
JOB 6: 1 Then Job answered,

Job answers, and vindicates himself; and shows that the great affliction which he suffered was the cause of his complaining, by which life was rendered burdensome to him, Job 6:1-13. He complains that, whereas he expected consolation from his friends, he had received nothing but the bitterest reproaches, on the assumed ground that he must be a wicked man, else God would not so grievously afflict him, Job 6:14-20. He shows them that they knew nothing of his case, and that they had no compassion, Job 6:21-23. And then entreats them, if they can, to show him in what he has offended, as he is ready to acknowledge and correct every trespass, Job 6:24-30.

JOB 6: 2 "Oh that my anguish were weighed, and all my calamity laid in the balances!

Verse 2

O that my grief were thoroughly weighed - Job wished to be dealt with according to justice; as he was willing that his sins, if they could be proved, should be weighed against his sufferings; and if this could not be done, he wished that his sufferings and his complainings might be weighed together; and it would then be seen that, bitter as his complaint had been, it was little when compared with the distress which occasioned it.

JOB 6: 3 For now it would be heavier than the sand of the seas, therefore have my words been rash.

Verse 3

Heavier than the sand of the sea - This includes two ideas: their number was too great to be counted; their weight was too great to be estimated.

JOB 6: 4 For the arrows of the Almighty are within me. My spirit drinks up their poison. The terrors of God set themselves in array against me.

Verse 4

The arrows of the Almighty - There is an evident reference here to wounds inflicted by poisoned arrows; and to the burning fever occasioned by such wounds, producing such an intense parching thirst as to dry up all the moisture in the system, stop all the salivary ducts, thicken and inflame the blood, induce putrescency, and terminate in raging mania, producing the most terrifying images, from which the patient is relieved only by death. This is strongly expressed in the fine figure: The Poison Drinketh Up my Spirit; the Terrors of God Set Themselves in Array against me. That calamities are represented among the Eastern writers as the arrows of the Almighty, we have abundant proofs. In reference to this, I shall adduce that fine saying attributed to Aaly, the son-in-law of Mohammed

in the Toozuki Teemour; which I have spoken of elsewhere. "It was once demanded of the fourth califf (Aaly), 'If the canopy of heaven were a bow; and if the earth were the cord thereof; and if calamities were the arrows; if mankind were the mark for those arrows; and if Almighty God, the tremendous and glorious, were the unerring Archer; to whom could the sons of Adam flee for protection?' The califf answered, 'The sons of Adam must flee unto the Lord.'" This fine image Job keeps in view in the eighth and ninth verses, wishing that the unerring marksman may let fly these arrows, let loose his hand, to destroy and cut him off.

JOB 6: 5 Does the wild donkey bray when he has grass? Or does the ox low over his fodder?

Verse 5

Doth the wild ass - פֶּרֶא pere, translated onager, by the Vulgate, from the ονοϋ αγριος of the Septuagint, which we properly enough, translate wild ass. It is the same with the tame ass; only in a wild state it grows to a larger size, is stronger, and more fleet. The meaning of Job appears to be this: You condemn me for complaining; do I complain without a cause? The wild ass will not bray, and the ox will not low, unless in want. If they have plenty of provender, they are silent. Were I at rest, at ease, and happy, I would not complain.

JOB 6: 6 Can that which has no flavour be eaten without salt? Or is there any taste in the white of an egg?

Verse 6

Can that which is unsavoury - Mr. Good renders this verse as follows: Doth insipid food without a mixture of salt, yea, doth the white of the egg give forth pungency? Which he thus illustrates: "Doth that which hath nothing of seasoning, nothing of a pungent or irritable power within it, produce pungency or irritation? I too should be quiet and complain not, if I had nothing provocative or acrimonious, but, alas! the food I am doomed to partake of is the very calamity which is most acute to my soul - that which I most loathe, and which is most grievous or trying to my palate." Some render the original, Is there any dependence on the drivel of dreams? There have been a great variety of interpretations given of this verse. I could add another; but that of Mr. Good is as likely to be correct as that of any other critic.

