

eternal, immortal, and invisible: it has sought to make man partaker of his eternal, immortal, and spiritual being. It has recognized the need; and it has proclaimed the existence, of something higher than a Divine worship—a Divine communion, a sharing of man's nature in the nature of God. Judaism worshipped the immortal Spirit, but it was unable to appropriate his immortality; there was a middle wall of partition between the Divine and the human which prevented the life of the one from running over into the life of the other. Christianity claims to have broken down the wall, to have made the life of God a possibility to the life of man. It professes to have destroyed that enmity which had so long rendered the finite the antithesis of the Infinite, and to have quickened the heart of time with the pulsations of an eternal Being. The acceptance, or the rejection, of that claim is not here the question, but there is one point at least on which there can exist no doubt. They who have accepted it, if they seem to have yielded to a supernatural influence, have thereby only vindicated the primitive instincts of human nature, and have found for natural reason the key which alone was wanting to unlock the portals of eternal life.

GEORGE MATHESON.

THE BOOK OF JOB.

VI. THE SOLILOQUY OF JOB. (CHAPTERS xxvii.—xxxii.)

WE have followed the polemic of Job with the Friends to its close. We have seen how, as they grew more definite and personal in their charges and more vehement in their invective, he has grown more profoundly conscious of his innocence, and less vehement, though

not less steadfast, in asserting it. And now the conflict is over. Job has silenced — silenced rather than convinced — his antagonists ; and, as they sit dumb before him, he breaks into a Soliloquy so elevated and sustained, that almost all the critics regard it as one of the most lovely and exquisite sections of this great Poem. Godet, indeed, speaks of it as “a burst of poetry never surpassed,” as “the most admirable section of the whole book,” and maintains that, “although much the hardest to interpret, it is nevertheless the most accessible to the chastened spirit.”

This Soliloquy, which extends from Chapter xxvii. to Chapter xxxi., is divided into two Monologues ; the first embracing Chapters xxvii. and xxviii., and the second, Chapters xxix.—xxxi. Each of these Monologues is introduced with the phrase, “Job took up his *strain*,” the Hebrew word for “strain” — which is sometimes translated by “oracle,” and sometimes by “parable” — covering all discourse of an elevated, picturesque, or poetic tone ; so that the Poet himself forewarns us that he is about to attempt a higher than his usual style, to stir and quicken our imagination with words and tropes that we shall not willingly let die.

He has hardly made the promise before he begins to fulfil it. His mind takes a more reflective turn ; his pencil is dipped in richer hues : he calls a pause in the action of his drama, and utters a more “lyrical cry.” As we listen to him we feel that the polemic storm has swept past ; the air grows clearer ; the birds break forth into singing : and if at times an occasional gust or ground-swell reminds us that the day has been one of wind and tempest, we are nevertheless aware that

the storm will not return, that the wind-vexed day is settling into an evening calm rich with the gorgeous yet tender and pathetic hues of sunset. Now and then, indeed, Job reverts, with a quick movement of indignation, to the charges alleged against him by the Friends; and once at least he cries out against the injustice of Heaven; but, for the most part, he bears himself with composure and maintains a contemplative mood.

It is easy to see that the Poet has thoroughly enjoyed this part of his work, and put his whole heart into it. He lingers over the themes, over the illustrations even of the themes, he handles; he elaborates the pictures he paints—as, for example, that of the Miner in Chapter xxviii., or that of the Aborigines in Chapter xxx.—adding line to line and touch to touch, as if he were loth to leave them. Contrasting his present with his previous mood, his meditative with his controversial mood, we are reminded of that exquisite and musical passage in the “Two Gentlemen of Verona” in which Julia describes the course and changes of her passion:—

The current that with gentle murmur glides,
Thou knowest, being stopped, impatiently doth rage:
But, when its fair course is not hinder'd,
He makes sweet music with the enameled stones,
Giving a gentle kiss to every sedge
He overtaketh in his pilgrimage;
And so by many winding nooks he strays,
With willing sport, to the wild ocean.

We have seen him raging and chafing impatiently against the arguments of the Friends, and now we shall have to linger with him in many a winding nook—the inventory of gems, for instance, and the studied use of the various Hebrew names for “gold” in Chapter xxviii. Verses 15–19, or the elaborated image of a

military siege in Chapter xxx. Verses 11-15; and to listen to the "sweet music" he makes as he sings, in Chapters xxix. and xxxi., of the happy days when God "kept" him, and by *his* light he walked through darkness.

