

and Luke; that of the three principal Apostles, Peter, John, and Paul; lastly, that of the entire primitive Church, in the persons of those five hundred of whom St. Paul speaks, and of whom the greater part were still living at the time when he quoted them without fear as his witnesses.

We are now about to study the validity of this testimony, or, in other words, to see if it would be possible to explain this fact of the testimony borne to the Resurrection by the apostles, under the hypothesis that this event did not really take place.

F. GODET.

THE BOOK OF JOB.

III.—THE FIRST COLLOQUY. (CHAPTERS IV.—XIV.)

(6.) JOB TO ZOPHAR. (CHAPTERS XII.—XIV.)

EACH of the three Friends has now spoken, and the First Colloquy, the Conference of the First Day, perhaps, draws to a close. In the harangue which closes it, Job does not simply answer the last speaker, who indeed has added little to the argument of his predecessors; but rather sets himself to reply on the whole discussion, so far as it had yet gone. He *does* reply to Zophar—rebuking the insolence of his tone, yet admitting the unsearchableness of the Divine Wisdom on which Zophar had laid so much stress, nay, affirming that it was far more inexplicable than even Zophar conceived it to be; and challenging that very encounter with God, that open encounter with his almighty Antagonist in public court, with which Zophar had sought to appal and silence him: but the whole course of the Contro-

versy is present to his mind. Eliphaz and Bildad, opponents more worthy of his steel than Zophar with his little quiver of truisms, had sought to force him to the same conclusions; they too had argued for the unimpeachable justice, the irresistible majesty, and the unfathomable wisdom of God, and affirmed that the true attitude of those whom He afflicts is to humble themselves under his mighty hand, and penitently confess the sins which had provoked Him to chasten them,—Eliphaz citing oracles and visions, Bildad the wisdom of antiquity, in support of their common argument: and now Job takes all their points at once on his single target, assails them with their own weapons, confutes them out of their own lips. He shews them that he himself is even more deeply sensible of the power of God than they are—for has he not felt it? and of the unsearchableness of his wisdom—for has he not failed to fathom it? Twice over, therefore, he flatly denies that they have overthrown him by their shallow reasonings (Chap. xii. 3, and Chap. xiii. 2); and follows up his second denial by asserting that, while they have been striving to give him a fall, they have prepared a terrible overthrow for themselves. They had sided with God simply because He was strong; but God was far too great to relish a flattery as gross and palpable as that offered to an Oriental monarch by his “knee-crooking knaves” and “obsequious parasites:” nay, He would resent and punish it. They had shewn themselves to be the mere sycophants of Heaven, because they dreaded the Power that ruled in heaven: but they had thus, however unwittingly, arrayed that Power *against*

them. Because they had "spoken wrongfully for God," as though He needed to have "falsehood uttered on his behalf," God Himself would heavily rebuke them (Chap. xiii. 7-11) when He appeared to close and crown the argument.

Having thus routed the Friends and driven them from the field, Job turns once more to God. So far from fearing the theophany with which he had been threatened, there is nothing that he so deeply craves. He has not much hope of an acquittal indeed; but, acquitted or condemned, he longs to put his fortune to the touch, and win or lose it all. If he may only defend his ways to the very face of God, with a brain no longer confused and darkened with agony, and a heart unterrified by the mere majesty of his Antagonist, he will embrace his sentence, whatever it may be (Chap. xiii. 14-22).

So set is he on thus appearing before God, even though God should be both Accuser and Judge, that (Chap. xiii. 23-xiv. 22). he prepares his "*Declaration*," his solemn and ordered defence, reciting the several pleas he intends to urge, and surrounding himself in imagination with the paraphernalia and accessories of a Court of Justice. This Declaration (Chap. xiii. 23-28) is one of the most noble and pathetic documents in the literature of the world; even custom cannot stale its infinite impressiveness, but rather renders it more impressive by associating it with the most solemn and tender moments in our brief span.

Viewing this passage as a whole, three points call for special remark.

(1) As Job shakes himself loose from the argu-

ments of the Friends—and that in the only noble way, viz., by confuting them with arguments which go far more deeply than theirs into the common and verified facts of human experience—his conception of the character of God rises and clears. No longer irritated by their dogmatic perversions of the facts of life he, who had just so passionately impugned the justice of God, now feels and admits Him to be so just that He will punish injustice even when it is exercised on his own behalf, so just that, whatever appearances may say, He will not suffer any upright man to perish unavenged (Chap. xiii. 7-16).