JOB 6: 7 My soul refuses to touch them. They are as loathsome food to me.

JOB 6: 8 "Oh that I might have my request, that God would grant the thing that I long for,

Verse 8

O that I might have - As Job had no hope that he should ever be redeemed from his present helpless state, he earnestly begs God to shorten it by taking away his life.

JOB 6: 9 even that it would please God to crush me; that he would let loose his hand, and cut me off!

Verse 9

Let loose his hand - A metaphor taken from an archer drawing his arrow to the head, and then loosing his hold, that the arrow may fly to the mark. See on Job 6:4 (note).

JOB 6: 10 Be it still my consolation, yes, let me exult in pain that doesn't spare, that I have not denied the words of the Holy One.

Verse 10

Then should I yet have comfort - Instead of **טוֹב** od, Yet, three of Kennicott's and De Rossi's MSS. have **טוֹחַ** zoth, This. And This should be my comfort. The expectation that he will speedily make an end of me would cause me to rejoice with great joy. This reading is supported by the Vulgate and the Chaldee.

I would harden myself in sorrow - To know that I should shortly have an end put to my miseries would cause me to endure the present with determinate resolution. Let him not spare - let him use whatever means he chooses, for I will not resist his decree; he is holy, and his decrees must be just.

JOB 6: 11 What is my strength, that I should wait? What is my end, that I should be patient?

Verse 11

What is my strength - I can never suppose that my strength will be restored; and, were that possible, have I any comfortable prospect of a happy termination of my life? Had I any prospect of future happiness, I might well bear my present ills; but the state of my body and the state of my circumstances preclude all hope.

JOB 6: 12 Is my strength the strength of stones? Or is my flesh of brass?

Verse 12

Is my strength the strength of stones? - I am neither a rock, nor is my flesh brass, that I can endure all these calamities. This is a proverbial saying, and exists in all countries. Cicero says, Non enim est saxo sculptus, aut e Robore dolatus Homo; habet corpus, habet animum; movetur mente, movetur sensibus. "For man is not chiselled out of the rock, nor hewn out of the oak; he has a body, and he has a soul; the one is actuated by intellect, the other by the senses." Quaest. Acad. iv. 31. So Homer, where he represents Apollo urging the Trojans to attack the Greeks: - Νεμεσησε δ' Απολλων, Περγαμου εκκατιδων· Τρωεσσι δε κεκλετ' αυσας· Ορνυσθ', ιπποδαμοι Τρωες, μηδ' εικετε χαρμης

Αργείοις· επει ου σφίλιθος χρωσ, ουδε σιδηρος, Χαλκον ανασχεσθαι ταμεσιχροα βα λ λ ο μ ε ν
ο ι σ ι ν .

Illiad, lib. iv., ver. 507.

But Phoebus now from Ilion's towering height

Shines forth reveal'd, and animates the fight.

Trojans, be bold, and force to force oppose;

Your foaming steeds urge headlong on the foes!

Nor are their bodies rocks, nor ribb'd with steel;

Your weapons enter, and your strokes they feel.

Pope.

These are almost the same expressions as those in Job.

JOB 6: 13 Isn't it that I have no help in me, That wisdom is driven quite from me?

Verse 13

Is not my help in me? - My help is all in myself; and, alas! that is perfect weakness: and my subsistence, תושיה תושיה, all that is real, stable, and permanent, is driven quite from me. My friends have forsaken me, and I am abandoned to myself; my property is all taken away, and I have no resources left. I believe Job neither said, nor intended to say, as some interpreters have it, Reason is utterly driven from me. Surely there is no mark in this chapter of his being deranged, or at all impaired in his intellect.

JOB 6: 14 "To him who is ready to faint, kindness should be shown from his friend; even to him who forsakes the fear of the Almighty.