But if the charm of the Soliloquy is very apparent, so also are the difficulties of which Godet speaks. Those commentators who are nothing if they are not critical, and even those in whom the critical prevails over the expository function, are very busy in this section of the Poem, detecting inconsequences of thought, rearranging the order of the Verses, or even putting them into other mouths than those of Job; the "higher criticism" being here, as too often elsewhere, mainly a censure of the author it examines or of the editors and commentators who have gone before it. By simply accepting the Poem as it stands, and patiently studying the intention and relation of its parts, we shall find, I hope, that no such heroic remedies, no such hazardous reconstructions, are required; that there is a truer order in the accepted form of this Soliloquy, and a finer meaning, than in any of the rearrangements of it by the critics whose "end" is too often "destruction," even when their aim is construction.

Looking at the Soliloquy as a whole, with a view to ascertain its true place and function in the Poem, there are three points which call for remark: (1) its connection with the polemic which has preceded it; (2) its connection with the harangue of Elihu which follows it; and (3) the conclusion in which, unaided as yet by God or man, Job settles down at the close of the controversy with his Friends.

1. As the waves of strife subside and the voices of

reproach are hushed, Job sinks—*rises*, rather—into a calmer, a more composed and reasonable, mood. Irritated by their “maxims of ashes,” resolute to demolish their “strongholds of clay” (Chap. xiii. 12), he had done some injustice to the arguments of the Friends, and had pushed his own counter-arguments to a point of excess at which they also grew to be untrue. But now that he has refuted and silenced them, now that he is sufficiently at leisure from himself to weigh the discussion fairly, he candidly admits both what had been true in their contention, and what had been untrue, because excessive, in his own. He still holds fast to his integrity (Chap. xxvii. 1-6), and sets it forth, with exquisite pathos, in that lovely picture of his “autumn days” contained in Chapters xxix. and xxxi. So, too, the sense of his misery still abides with him; he gives a new and most moving description of it in Chapter xxx., depicting himself as the offscouring of all things, the scorn of men whom all men scorned. And he still stands to it that he has done nothing to provoke or deserve his misery; that he has been grievously wronged: he exclaims at his wrong (Chap. xxvii. 2; xxx. 20-26), and both demands and implores redress from the Almighty (Chap. xxxi. 35-37). But he admits that in the history and experience of man there are clear tokens of that Divine Providence, and especially of that Law of Retribution, which he had called in question; that, *as a rule*, the wicked do not thrive, and that, *in the end*, the righteous do. Even now he does not grant, what the Friends had contended for, that all good men have easy lives, while all bad men are instantly punished for their sins, and that therefore loss and suffering are always proofs and

effects of the Divine displeasure. But he confesses that the real and ultimate doom of the wicked — their “doom *from God*,” their “heritage *from the Almighty*” (Chap. xxvii. 13), *i. e.*, the *ideal* doom to which their actual fate is always tending—is perdition; that they cannot for ever escape the pursuing Nemesis of their character and deeds, but must, sooner or later, be overtaken by it (Chap. xxvii. 8–23); and thus he paves the way for the admission that the exceptions to the retributive rule, which he had been tempted to rate as themselves the rule, are *only* exceptions to it, and that even these exceptions may be consistent with the Divine Justice and Goodness. He does not even yet see *how* they can consist with those attributes indeed; but what of that? Man, wise and inventive as he is on a lower plane, is utterly unable to comprehend and vindicate the ways of God; he may dig into the earth and detect its hidden stores, but he cannot climb into heaven and penetrate the very bosom of God. Wisdom belongs to Him alone; and man approaches wisdom only as he lives in the fear of God and hates the evil which He condemns (Chap. xxviii.). And so Job reaches, though by a somewhat different road, and to a very different end, the conclusion of Modern Science — that, while the faculties of man fit him for the investigation of physical phenomena, and enable him to turn them to account, he is unable, by searching, to find out God, to grasp the Eternal Substance, or Force, or Will, which lies behind the phenomena and informs them.

2. But while meditating on the controversy in which he had engaged with the Friends, while determining and formulating the conclusions to which it has led him, Job is also preparing the way for the advent of the

next actor on the scene, for the intervention of Elihu. When *he* speaks, Elihu, as we shall see, is indignant with the Friends because they cannot defend God without accusing Job, and with Job because he cannot defend himself without accusing God. He is sure that there must be some better way, some *via media*, some course by taking which they may steer clear both of the whirlpools and the rocks. The sufferings of the good *must* have an intention consistent at once with the justice of God and the integrity of man. And it surely is a subtle and admirable stroke of art that, before Elihu appears, we should be prepared for his advent by the frank admissions and modified conclusions of Job. For, in confessing his own ignorance, the impossibility that man should apprehend more than the bare "edges" of God's ways, and by granting that Wisdom dwells with God alone, he does virtually admit that God may, and must, have an intention such as that for which Elihu afterward contends in imposing loss and suffering on the upright and the good.