(2) As in his answer to Bildad, his sense of the inequalities of human life, the mystery of God's dealings with men, awoke in Job's heart a yearning for and a dim presentiment of a Mediator, an incarnation of God, who should both speak for men to the Majesty on high and interpret Him to men, so here, as his prophetic soul broods over the brevity and the misery of human life upon the earth, there rises in it a yearning for and a presentiment of a life beyond the grave, in which all wrongs shall be righted, all privations compensated, all sorrows comforted, all problems solved (Chap. xiv. 5-15).

(3) While his mind is occupied with these large and solemn conceptions, while he muses with a generous grief over the miseries which afflict the whole race, the bitter sense of his personal misery, which elsewhere breaks out into the most passionate utterance, is held in abeyance. Throughout these Chapters he hardly alludes to it, and never does more than allude to it.

Where the greater malady is fix'd
The lesser is scarce felt.

The agony and the shame of his loathsome disease, the scorn and contempt of the tribes, the shrill mockery of the little children (Chap. xix. 18) as they played about the *mezbele*, and even the suspicions and abhorrence of his most inward friends, are all forgotten for the time; his whole soul is absorbed in the great tragedy of human life, in the endeavour to master its secret and law, an endeavour which he feels to be hopeless, but from which he nevertheless cannot desist. This inner conflict dulls him to all interests and vicissitudes but its own;

The tempest in his mind
Doth from his senses take all feeling else
Save what beats there.

CHAPTERS XII.—XIV.

CHAP. XII. I.—*Then answered Job and said :*

2. *No doubt but ye are the people,
 And with you shall wisdom die !*
3. *But I have understanding as well as ye ;
 I fall not beneath you :
 And who knoweth not such things as these ?*
4. *I am become as one who is a laughing-stock to his friends :
 He who called on God and He answered him—
 The just, the innocent—a laughing-stock !*
5. *Contempt for mishap is the impulse of the secure ;
 It awaiteth those whose feet totter.*
6. *Tranquil are the tents of the spoilers,
 And they who provoke God are confident,
 Who carry their god in their hand.*
7. *But ask now the beasts, and they shall teach thee,
 And the fowl of the air, and they shall tell thee ;*
8. *Or speak to the earth, and it shall teach thee,
 And the fish of the sea shall declare it unto thee :*
9. *Who knoweth not by all these
 That Jehovah's hand hath wrought this,
 In whose hand is the life of every living creature*
10. *And the breath of all mankind ?*

11. *Shall not the ear test words
As the palate testeth food ?*
12. *Is wisdom with the aged ?
And understanding with length of days ?*
13. *With Him are wisdom and strength,
Counsel and understanding are his.*
14. *Lo, He breaketh down, and there is no rebuilding,
He shutteth up a man, and none can release him ;*
15. *When He withholdeth the waters, they dry up,
When He sendeth them forth, they lay waste the earth.*
16. *With Him are strength and wisdom ;
The misled and the misleader both are his :*
17. *He leadeth away councillors captive,
And maketh judges fools ;*
18. *He looseneth the girdle of kings,
And bindeth their loins with a cord ;*
19. *He leadeth away priests captive,
And overthroweth the strong ;*
20. *He depriveth the trusty of eloquence,
And taketh away judgment from the elders ;*
21. *He poureth contempt on nobles,
And unlooseth the belt of the mighty ;*
22. *He revealeth deep things out of darkness,
And bringeth the blackness of death to light ;*
23. *He exalteth nations, and destroyeth them ;
He enlargeth nations, then straiteneth them :*
24. *He taketh away the heart of the chieftains,
And maketh them wander in a pathless waste,*
25. *So that they grope in a darkness where there is no light :
Yea, He maketh them to reel like a drunkard.*

- CHAP. XIII. 1. *Lo, all this mine eye hath seen,
Mine ear hath heard and noted it ;*
2. *What ye know I know also :
I fall not beneath you.*
3. *But I would address myself to the Almighty,
I crave to reason with God ;*
4. *For ye patch up old saws :
Worthless bunglers are ye all.*
5. *O that ye would altogether hold your peace !
It should be counted to you for wisdom.*