Verse 14

To him that is afflicted pity should be showed from his friend; but he forsaketh the fear of the Almighty - The Vulgate gives a better sense, Qui tollit ab amico suo misericordiam, timorem Domini dereliquit, "He who takes away mercy from his friend, hath cast off the fear of the Lord." The word לַמָּס lammas, which we render to him who is Afflicted, from מַסַּח masah, to dissolve, or waste away, is in thirty-two of Dr. Kennicott's and De Rossi's MSS. לְמֹסֵס lemoes, "to him that despiseth his friend;" and hence the passage may be read: To him who despiseth his friend, it is a reproach; and he will forsake the fear of the Almighty: or, as Mr. Good translates, "Shame to the man who despiseth his friend!

He indeed hath departed from the fear of the Almighty."

Eliphaz had, in effect, despised Job; and on this ground had acted any thing but the part of a friend towards him; and he well deserved the severe stroke which he here receives. A heathen said, *Amicus certus in re incerta cernitur*; the full sense of which we have in our common adage: -

A Friend in Need is a Friend Indeed.

Job's friends, so called, supported each other in their attempts to blacken the character of this worthy man; and their hand became the heavier, because they supposed the hand of God was upon him. To each of them, individually, might be applied the words of another heathen: - *Absentem qui rodit amicum*,

Qui non defendit alio culpante; solutos

Qui captat risus hominum, famamque dicacis,

Fingere qui non visa potest; commissa tacere

Qui nequit; hic niger est; hunc tu, Romane, caveto.

Hor. Satyr. lib. i., s. iv., ver. 81.

He who, malignant, tears an absent friend;

Or, when attack'd by others, don't defend;

Who trivial bursts of laughter strives to raise,

And courts, of prating petulance, the praise;

Of things he never saw who tells his tale,

And friendship's secrets knows not to conceal; -

This man is vile; here, Roman, fix your mark;

His soul's as black as his complexion's dark.

Francis.

JOB 6: 15 My brothers have dealt deceitfully as a brook, as the channel of brooks that pass away;

Verse 15

Have dealt deceitfully as a brook - There is probably an allusion here to those land torrents which make a sudden appearance, and as suddenly vanish; being produced by the rains that fall upon the mountains during the rainy season, and are soon absorbed by the thirsty sands over which they run. At first they seem to promise a permanent stream, and are noticed with delight by the people, who fill their tanks or reservoirs from their waters; but sometimes they are so large and rapid as to carry every thing before them: and then suddenly fail, so that there is no time to fill the tanks. The approach of Job's friends promised much of sympathy and compassion; his expectations were raised: but their conduct soon convinced him that they were physicians of no value; therefore he compares them to the deceitful torrents that soon pass away.

JOB 6: 16 Which are black by reason of the ice, in which the snow hides itself.

Verse 16

Blackish by reason of the ice - He represents the waters as being sometimes suddenly frozen, their foam being turned into the semblance of snow or hoar-frost: when the heat comes, they are speedily liquefied; and the evaporation is so strong from the heat, and the absorption so powerful from the sand, that they soon disappear.

JOB 6: 17 In the dry season, they vanish. When it is hot, they are consumed out of their place.

JOB 6: 18 The caravans that travel beside them turn aside. They go up into the waste, and perish.

Verse 18

The paths of their way - They sometimes forsake their ancient channels, which is a frequent case with the river Ganges; and growing smaller and smaller from being divided into numerous streams, they go to nothing and perish - are at last utterly lost in the sands.

JOB 6: 19 The caravans of Tema looked. The companies of Sheba waited for them.

Verse 19

The troops of Tema looked - The caravans coming from Tema are represented as arriving at those places where it was well known torrents did descend from the mountains, and they were full of expectation that here they could not only slake their thirst, but fill their girbas or water-skins; but when they arrive, they find the waters totally dissipated and lost. In vain did the caravans of Sheba wait for them; they did not reappear: and they were confounded, because they had hoped to find here refreshment and rest.

JOB 6: 20 They were distressed because they were confident. They came there, and were confounded.

JOB 6: 21 For now you are nothing. You see a terror, and are afraid.