3. It is but fitting, moreover, that we should learn how far Job was able to go *alone*, without help, whether from God or man; to what conclusion he was able to come when, no longer driven to passionate exaggeration by the excitements of controversy, he could adopt all that was substantially true in the arguments of the Friends and discard all that savoured of excess in his own arguments. This conclusion, stated with singular pomp and elaboration in Chapter xxviii., is a very remarkable one. It is remarkable for two reasons: (*a*) for its blended sublimity and humility, and (*β*) because it is but "the abstract and brief chronicle" of Job's own character and life.

(α) In face of the great mysteries by which he is surrounded and perplexed, he concludes that "the place of Understanding" is beyond the reach or ken of man; that Wisdom dwells with God, and, if it come to them at all, can only "come" *from Him* to men; and that, so far as it has come, "the fear of the Lord, that is wisdom, and to eschew evil, that is understanding." With a proud humility, with a strange blending of loftiness and lowliness, he confesses that man is wise, not as he comprehends and can vindicate the ways of God, but in proportion as he reverentially submits to them and adopts them for his own, pursuing that which God has pronounced good, eschewing that which He has condemned as evil. And though to some minds this definition of Wisdom may seem indefinite and mystical, it may be doubted whether any finer or more practical definition of it is even yet to be attained, whether it is not at bottom accepted alike by sceptic and believer.¹

(β) Sublime as it is and worthy of all acceptation, it is, after all, only an abstract translation of the moral character of Job himself, a point somewhat hidden from us by the fact that in our Authorized Version the same Hebrew are not rendered by the same English words. In Chapter i. Verse 8, and again in Chapter ii. Verse 3, Job is described by Jehovah Himself as "one that *feareth God* and *escheweth evil*." And in Chapter xxviii. Verse 28, the secret of true Wisdom is declared in these very words, "Lo, *the fear of the Lord*, that is wisdom, and to *eschew evil* (Authorized Version, "to depart from evil"), that is understanding." So that, in God's eye, *Job* was the very wise man whom

¹ See Commentary on Chap. xxviii. 28.

He here describes, though of all men he himself would have been most surprised to hear it.

But while this end and conclusion is stated with rare elaboration, and with solemn and impressive beauty, in Chapter xxviii., we should not give it its due weight did we not observe that, besides its formal statement in this Chapter, it really pervades and dominates this whole section of the Poem. The way is prepared for it even in Job's final answer to Bildad (Chap. xxvi.), in which he sets forth the universal presence and rule of God in a strain of unusual grandeur, acknowledging and insisting that the Divine Majesty is to be seen, not in heaven alone, but also in Hades, in the earth, in the waters of the firmament and in the waters of the sea, in storm and calm, and in all the events and changes of time. To grasp and comprehend that Majesty is impossible; it is at once too subtle and too vast. We can but see "the edges" of God's ways; we can but hear "a slight whisper" of his voice: the full volume and "thunder of his power" is wholly beyond us. This is the prelude to the noble strain of Chapter xxviii., and is set in the same key with it. And the same strain underlies all the variations of the Chapters which succeed it. Since the fear of the Lord is at once the beginning and the end of wisdom, the fellowship and favour of the Lord must be the sum and crown of human blessedness. It is the loss of this fellowship which we shall hear Job most of all deploring (Chaps. xxix.-xxxi.); it is the recollection of this fellowship which throws the most winning light on the happy days "when the favour of God was on his tent;" it is the restoration of this fellowship which he craves above all else. No less

than six times in the brief compass of four Verses (Chap. xxix. 2-5) does he refer to it as the crowning felicity of his happier estate; and, throughout the Second Monologue, it is either the memory of that Divine communion, or the longing to recover it, which rules his thoughts and gives form and colour to his words.

FIRST MONOLOGUE.