6. *Hear, now, my defence,
And listen to the pleadings of my lips.*
7. *Will ye speak wrongfully for God,
And utter falsehood on his behalf?*
8. *Will ye accept his person,
And thus contend for God?*
9. *Will it be good for you when He searcheth you out?
Can ye deceive Him as man is deceived?*
10. *Heavily will He rebuke you
If ye privily accept persons!*
11. *Should not his majesty make you afraid,
And the dread of Him fall on you?*
12. *Your maxims are maxims of ashes,
Your strongholds strongholds of clay.*
13. *Be silent before me, that I may speak,
And let what will befall me.*
14. *Come what may, I will take my flesh in my teeth,
And will put my life in my hand.*
15. *Lo, He may slay me,—I have ceased to hope;
Still let me defend my ways to his face.*
16. *Even this speaketh for my acquittal,
For a sinner would not dare to come before Him.*
17. *Give good heed to my discourse,
And let my Declaration sink into your ears.*
18. *Behold, now, I have set my cause in order:
I know that I have right on my side.*
19. *Who is he that can allege ought against me?
Then would I be silent and give up the ghost.*
20. *Only do not Thou two things unto me,
And I will not hide myself from thy Presence,—*
21. *Withdraw thine hand from me,
And let not thy majesty affright me;*
22. *Then do Thou accuse, and I will answer,
Or let me speak, and do Thou respond.*
23. *How many are my iniquities and my sins?
Shew me my sin and my transgression!*
24. *Wherefore hidest Thou thy face,
And holdest me for thy foe?*
25. *Wilt Thou terrify a driven leaf,
And chase the withered stubble?*

26. *For Thou recordest bitter things against me,
And makest me to inherit the sins of my youth ;*
27. *Thou also settest my feet in the stocks,
And watchest all my ways :*
28. *Thou hast drawn a line, beyond which I cannot pass,
Round one who is consumed as with a rot,
Like a garment gnawed by the moth.*

CHAP. XIV. I.

- Man, born of woman,
Of few days and full of trouble,
2. Cometh forth like a flower and is cut down ;
He fleeth like a shadow and continueth not :*
3. *And dost Thou fix thine eyes on such an one ?
And wilt Thou bring me into judgment with Thee ?*
4. *O that the clean could come forth from the unclean !
But not one can.
5. If his days are determined,
If the number of his months is with Thee,
If Thou hast set bounds that he cannot pass,
6. Turn from him that he may rest
Till, like the hireling, he accomplish his day.
7. For the tree hath hope
That, if felled, it will sprout again,
And that the sucker thereof will not fail ;
8. Though its root wax old in the earth,
And the stock thereof moulder in the ground,
9. Yet will it bud at the scent of water,
And shoot forth boughs like a young plant :
10. But man dieth and is brought low,
Man giveth up the ghost,—and where is he ?
11. The waters fail from the pool,
And the stream drieth and is parched up ;
12. So man lieth down and riseth not :
Till the heavens be no more, he shall not awake
Nor be aroused from his sleep.
13. O that Thou wouldest hide me in Hades,
That Thou wouldest conceal me till thy wrath be past,
That Thou wouldest appoint me a set time and remember me !
14. (If a man die, shall he live again ?)
All the days of that hard term would I wait
Till my discharge came :*

15. *Thou wouldest call, and I would answer Thee ;
Thou wouldest yearn toward the work of thine hands.*
16. *But now Thou numberest my steps :
Dost Thou not watch for my sin ?*
17. *My transgression is sealed up in a bag,
And Thou sewest up mine iniquity.*
18. *Verily, a mountain, when it falleth, crumbleth away,
And a rock, growing old, decayeth from its place ;*
19. *Waters wear down stones,
And floods wash away the soil of the earth :
So Thou destroyest the hope of man ;*
20. *Thou prevailest over him evermore, and he passeth hence ;
Thou changest his aspect and sendest him away :*
21. *His sons come to honour, but he knoweth it not,
Or they are brought low, but he heedeth it not ;*
22. *Only in his own flesh can he suffer pain,
And his spirit mourn for itself.*

Job opens his Reply, as his manner is, in a tone of bitter irony, an irony, however, which is here in place. The contemptuous and cruel severity of Zophar cried aloud for castigation. But Job does not address himself to Zophar simply. No doubt Eliphaz and Bildad had intimated by their bearing and manner their general sympathy and concurrence in his censures, although they themselves might have worded them more considerably.

