffix pronoun. But neither of these objections is decisive.

Vs. 26, 27. When he made for the rain a statute, and a way for the thunder-flash;

Then did he see and declare her; he established her, and also searched her out.

At the creation of the world, when God prescribed laws for rain and thunder (these, again, stand as representatives of all his works), then he *saw* wisdom, saw her in her nature, comprehended her perfectly; and *declared her*, either, *made her known* to men by his works, or, *declared her* as one declares that which he understands in all its parts, with perhaps an allusion to the following verse, in which he prescribes to men the limits within which their wisdom lies; and *established her*, namely, as his guide, so to speak, in the formation and government of all things; and *searched her out*, an expression borrowed from human modes of gaining knowledge, and signifying his perfect apprehension of her inmost nature.

V. 28. And to man he said: Behold, the fear of the Lord, that is wisdom; and to depart from evil is understanding.

Nothing can exceed the majesty and power of this closing sentence, coming as it does at the conclusion of the argument to show that wisdom belongs to God alone. It is as if God had opened a door in heaven, and poured down upon the world a beam of light from his own throne. He with whom perfect and everlasting wisdom dwells, communicates to men, out of her infinite treasures which he alone understands, *this portion* as their possession. *Their* wisdom is all comprehended in fearing God and departing from evil. To fear God is to yield ourselves up in reverential love and confidence to his authority, so that his will shall be the law of our being; and since his will is always holy, such fear of God includes in itself departing from evil and doing righteousness. Thus man is *put in possession*, so to speak, of that perfect and absolute wisdom which none but God can comprehend. For *first*, he has a perfect rule for the direction of his life, in conformity to which he can never go astray, and this is to *know* wisdom, so far as mortals are capable of knowing her; *secondly*, the perfect and incomprehensible wisdom of God orders all things for the highest welfare of those who thus fear him and depart from evil, and this is to *enjoy* wisdom — wisdom in the perfect and absolute sense of the word. Thus does this bright and

glorious declaration of the inspired patriarch blend its beams with the kindred declaration of the inspired Apostle: "We know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose;"<sup>1</sup> and the two together, shine upon this fallen world like the sun in his strength.

---

### ARTICLE III.

#### LUCIAN AND CHRISTIANITY.

A CONTRIBUTION TO THE CHURCH HISTORY OF THE SECOND CENTURY.

By Adolf Planck, Dean of Heidenheim in Würtemberg. Translated by Rev. Alvah Hovey, M. A., Teacher of Hebrew in Newton Theological Seminary.

THE rhetorician and sophist Lucian, of Samosata, was born about 120 A. D., flourished in the age of the Antonines, so important for the history of culture and the church, and continued his labors as an author even into the first years of the third century. Among his numerous writings there are particular works which, because of the references to Christianity and the Holy Scriptures found in them, have attracted the attention of theologians, especially during the last century. Of no one is this true in a higher degree than of the treatise which describes the self-burning of the cynic Peregrinus Proteus, at Olympia. For Lucian makes him live in close union with the Christians for a considerable time, and takes occasion from this to describe the life and practices of the Christian churches of that period. The manner in which he speaks of Peregrinus, especially of his strange end, has from the first called forth very diverse opinions from critics. Some have regarded his narrative as throughout historical, others have found in it a caricature and satire upon Christian martyrs. A safe decision on this point naturally depends upon a more careful examination of Lucian's peculiarities as a writer, and especially upon a stricter scrutiny of those treatises which *claim to be historical*. Besides the *Peregrinus Proteus*, there are properly only

---

<sup>1</sup> Rom. 8: 28.