CHAP. XXVII. 1.—*Then Job took up his strain and said :*

2. *As God liveth, who hath denied me justice,*
 And the Almighty, who hath embittered my soul,
3. *All the while my breath is in me,*
 And the spirit of God in my nostrils,
4. *My lips shall not speak iniquity,*
 Nor my tongue utter deceit !
5. *Be it far from me to grant that you are in the right ;*
 Till I breathe my last I will not give up my integrity :
6. *I hold fast my righteousness and will not let it go ;*
 My heart shall not upbraid me so long as I live.
7. *May my foe be like the wicked,*
 And he that riseth up against me like the impious !
8. *For what can the impious hope for, though he get him gain,*
 When God shall require his soul ?
9. *Will God hear his cry*
 When trouble cometh upon him ?
10. *Can he delight himself in the Almighty,*
 And at all times invoke the Most High ?
11. *I will teach you of the hand of God,*
 I will not hide that which is with the Almighty.
12. *Behold, ye yourselves have all seen it ;*
 Why then speak ye thus vainly ?
13. *This is the doom of the wicked man from God,*
 And this the heritage of oppressors from the Almighty :—
14. *If his children be multiplied, it is for the sword,*
 And his offspring shall not be satisfied with bread ;
15. *His survivors shall be buried by the Pest,*
 And their widows shall not bewail them :

16. *Though he heap up silver like dust,
 And gather robes as mire,*
17. *That which he hath gathered shall the righteous wear,
 And the innocent shall divide his silver :*
18. *He buildeth his house like a moth,
And as a booth which the keeper of a vineyard runneth up :*
19. *He lieth down rich, but it is for the last time ;
 When he openeth his eyes he is no more :*
20. *Terrors overtake him like a flood,
 A whirlwind filcheth him away by night ,*
21. *The East wind catcheth him up and he is gone,
 It hurleth him out of his place :*
22. *God shall cast evils upon him, and spare not,
 Though he would fain escape out of His hand ;*
23. *Men clap their hands at him,
 And hiss him out of his place.*

- CHAP. XXVIII. 1.—*Surely there is a vein for silver,
 And a place for the gold which men wash out ;*
2. *Iron may be taken from the earth,
 And the rock be smelted for copper.*
3. *[The miner] maketh an end of darkness,
 And searcheth through all its limits
For the stones of darkness and of the blackness of death ;*
4. *He sinketh a shaft far from the habitations of men,
 He is forgotten of those who walk above,
 He swingeth suspended afar from men :*
5. *The underparts of the earth, out of which cometh forth bread,
 Are stirred up as if by fire :*
6. *The rocks are the sapphire's bed,
 And yield him gold-dust.*
7. *That path ! no bird of prey knoweth it,
 Nor hath the eye of the hawk scanned it ;*
8. *No proudly-pacing beast hath trodden it,
 Nor lion passed by upon it.*
9. *He putteth forth his hand against the quartz,
 He turneth up the mountains from their base ;*
10. *He cutteth out canals among the rocks,
 And his eye detecteth every precious thing ;*
11. *He bindeth up waters so that they weep not,
 And bringeth that which is hidden to light.*

12. *But Wisdom—where shall she be gotten?
And where is the place of Understanding?*
13. *Man knoweth not her haunt,
For she is not to be found in the land of the living:*
14. *The abyss saith, "She is not in me;"
And the sea saith, "Nor with me:"*
15. *Choice gold cannot purchase her,
Nor silver be weighed out as her price:*
16. *She cannot be bought with the ingot of Ophir,
With the precious onyx and the sapphire;*
17. *Brigit gold and crystal cannot compete with her,
Nor can she be bartered for vessels of fine gold;*
18. *No mention shall be made of diamonds or gems,
And the price of Wisdom is beyond pearls;*
19. *The topaz of Cush cannot compare with her,
Nor shall she be weighed with pure gold.*
20. *Whence, then, shall Wisdom come,
And where is the place of Understanding,*
21. *Since it is hidden from the eyes of all living,
And kept close from the fowl of heaven?*
22. *Abaddon and Death say,
"Only the rumour of it hath reached our ears!"*
23. *God understandeth the way thereof,
And He—He knoweth its place;*
24. *For He looketh to the ends of the earth,
And seeth all that is under heaven.*
25. *When He made a weight for the wind,
And meted out the waters by measure;*
26. *When He made a law for the rain,
And a pathway for the flash with its voice of thunder,*
27. *Then He beheld and declared it,
He gave it its place, and tested it:*
28. *And to man He said, "Lo, the fear of the Lord, that is Wisdom,
And to eschew evil, that is Understanding."*