Traded by ignorant tongues, which neither know
His faculties nor person, yet will be
The chronicles of his doing,

Job is deeply wounded, and now turns upon them with an irony so fierce as to seem out of keeping with his character, till we remember that nothing is so fierce as wounded and insulted love. "Doubtless," he cries (Chap. xii. 2), "ye are the people," the true representatives of mankind, alone worthy of

the name, "and with you shall wisdom die!" Then (*Verse 3*), fixing on a phrase used by Zophar (Chap. xi. 12), in which he had implied that Job was a man "without a heart" and "void of understanding," he retorts, "But *I* have an understanding"—literally, "a heart"—"as well as ye;" and in this conflict of mind with mind, this clashing of opinion with opinion, "I do not fall beneath you," like a weaker or less skilful wrestler beneath his antagonist—a phrase, or figure, so much to his mind that he repeats it in Chapter xiii. Verse 2. Weak and unskilled indeed must he be who should find himself overmatched by you; for "who knoweth not such things as these?" *i.e.*, the well-worn truisms and platitudes which Zophar had just been drumming into his reluctant ears. In *Verse 4* he lets out the secret of his bitterness. What angered him past all endurance was that it should be his *friends* who made a laughing-stock of him; and, still more, that they should dare to make a just and innocent man, one who had been in the closest correspondence with Heaven and had shewn himself to be not unworthy of that grace, the butt of their derision.

Verse 5 contains a fine instance of Job's reasonableness, of that "large-mindedness" which the Hebrews ranked among the chief virtues. Even when he is resenting a personal wrong, even when he is in his most ironic and indignant mood, he is calm enough to meditate, to generalize, and even to admit that the Friends are but betraying a weakness common to all men in their position. He confesses that his is no isolated case, that even his sorest trial is the common lot of the unfortunate and the miser-

able. Contempt for the weak, who totter and fall on slippery paths, is the habitual impulse of those who stand firmly on the firm ground of security, and who see no reason why other men should not be as vigorous and resolute and prosperous as themselves. Umbreit and Rosenmüller contend for a very graphic rendering of this Verse. They read it thus :

*The torch, prepared for faltering feet,
Is despised by the secure ;*

and take it to suggest that just as the traveller, when once he has gained the shelter and security of the caravanserai, flings away the torch of whose guidance he was glad enough while he groped his way through the darkness with faltering and uncertain feet, so the Friends of Job, now that they can no longer make use of him, set no further store by him, but fling him aside with contempt. The rendering is so picturesque that we resign it with reluctance; but I am afraid it must be resigned, since the weight of authority is conclusively against it: and that we must be content to understand Job as simply affirming that the strong and secure are apt to despise the weak and timid, and as finding in this common impulse the secret of Zophar's insolence. Had Zophar been less content with himself and his lot, had he known what it was to grope his way blindly through an inexplicable misery, he would not have been so harsh and contemptuous in his censures and rebukes. It must have been a noble nature which, in the midst of its agony, could frame such an apology for one who had given its agony a keener edge.

From *Verse* 6 onwards Job passes into a new train of thought, and addresses himself rather to Bildad and Eliphaz than to Zophar. While he still challenges the conclusion they held in common, while he continues to deny what they all affirm, viz., that piety and prosperity, sin and misery, are correlatives, he also shews that he himself had a far deeper and larger conception of the irresistible power of God than that which the two earlier speakers in the Colloquy had so impressively enunciated. He does not for a moment question that his own losses and griefs proceed from the hand of God; nor does he for a moment deny that

all the plagues that in the pendulous air
Hang fated o'er men's faults

descend and strike them by the ordinance of God. On the contrary, he affirms this precious truth of theirs, which they press upon him as though it were a novel and profound discovery, to be so mere and patent a truism, that the veriest dolt cannot have missed it; the whole creation is instinct with it; all animate creatures, and even the inanimate earth, constantly publish it abroad. Do they imagine that *he* is ignorant of it? He will shew them that to him it is more familiar than it is to them, that he can handle it "more masterly," and develop it to issues of which they have not dreamed.