Verse 21

For now ye are nothing - Ye are just to me as those deceitful torrents to the caravans of Tema and Sheba; they were nothing to them; ye are nothing to me. Ye see my casting down - Ye see that I have been hurried from my eminence into want and misery, as the flood from the top of the mountains, which is divided, evaporated, and lost in the desert.

And are afraid - Ye are terrified at the calamity that has come upon me; and instead of drawing near to comfort me, ye start back at my appearance.

JOB 6: 22 Did I say, 'Give to me?' or, 'Offer a present for me from your substance?'

Verse 22

Did I say, Bring unto me? - Why do you stand aloof? Have I asked you to bring me any presents? or to supply my wants out of your stores?

JOB 6: 23 or, 'Deliver me from the adversary's hand?' or, 'Redeem me from the hand of the oppressors?'

Verse 23

Or, Deliver me - Did I send to you to come and avenge me of the destroyers of my property, or to rescue my substance out of the hands of my enemies?

JOB 6: 24 "Teach me, and I will hold my peace. Cause me to understand wherein I have erred.

Verse 24

Teach me - Show me where I am mistaken. Bring proper arguments to convince me of my errors; and you will soon find that I shall gladly receive your counsels, and abandon the errors of which I may be convicted.

JOB 6: 25 How forcible are words of uprightness! But your reproof, what does it reprove?

Verse 25

How forcible are right words - A well-constructed argument, that has truth for its basis, is irresistible.

But what doth your arguing reprove? - Your reasoning is defective, because your premises are false; and your conclusions prove nothing, because of the falsity of the premises whence they are drawn. The last clause, literally rendered, is, What reproof, in a reproof from you? As you have proved no fault you have consequently reprov'd no vice. Instead of מַה נִמְרָצוּ mah nimretsu, "how forcible," מַה נִמְלֵצוּ mah nimletsu, "how savoury or pleasant," is the reading of two MSS., the Chaldee, and some of the rabbins. Both senses are good, but the common reading is to be preferred.

JOB 6: 26 Do you intend to reprove words, since the speeches of one who is desperate are as wind?

Verse 26

Do ye imagine to reprove words - Is it some expressions which in my hurry, and under the pressure of unprecedented affliction, I have uttered, that ye catch at? You can find no flaw in my conduct; would ye make me an Offender for a Word? Why endeavor to take such advantage of a man who complains in the bitterness of his heart, through despair of life and happiness?

JOB 6: 27 Yes, you would even cast lots for the fatherless, and make merchandise of your friend.

Verse 27

Ye overwhelm the fatherless - Ye see that I am as destitute as the most miserable orphan; would ye overwhelm such a one? and would you dig a pit for your friend - do ye lay wait for me, and endeavor to entangle me in my talk? I believe this to be the spirit of Job's words.

JOB 6: 28 Now therefore be pleased to look at me, for surely I shall not lie to your face.

Verse 28

Look upon me - View me; consider my circumstances; compare my words; and you must be convinced that I have spoken nothing but truth.

JOB 6: 29 Please return. Let there be no injustice. Yes, return again. My cause is righteous.

Verse 29

Return, I pray you - Reconsider the whole subject. Do not be offended. Yea, reconsider the subject; my righteousness is in it - my argumentation is a sufficient proof of my innocence.

JOB 6: 30 Is there injustice on my tongue? Can't my taste discern mischievous things?

Verse 30

Is there iniquity in my tongue? - Am I not an honest man? and if in my haste my tongue had uttered falsity, would not my conscience discern it? and do you think that such a man as your friend is would defend what he knew to be wrong?

I Have done what I could to make this chapter plain, to preserve the connection, and show the dependence of the several parts on each other; without which many of the sayings would have been very obscure. The whole chapter is an inimitable apology for what he had uttered, and a defense of his conduct. This might have ended the controversy, had not his friends been determined to bring him in guilty. They had prejudged his cause, and assumed a certain position, from which they were determined not to be driven.