CHAPTER XXVII. *Verses 2-4.* The First Monologue opens with an oath. This oath—"as God liveth"—is the first we hear from the lips of Job, and appropriately introduces the more rich and elevated music of this

high "strain." He summons Jehovah, his "Witness" and his "Redeemer," to attest his integrity, even while "he professes to have received but sinister measure from his Judge." This faith in the justice of the God who has "denied him justice," and in the goodness of the God who has "embittered his soul," while it is a special note of Job's character, is not unknown to many who since his day have been perplexed and saddened by the wrongs of time. He does but glance in passing, however, at the fact that God has been moved against him "without cause"—a charge which Jehovah Himself confesses to be true (Chap. ii. 3), and which, therefore, we cannot blame Job for asserting. It is his integrity, and not his wrongs, by which his thoughts are occupied for the moment; and what he emphatically affirms in these Verses is that, as surely as God lives and as long as he himself lives, he will not blemish his integrity by stooping to the "iniquity" and "deceit" of confessing sins of which he is unconscious or of which he is consciously innocent. He lives only by the "breath" or "spirit" of God, which, breathed into his nostrils, made him "a living soul:" to be untrue to himself would be to sin against that "spirit," and so to forfeit his true life.

This reaffirmation of his integrity he proceeds to develop in *Verses* 5 and 6; and if the assertion of his righteousness sound overbold, we must remember both that he asserts it only against the utterly unfounded charges of the Friends, and that even a Christian Apostle, who confessed himself to be the "chief" of sinners, could also say (1 Cor. iv. 4), "I know *nothing* against myself;" *i.e.*, he was utterly unconscious of any wilful guilt, any guilt of which *men* could fairly

charge him, while yet he admitted that he was not thereby "justified" before the Lord. So Job, as he confronts men, can honestly say, "My heart does not reproach any of my days, and shall not so long as I live," and yet, when bending before God, confess, "I am vile."

Verse 7 is a point of transition; and however we translate it—and it is so charged with emotion as to be very difficult to convey from one language to another—it must not be taken as an imprecation, but rather as affirming that it is not Job himself, but his enemies and gainsayers, those who branded him as wicked, who are really wicked; it is they who, in condemning him, condemn themselves. And hence, though the Verse is emotional and ejaculatory in form, we shall do well to take as at least an alternative rendering of it:—

It is my foe who is like the wicked,
And he that riseth up against me who is like the impious.

From this Verse onward some critics, from Verse 13 onward many critics, assume, simply from internal evidence, that words are put into Job's mouth which really belong to Zophar; that, in fact, we have here that third speech of his, of which, as the Poem stands, we have no record; or that, at least, Job is here stating the view held by the Friends, and not his own view. There are, however, many reasons in the structure of these Verses which render any such theory improbable, though with these we need not concern ourselves, since a really careful and sympathetic study of the Verses proves them to be perfectly appropriate—necessary even to the development of the Poem—in the mouth of Job, and shews the conjectures of the "higher cri-

ticism" to be wholly unnecessary.¹ It is quite true that, in opposition to the Friends, Job had argued that the wicked often pass their days in mirth and affluence, and end them by a sudden and painless death. But he nowhere affirms, as we have seen (*Vide* Comments on Chaps. xxi. and xxiv.), that *all* the wicked are thus fortunate, or, in a deeper sense, unfortunate, or that a due retribution *never* overtakes them; so that he may now very consistently give us the darker, as before he had given us the lighter, aspect of their lot. And, moreover, is a man, a man, too, who "above all other strifes contends to know himself," to learn nothing from experience, from long and painful meditation on human character and destiny? Is a poet, and a poet who "takes all knowledge for his province," to conduct a long and intricate argument without advancing toward his conclusion, or even without holding any conclusion

¹ Perhaps I may take this opportunity of recommending those who have been distressed and perplexed by the way in which this school has handled the Bible, and especially the poetry of the Bible, to study their treatment of the great masters of classical and modern times—Shakespeare, for instance, and Virgil. Their feeble, contradictory, and ludicrous assumptions and conclusions on this lower range of literature are the best tonic for any who tremble lest the Bible should ultimately suffer harm or loss at their hands. Mr. Myers has exposed their arrogance and absurd incompetency in a very able article on Virgil in "The Fortnightly Review," from which I take a single brief extract. "Thus one of them objects to Dido's 'auburn tress' on the ground that a widow's hair *should be* of a darker colour! Another questions whether a broken heart can be properly termed 'a fresh wound,' if a lady has been suffering from it for *more than a week!*" While Ribbeck, one of the highest critics of this higher school, "alters the text of Virgil, in defiance of all the manuscripts, because the poet's picture (*Aeneid*, xii. 55) of Amata, 'self-doomed to die, clasping for the last time her impetuous son-in-law,' seems to him tame and unsatisfactory. By the alteration of *moritura* into *monitura*, he is able to represent Amata as clinging to Turnus, not 'with the intention of killing herself,' but 'with the intention of giving advice,' *which he considers as the more impressive and fitting attitude for a mother-in-law!*" For myself, I am profoundly thankful to these gentlemen for having taken Shakespeare in hand; for till I read their prelections on his "works," I was not sure to what this high *a priori* criticism might lead, and never suspected what *idiots* (in the classical sense of the word) they might be, or of what very "*private* interpretations" they were capable.