He starts on this new train of thought by once more challenging the sufficiency of their formula. The whole scheme and mystery of Providence, he says (*Verse* 6), is *not* to be compressed into their petty maxim, that good comes to the good and evil

to the evil. There are large and common facts of daily experience which lie outside of it, and contradict it; as, for example, these. The tents of the violent and rapacious are tranquil, and often stand in an air of as sunny and deep repose as the homes of the just. Men may be at peace, and bask in the very summer of prosperity, although they both wrong their neighbour and provoke God, nay, although they worship no god but their sword. The last line of the Verse has provoked much comment, but its significance is quite plain, I think. The men "who carry their god (their *Eloah*) in their hands" are men who worship the sword with which they win their spoils, who regard it as the supreme power of the world, who have no god but *that*.¹ The phrase is probably an antique proverb which reappears in various forms, and probably its earliest form is given in the Hebrew of Genesis xxi. 29, where Laban says, "There is *god* to my hand," meaning, "There is *power* in my hand to harm thee, if only I cared to use it."

Here, then, were facts inconsistent with, unprovided for, in the inadequate formula of the Friends: on the one hand, the just and blameless man, who walked with God, might nevertheless walk with faltering feet till he became the "laughing-stock" of the strong and secure; and, on the other hand, the violent and rapacious, who revered nothing but the sword, might nevertheless dwell in an unbroken tranquillity. Did Job, then, deny the overruling power of God, and conclude that He was

¹ Compare with this Verse, Habakkuk i. 11, "Then *its strength becometh its god*;" and Virgil's *Æneid*, x. 773, "*Dextra mihi Deus*."

unable to prosper the righteous and to punish the wicked? So far from questioning that power, he entertained a far profounder conviction of it than those who were for ever exhorting him to defer to it. He traced to it not only the common order of Providence, but also these extraordinary and perplexing exceptions to that order. The misery of the good was God's doing no less than their happiness, and the prosperity of the wicked no less than the penal consequences of their sins. It was *because* he traced all events to the hand of God that his mind was fretting itself against an insoluble problem, and his heart was haunted by a sorrow not to be assuaged. It took no great wisdom to discover the constant presence and interference of God; the wonder was that any man could shut his eyes and ears to the proofs of it: for (*Verses 7 and 8*) the earth and the sea, with all that dwelt therein, were for ever proclaiming themselves to be his handiwork. Lives there a man (*Verses 9 and 10*) so inobservant and inapt as not to have inferred from the things which are seen and made the invisible yet irresistible power of the Creator and Lord of the universe? as not to have learned in whose hand is the life of every creature and the breath of all mankind?

It is a singular and noteworthy fact, and we must turn aside for a moment from the main argument to consider it, that only in *Verse 9* does the Poet bring the Divine Name *Jehovah* into his verse. It occurs profusely in his prose, both in the Prologue and in the Epilogue, but only on this occasion throughout the Poem proper. In *this* his names for God are *El, Eloah, Elohim, Shaddai*. Many explanations of

the curious literary fact that this sacred Name occurs here, though nowhere else in the Poem, have been offered. Schlottman says, "We find a sufficient explanation of it in the solemn earnestness with which Job desires to shew that he is as deeply, nay, more deeply, penetrated than the Friends by the manifestation of the glory of God in nature." Canon Cook says, "It is as though reflection on the greatness of God brought out the very innermost conviction of the Patriarch's heart, and forced from him the word which expresses the very essence of the Deity;" and suggests that "there may also be a reference to his own words when he was told of his children's death (Chap. i. 21), '*Jehovah* gave, and *Jehovah* hath taken away.'" But Delitzsch's suggestion seems to me to come nearest to the mark. "That the name of God, *Jehovah*, for once escapes the Poet here, is to be explained by the fact that the phrase, 'The hand of *Jehovah* hath made this,' was a somewhat proverbial expression." (Comp. Isaiah xli. 20 and lxvi. 2.)

To convince Job of the power of God, and that this power was used for the punishment of the wicked, Bildad had arrayed against him the wisdom of the antique world (Chap. viii. 8-19). And Job (in *Verse* 11), with a sagacity which those who pin their faith to the sleeve of Tradition and with whom mere antiquity is a conclusive argument of truth would do well to imitate, now reminds him that the sayings of the ancients are not to be accepted indiscriminately, that they must be tested and estimated at their true worth. Just as the palate is given to man that it may select only those kinds of food

which are wholesome and nourishing, so the ear is given to him, and, of course, the judgment which sits behind the ear, that he may try the sayings of men and select from them only those which nourish and invigorate the soul. A valuable, and even invaluable principle this; and, in *Verses* 12 and 13, he lays down another of at least equal worth. No doubt antiquity was wise, no doubt experienced age is wise, and should command a certain respect; but *God* has an absolute and inherent wisdom, not simply the wisdom which results from experience and is hallowed by age. Wisdom and understanding dwell with Him as in their native home; and therefore if we can gain access to his counsels, they should command an instant and profound deference infinitely beyond that we pay to men, however ancient and widely-experienced they may be. Tradition is good, if it help us to interpret the words of God; but the words of God are infinitely more precious and authoritative than any tradition. These are principles which lie at the very root of all intelligent Protestantism, of all liberal and progressive thought indeed; and it is a welcome surprise to find them so clearly enunciated in one of the oldest writings in the world.

Whether or not Job meant to claim a certain inspiration for the Verses that follow, whether or not he meant to imply that they contain a ray of the Divine and Eternal Wisdom, it is quite certain that they express a conception of Providence which has always and widely obtained in the East. Bildad had used his power of discrimination, and had selected certain antique proverbs which served his

turn and relished on his "palate." And now Job will make *his* selection. As he reads it, the profound ancestral wisdom depicts God as ruling men with a mysterious sovereignty which, instead of meting out to every man the due reward of his deeds, is wholly independent of human desert. And, curiously enough, the conception which Job now advances is quite as characteristic of Oriental thought as that which Bildad had advanced. Side by side with each other there have always stood these speculative opposites, which are often found unreconciled in one and the same Creed: (1) that man's deserts are the sole measure of his reward; and (2) that man's life and lot are dominated by an inscrutable fate, a Divine doom, or decree, which he is utterly unable either to modify or resist. Bildad had argued for the first of these conceptions, and Job now proceeds to give a fine rhetorical expansion to the latter of them. His conception is virtually that of the Mohammedan creed, which is summed up in the brief strong words, "*If* God will, and *how* God will."

The Verses in which he expands it call for little remark; for the most part their meaning lies on the very surface: and as, after the sin of passing over that which is really difficult, a commentator can be guilty of no greater sin than that of dwelling on passages which every man is able to interpret for himself, a few brief notes may carry us rapidly yet safely to the end of the Chapter.

In *Verses* 14-16 Job affirms that the inscrutable power, the sovereign decree, of God shapes all sequences and events, both in the natural and in the

human worlds; in *Verses* 17-21, he traces its effects in the history of individual men, and in *Verses* 22-25 its effects on tribal or national communities.

Verse 16.—“The misled and the misleader both are his” has an exact parallel in the Coran (*Sur.* xiv. 5), “God both leads into error, and guides (*i.e.*, guides aright) whom He will.”

The image of *Verse* 18 is very expressive. God replaces the costly jewelled state-girdle of kings with the “cord” of servitude.

Verse 19.—The allusion to “priests” — which seems to bring the Poem down to a later than the patriarchal age — does not necessarily imply the existence of a separate sacerdotal caste. Job may simply refer to the fact that, in the patriarchal times, the head of the family, or the chief of the clan, was its recognized priest and mediator with God. Melchizedek was a priest of the Most High. Abraham offered sacrifices, and made intercession. In the second clause of the Verse the word rendered “the strong” means, literally, “the *everflowing*,” *i.e.*, those whose prosperity runs in full tide, who seem above the reach of change, whose career knows no check.

Verse 20.—The line, “He depriveth the trusty of eloquence,” might be more literally rendered, “He taketh away *the lip* of the trusty.” The allusion seems to be to men who had been tried and found of good counsel, to practised orators and experienced advisers who had come to be relied on by the monarchs whom they served, or who perhaps had come to trust in themselves: such men, for example, as Daniel and Ahithophel afterwards shewed themselves to be.

In *Verses* 22–25 there is throughout, probably, an under-current of reference to the description of the effects of God's interference in human affairs given by Eliphaz (Chap. v. 11–16). Many of his words and phrases are repeated; his premises are accepted and illustrated afresh: it is only his conclusion which Job disputes. He had so pointed his description as to make it sustain his thesis, that calamity is invariably the result of transgression, and that the sole method of rising out of it is by repentance and amendment; but Job so points his description as to educe from it the moral, that the lot of men and nations is shaped not so much by a just retributive Providence as by a capricious and inscrutable Fate.