in view? is he, "like the damned in the Grecian Tartarus, to spin for ever on the same wheel, round the same pivot"? Surely we might fairly have blamed the Poet, as deficient both in the dramatic instinct and in the art of reasonable discussion, if he had *not* portrayed Job as advancing, through meditation and discussion, and above all under the pressure of painful and wider experience, to larger and more settled views of human destiny; and as making that advance mainly when the confusing excitements of controversy were subsiding, and the voice of reason could be more clearly heard.

And in these Verses Job does, as has been said, both modify, or complete, his view of the lot of the wicked, and state it more temperately, adopting whatever he felt to be true in the contention of the Friends. But it is to be observed that, while Job in part adopts that contention, he holds it with a vital difference, draws a wholly opposite conclusion from it, and turns it *against* the very position which they had assumed. He grants what they had affirmed, what he himself had questioned, that to be wicked is to be miserable, though even yet he does not affirm, as they had done, either that to be wicked is to be in all cases *instantly* miserable, or that *all* the miserable must be wicked. But why does he grant it? Only to refute their inference from it. They had held up the doom of the wicked before him as a mirror in which he was to *see himself*, and confess that *he* was wicked; and now he holds up this selfsame mirror before them, that *they may see themselves* in it, and confess that it is not he, but his traducers and gainsayers (See Note on Verse 7) who are really wicked in the sight of God. To take these

Verses from the mouth of Job, and to put them into the lips of Zophar or any of the Friends, is therefore to shew an entire misapprehension of their true scope and meaning. The critics who are guilty of it simply condemn themselves as lacking in the literary instinct and power on which they found their claim to a "higher criticism" than that of their fellows. Exalting themselves, they are abased.

These general remarks furnish the key to the whole Chapter. From this point of view, what *Verses 7-12* really come to is this: "I cannot and will not belie my conscience by confessing the sins with which you have charged me. It is not *I* that am wicked, but *you* who rise up against me with censures for which you can adduce no proof, which you simply infer from the calamities laid upon me. Your pictures of the doom of the wicked are not true of me; for while *he* has no hope in his death, *I* look for a judgment to come, in which my integrity will be vindicated and my wrongs redressed: while *he* cannot call upon God in his trouble, *I* am incessantly calling on Him, and beseeching Him to shew Himself to me: while *he* cannot delight himself in God, *I* feel his favour to be life, and his lovingkindness better than life. *His* lot is not mine; his doom is not mine. What his real heritage is, his 'heritage from the Almighty,' I will teach you, though indeed ye have all seen it for yourselves and proclaimed it. Why, then, having seen it, do ye thus vainly contend that my lot resembles his?"

To this general interpretation of the Verses nothing need be added, perhaps, except a brief note on *Verse 8*. The word here used for "gain" denotes "*wrongful gain*," the implication being that all that the wicked ac-

quire is wrongfully acquired, does not properly belong to them, has at least the evil taint which rests on the possessions of those who "love money" and make it their god. The word translated "*require*"—a fine strong word, very suitable here, when we remember the meaning put into it by Him who said, "This night shall thy soul be *required* of thee"—means literally to "draw out," and implies that the reluctant soul of the opulent but unrighteous man will be drawn out of the body to which it clings, as a rusty sword is drawn from its rusted scabbard: the line might be rendered, "When God shall *unsheath* his soul," and in that rendering of it is rife with food for meditation. But the most noticeable point in the Verse is "the instinctive and ineradicable faith" in an after-life implied in it. Quite unconsciously, Job betrays how deeply the conviction expressed in the Monumental Inscription (Chap. xix. 23-27) had entered into his soul, how profoundly he now believed that "there is another comfort than this world." For if there were no retributive life to come, how could there be any question of what a man may hope for "when God shall require his soul"? And yet how carelessly, as it were, how naturally and instinctively, how much as matter of course, Job assumes that even the godless man has *something* to look for at that supreme moment!