“The deep things out of darkness” of *Verse* 22 are, possibly, the secret intrigues of statesmen, their occult and evil intentions; or, more probably, the hidden bents and currents which slowly give shape to the character and functions of a nation or ever it is aware, or ever even its rulers are aware, of them—that stream of tendency, running darkly underground for a while, which silently carries us we know not whither, we know not how, and lands us in enterprises and modes of national activity alien and opposed to those toward which our subtlest politicians supposed they were guiding us.

And yet even of this dark inscrutable Fate, which leads men and nations “whither they would not,” Job has no fear; for this is only one of many faces which God wears, only one of many aspects which his Providence assumes. We must not assume either that Job denied the view of God's rule held

by the Friends, or that he asserts the view to which he himself has just given expression to be the only or a complete view. He admits that the Divine Providence is retributive; all he denies is that Retribution is an adequate key to all the phenomena it presents. He affirms that there is a non-retributive element in it; that this non-retributive element is as patent in it as the retributive; and that the two combined present a profound mystery which no hypothesis that either he or the Friends can frame will dissolve and explain. And, therefore, He would fain reason with God Himself, and ask *Him* to explain and vindicate his way with men. The Friends have *threatened* him with a theophany. There is nothing he so much desires, however awful it may be to flesh and blood; for in the depths of his heart he is sure that God is just and rules in equity. With humility and faith, with a pathetic blending of courage and fear, he solicits, nay, demands, access to God, that he may defend his ways to his face. But as yet he cannot wholly shake himself loose from the Friends; he is in no fit mood to plead with God; his indignation against their cruelty and servility—cruelty to himself, servility to the Almighty—must have time to work itself off; and so in the first twenty-two Verses of Chapter xiii. we have the strangest succession and conflict of moods, the desire to reason with God being perpetually broken and confused by flashes of caustic irony against the men who had both belied God and insulted *him*.

His oscillation between these two impulses, the impulse to appeal to God who alone can compre-

hend and clear him, and the impulse to bestow on his Friends the castigation they so richly deserved, is so marked in these Verses, and the terms in which it is expressed are so free from perplexing allusions, that a few brief comments on them will suffice. The two main points to be borne in mind, as we turn to a study of this great and noble heart in a moment of supreme agitation and excitement, are those I have already mentioned: viz., that, in dealing with the Friends, Job charges them with having sided with God against him rather from a wish to stand well with the omnipotent Ruler of the world than from a sincere conviction that he, Job, was in the wrong; and that he has still so firm a persuasion of the ultimate justice of God as to be sure that this sycophantic deference to mere Power will be offensive to Him, and must provoke his wrath rather than propitiate his favour.

In *Verse 3* he states his craving to reason with God, since the Friends have no reason worthy of the name to allege on his behalf.

In *Verses 4-12* he is diverted from at once yielding to this craving by a righteous indignation against the men who had so cruelly misjudged him, and reduces them to the dilemma:

Either you must
Confess yourselves wondrous malicious,
Or be accused of folly.

The best commentary on *Verse 5* is that of Proverbs xvii. 28: "Even a fool, *when he holdeth his peace*, is counted wise." In *Verses 7* and *8* he charges them with being mere flatterers of the Divine Power.

In *Verses* 9-11 he warns them that by such a base sycophancy they will but injure themselves with the very Being they hope to propitiate. A very noble conception! A man must have been very sure that God was just before he could have risen to it. There is a wonderful and impressive boldness, the boldness of both genius and faith, in the thought that, in any trial of right in which even God Himself is implicated, justice is to be the first and sole consideration. His person is not to be accepted; no deference is to be accorded to his rank and power. Those who give sentence are not to be influenced by the knowledge of how much He can do for, or against, them. He Himself will be the very first to resent it if they do. Any departure from strict equity is hateful to Him, and all the more hateful if it be in his own favour. We have heard Job say many hard things of God, frame many partial and imperfect conceptions of Him. Let us the more carefully remember this great saying of his—surely one of the greatest and noblest ever uttered by man.

Verse 12.—They had threatened him with a terrible doom if, or when, the Judge of all the earth should appear. Let them bethink them of the doom which they themselves have provoked. In that day the oracular and proverbial strongholds,¹ the maxims of antiquity and the truisms of the passing day, behind which they have entrenched them-

¹ There is a play on words in the Hebrew of this Verse which can only be imperfectly transferred to the English. The German lends itself more easily to it. Thus Schlottmann renders it:

Eure Denksprüche sind Aschensprüche,
Lehmburgen eure Burgen!

selves, will vanish like smoke, and moulder like clay leaving them defenceless and exposed.

In *Verses* 13 and 14 Job falls back on his resolve to appeal to God. But he knows how terrible will be the risk of this great enterprise. "I will take my flesh in my teeth, and put my life in my hand!" he cries,—a fine proverbial expression for running all hazards even to the last, of which Shakespeare gives a noble variation in King Henry VIII., when describing the people of England under oppressions which break the sides of loyalty, as

Compell'd by hunger
And lack of other means, *in desperate manner*
Daring the event to the teeth.

Of *Verse* 15 we have so fine a rendering in our Authorized Version that we cannot surrender it without pain. And, indeed, many competent scholars refuse to surrender it. They still read the verse, "Though he slay me, I will trust in him;" or,

Lo, He may slay me, yet will I wait for Him ;
And I will defend my ways to His face ;

i.e., I will look hopefully for a verdict. This sense, however, rests on a bad text of the Original, and *must*, I fear, be given up. The Hebrew of the best Codices compels us to take the Verse as meaning: "Lo, He may slay me; I have little hope of any other issue to my appeal: nevertheless, so conscious am I of the justice of my cause, I can no other than defend my ways to his face." And if we lose something by this rendering, we also gain something. If we lose a noble expression of an invincible faith in God, a faith stronger than death, we gain a noble expression of loyalty to truth at all hazards, of that

superb and courageous honesty which is true to itself in scorn of consequence. And *this*, too, is the gift of God, and springs, in the last resort, from an invincible confidence in his righteousness and truth.

Job himself (*Verse 16*) finds his sole hope in this incorrigible and losing honesty. It is the one voice which speaks in his heart, and even this voice speaks somewhat faintly and dubiously, "for his acquittal." A sinner, he argues, a man laden with unredressed and unrepented crimes, would be incapable of it. *He* would not long to stand face to face with God, and dare all that he might reason and plead with Him. The fact that *I* cherish this longing, and will cheerfully fling away my life to gratify it, is surely a good omen, a ground for hope.

Verse 17.—In the strength of this hope he sets himself to compose his "Declaration," to draw up the Brief from which he intends to plead his cause when he is admitted to the presence of the Judge. And this Declaration (*Verse 18*) is to contain no cunningly devised pleas by which he may make the worse appear the better cause. His aim is not to escape punishment, but to establish his integrity. To snatch a verdict by legal chicanery will not content him. He will be content with nothing short of hearing God and man declare that he has right on his side. If indeed (*Verse 19*) he could believe either God or man able to prove him guilty, of shewing that his calamities were the due reward of his transgressions, there would be nothing for him but to die in mute despair. But he is confident that no fair argument, no impartial trial, will issue in his condemnation. Only (*Verses 20 and 21*) as the

enterprise is so momentous and perilous, as the issue of it, for him, must be life or death, he trusts that the trial will be a fair one, and that he may be permitted, enabled even, to make his defence as vigorous and conclusive as it ought to be. But how can he hope to do that in his present condition? A sick man cannot exert the full tale of his energies even in self-vindication; a terrified man can neither collect nor express his thoughts with force and precision. And, therefore, he stipulates for health,—“Withdraw thine hand from me;” and for a self-possession undisturbed by fear, “And let not thy majesty affright me.” These conditions granted, he is ready to undertake his defence even against a Divine Advocate, and is indifferent what form the trial may assume. In the forensic terms of his age (*Verse 22*) he challenges the Almighty to appear either as accuser or defendant, and professes an equal willingness either to answer any charges which God may bring against him, or himself to allege the counts to which he would have God reply.

And so, for the time, we leave Job trembling on the threshold of the Supreme Court, fully alive to the tremendous risk he is about to run, but sustained by the sense of his own integrity and by a secret assurance that God will do him justice even though He should have to give a verdict against Himself.