Verses 13-23 contain Job's formal and final statement of the doom and heritage of the wicked man; that which pertains to him by a Divine decree, *i.e.*, by a natural propriety and fitness; that ideal destiny which is in the mind of the Almighty, and will sooner or later come from it; that doom which is the proper and natural issue of his character and ways in the judg-

ment of God, and which must therefore be reached at last. Just as Shakespeare makes Gratiano say to the still wealthy "Merchant of Venice,"

You have too much respect upon the world;
They lose it that do buy it with much care;

so Job declares of the wicked man, however prosperous he may be for the moment, that the general law of his case is, that those who gain wealth and power unjustly, who "fear not God nor regard man," lose, and must lose, what they have bought with so much care and pains. There is a doom in their very deeds; their very character doth "presage some ill event;" they may escape it for a time, and for a long time, but in due time they infallibly get their due.

So far Job modifies his former statements. Whereas he had spoken of the wicked as not receiving the due reward of their deeds, at least in their own persons and during the brief span of time (Chap. xxi. 19-21), that "ceaseless lackey of eternity," he now admits that, despite apparent exceptions, the law of retribution holds good, that it *is* the law, that God has appointed and will execute it. Looking out on human life as a whole, he confesses that to be bad *is* to be miserable and accursed, that sin carries its own penalty within itself; and to this thesis he gives a highly wrought and highly coloured expression. Sword, Famine, and Pestilence are, according to him, the three avenging furies which pursue and overtake the proud self-confident sinner, and even his offspring and survivors (*Verses 14 and 15*): and no doubt he selects these three—Pestilence, Famine, Sword—because they were the calamities most common in the East and most

“feared of man.” He *had* complained that the wicked “send forth their children like a flock” (Chap. xxi. 11); he now confesses that, numerous as they may be, they are all “for the sword.” He had complained that their “loins were full of fat” (Chap. xxi. 24); he now admits that they “shall not be satisfied with bread.” He had complained that no scourge of God fell on them, that they were borne to the tomb with pomp and that watch was kept over their pile (Chap. xxi. 9, 32); he now foresees and admits that they will be smitten by the pestilence; nay, in a fine impersonation, he depicts them as “buried by the Pest,” as denied, that is, the usual funeral solemnities, as hurried to an unknown grave, unmourned and unwept even by those who loved them best. What boots their wealth in silver and in “robes”?—this latter being one of the commonest forms of wealth in the East, where, to this day, changes of raiment and costly and begemmed dresses of state are customary presents. Let them gather them up like “mire”—a familiar Biblical emblem of the abundance in which even things most costly lose their value. They will but enrich the righteous when the avenging Nemesis sweeps away the evil-doer and his offspring (*Verses* 16 and 17). What though their “house” be sumptuous as a palace and strong as a fortress? In the day of vengeance it will prove frail as the silky cocoon woven by the moth, or the booth run up of mats and sticks in which, for the brief weeks of harvest, the watchman of the vineyard protected the harvest from the depredations of thieves, birds, wild beasts, and wandering cattle (*Verse* 18). Kindling and rising as he speaks, Job throws off (in *Verses* 19-23) a series of graphic figures, each of which sets

forth the doom that awaits the unrighteous, emphasizing especially the suddenness and the utterness of his overthrow. In *Verse* 19, which is somewhat obscure, he seems to pourtray the sinner who has grown wealthy by wrong as lying down rich at night, without suspecting that it is for the last time, though it is the last; or as opening his eyes in the morning, without suspecting that he shall never open them again, though Death is about to close them for ever. In *Verses* 20 and 21—still to denote the sudden and violent surprise of his end, and so presenting another aspect of that sudden death which Job had once reckoned (Chap. xxi. 13) among the blessings of the prosperous wicked—he introduces the metaphors of the flood, the whirlwind, and the east wind, storms with an east wind being very rare in the East, but so severe and destructive when they do occur as to smite down whole villages and to uproot the largest trees. And, in *Verses* 22 and 23, he pourtrays God and man as turning against the poor wretch with whom all the forces of Nature are at strife—God shooting or raining down upon him a succession of evils from above, which it is impossible for him to escape; while, below, men “clap their hands” at him—an Eastern token of malignant delight, and “hiss him out of his place”—hissing being all the world over a token of hatred and contempt.

The description is so tremendous as almost to quicken our sympathy with the hunted and abandoned fugitive who meets the menacing glare of Death and Ruin at every turn. And perhaps we ought not to be surprised that certain critics—save that it is the very office and function of the critic to detect the more subtle strokes of intention and art—find this descrip-

tion of the lot and doom of the wicked so opposed to the earlier descriptions given by Job, that they are disposed to ascribe it to other lips than his. There is, however, not only, as we have seen, no need thus to recast the passage; but, further, we absolutely cannot do it without snapping many subtle links of connection between this and other parts of the Poem, and so impairing its unity and its force. If, for example, we turn to Chapter xxi. — the Chapter to which we have so often referred, since in this Chapter Job most fully delineates the prosperity of the wicked, and seems at the farthest remove from his present mood—we may see that that delineation is most craftily qualified, and that all sympathy with it is openly repudiated. After elaborating a description of their prosperity (Chap. xxi. 7–15) which reads like a pastoral idyll, so subtle-sweet is its music, he himself bids us mark (*Verse* 16) that after all “their prosperity is *not in their own hand*,” but in the hand of God. He calls our attention to this fact as though to set us thinking of the insecure tenure on which their prosperity is held, if not on the certainty that, God being just, it is doomed to perdition. And, then, in the same *Verse*, as if *he* discerned some horror in the distance which *we* cannot see, he breaks into the formula of aversion and abhorrence: “*Far from me* be the counsel of the wicked!” Is it not as if he forewarned us that there is another and a darker aspect of their lot which he cannot yet delineate, but which renders the mere thought of sharing their prosperity horrible to him, too horrible to be entertained for a moment? And if he now (in Chap. xxvii.) delineates that darker aspect, what ground have we for pronounc-

ing him inconsistent and for taking his words out of his mouth ?

We must also, if we would judge him fairly, consider the end he had in view *then* and *now*. *Then*, he was bent on meeting Zophar's extravagant and reckless dogma (Chap. xx.) that the wicked are *always and instantly* arrested by the due punishment of their sins, and that *none but* the wicked suffer such things as these. And he meets the assertion of this crude and cruel dogma by citing patent and notorious facts which ran right in its teeth, by adducing the long-continued prosperity enjoyed by some of the wickedest of men, and the terrible and crushing adversities which at least some good men are called to endure. But, *now*, his end is different, and he approaches it by a different road. The Friends had wanted him to see himself in their portraiture of the lot and fate of the wicked man. And he meets them, not by denying the truth of their description, but by shewing them that *it was not true of him*. It is not simply that

No more can they distinguish of a man
Than of his outward show ; which, God He knows,
Seldom or never jumpeth with the heart.

What Job affirms of them is that they have failed to read and interpret even the "outward show" of his life. And so he takes up the pencil they had dropped, draws the lot and fate of the wicked in still more terrible lines and hues than theirs, and then defies them to trace any resemblance in it to his own lot and fate. His children had *not* been destroyed by sword, famine, and pestilence, but by the immediate hand of God. His wealth had *not* been transferred to the righteous, but carried off by caterans. He had *not*

been surprised out of life in a moment as by a flood or a whirlwind, but condemned to a lingering malady, a living death. And, above all, instead of fleeing from God, and seeking to escape the evils rained down upon him from Heaven, he had fled to God, and was still knocking at his gate, pursuing Him with the inquest of his beseeching looks, besieging Him with his importunate cries for justice and redress, content to risk, and even to endure, all evils, if only he might find God and speak with Him. And, surely, there is no inconsistency here, but rather a subtle harmony and concert.

S. COX.

FAITH AS A GRAIN OF MUSTARD SEED.

ST. MATTHEW xvii. 20 ; ST. LUKE xvii. 6.

THE view of the meaning of the words, *If ye have faith as a grain of mustard seed*, generally taken is that set forth by Chrysostom :¹ " To indicate that even the least degree of genuine faith can do great things, He mentioned the mustard seed ;" and more recently and vigorously by Olshausen (*in loc.*) : " If ye have faith ready, and hold it fast for the moment when ye are called to use it and to prove it, all distinction between little and much, small and great faith, then falls to the ground : the smallest measure of real living power of faith, disturbed at the moment by no unbelief and doubt, is sufficient to accomplish the greatest things." According to this, the traditional and now current interpretation, the point of comparison is the smallness of the mustard seed. Trench² refers to another view : " Faith as a grain of mustard seed means lively faith,

¹ Homily on Matthew xvii. 20.

² " Miracles," p. 370.