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JOB 18: 1 Then Bildad the Shuhite answered,

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Bildad, in a speech of passionate invective, accuses Job of impatience and impiety, Job 18:1-4; shows the fearful end of the wicked and their posterity; and apparently applies the whole to Job, whom he threatens with the most ruinous end, vv. 5-21.

Verse 1

Then answered Bildad - The following analysis of this speech, by Mr. Heath, is judicious: "Bildad, irritated to the last degree that Job should treat their advice with so much contempt, is no longer able to keep his passions within the bounds of decency. He proceeds to downright abuse; and finding little attention given by Job to his arguments, he tries to terrify him into a compliance. To that end he draws a yet more terrible picture of the final end of wicked men than any yet preceding, throwing in all the circumstances of Job's calamities, that he might plainly perceive the resemblance, and at the same time insinuating that he had much worse still to expect, unless he prevented it by a speedy change of behavior. That it was the highest arrogance in him to suppose that he was of consequence enough to be the cause of altering the general rules of Providence, Job 18:4. And that it was much more expedient for the good of the whole, that he, by his example, should deter others from treading in the same path of wickedness and folly;" Job 18:5-7.

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JOB 18: 2 "How long will you hunt for words? Consider, and afterwards we will speak.

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Verse 2

How long will it be ere ye make an end - It is difficult to say to whom this address is made: being in the plural number, it can hardly be supposed to mean Job only. It probably means all present; as if he had said, It is vain to talk with this man, and follow him through all his quibbles: take notice of this, and then let us all deliver our sentiments fully to him, without paying any regard to his self-vindications. It must be owned that this is the plan which Bildad followed; and he amply unburdens a mind that was laboring under the spirit of rancour and abuse. Instead of How long will it be ere ye make an end of words? Mr. Good translates: "How long will ye plant thorns (irritating, lacerating, wounding invectives) among words?" translating the unusual term קִנְסֵי kintsey, thorns, instead of bounds or limits. The word קִנְסֵי kintsey may be the Chaldee form for קִצֵּי kitsey, the ן nun being inserted by the Chaldeans for the sake of euphony, as is frequently done; and it may be considered as the contracted plural from קָץ kats, a thorn, from קָץ kats, to lacerate, rather than קֵץ kets, an end, from קָצַח katsah, to cut off. Schultens and others have contended that קָנַץ kanats, is an Arabic word, used also in Hebrew; that (Arabic) kanasa, signifies to hunt, to lay snares; and hence (Arabic) maknas, a snare: and that the words should be translated, "How long will you put captious snares in words?" But I prefer קִנְסֵי kintsey, as being the Chaldee form for קִצֵּי kitsey, whether it be considered as expressing limits or thorns; as the whole instance is formed after the Chaldee model, as is evident, not only in the word in question, but also in לְמִלִּין lemillin, to words, the Chaldee plural instead of לְמִלִּים lemillim, the Hebrew plural.

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JOB 18: 3 Why are we counted as animals, which have become unclean in your sight?

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Verse 3

Counted as beasts - Thou treatest us as if we had neither reason nor understanding.

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JOB 18: 4 You who tear yourself in your anger, shall the earth be forsaken for you? Or shall the rock be removed out of its place?

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Verse 4

He teareth himself in his anger - Literally, Rending his own soul in his anger; as if he had said, Thou art a madman: thy fury has such a sway over thee that thou eatest thy own flesh. While thou treatest us as beasts, we see thee to be a furious maniac, destroying thy own life.

Shall the earth be forsaken for thee? - To say the least, afflictions are the common lot of men. Must God work a miracle in providence, in order to exempt thee from the operation of natural causes? Dost thou wish to engross all the attention and care of providence to thyself alone? What pride and insolence!

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JOB 18: 5 "Yes, the light of the wicked shall be put out, The spark of his fire shall not shine.

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Verse 5

The light of the wicked shall be put out - Some think it would be better to translate the original, "Let the light of the wicked be extinguished!" Thou art a bad man, and thou hast perverted the understanding which God hath given thee. Let that understanding, that abused gift, be taken away. From this verse to the end of the chapter is a continual invective against Job.

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JOB 18: 6 The light shall be dark in his tent. His lamp above him shall be put out.

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Verse 6

The light shall be dark in his tabernacle - His property shall be destroyed, his house pillaged, and himself and his family come to an untimely end.

His candle shall be put out - He shall have no posterity.

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JOB 18: 7 The steps of his strength shall be shortened. His own counsel shall cast him down.

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## Verse 7

The steps of his strength - Even in his greatest prosperity he shall be in straits and difficulties.

His own counsel - He shall be the dupe and the victim of his own airy, ambitious, and impious schemes.

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JOB 18: 8 For he is cast into a net by his own feet, and he wanders into its mesh.

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## Verse 8

For he is cast into a net - His own conduct will infallibly bring him to ruin. He shall be like a wild beast taken in a net; the more he flounders in order to extricate himself, the more he shall be entangled.

He walketh upon a snare - He is continually walking on the meshes of a net, by which he must soon be entangled and overthrown.

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JOB 18: 9 A snare will take him by the heel. A trap will catch him.

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## Verse 9

The gin shall take him - Houbigant reads the tenth before the ninth verse, thus: "The snare is laid for him in the ground, and a trap for him in the way. The gin shall take him by the heel, and the robber shall prevail against him." From the beginning of the seventh verse to the end of the thirteenth there is an allusion to the various arts and methods practiced in hunting. 1. A number of persons extend themselves in a forest, and drive the game before them, still straitening the space from a broad base to a narrow point in form of a triangle, so that the farther they go the less room have they on the right and left, the hunters lining each side, while the drovers with their dogs are coming up behind. "The steps of his strength shall be straitened," Job 18:7. 2. Nets, gins, and pitfalls, are laid or formed in different places, so that many are taken before they come to the point where the two lines close. "He is cast into a net, he walketh upon a snare - the trap is laid for him in the way - the snare in the ground," Job 18:8-10. 3. The howling of the dogs, with the shouts of the huntsmen, fill him with dismay, and cause him to run himself beyond his strength and out of breath. "Terrors shall make him afraid on every side, and shall drive him to his feet," Job 18:11. 4. While spent with hunger and fatigue, he is entangled in the spread nets; and the huntsman either pierces him with an arrow or spear, or cuts the sinews of his legs, so that he is easily captured and destroyed. "The robbers shall prevail against him," Job 18:9. "His strength is hunger-bitten, and destruction is ready at his side," Job 18:12. This latter verse is thus paraphrased by the Chaldee: "Let his first-born son be famished; and affliction be prepared for his wife."

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JOB 18: 10 A noose is hidden for him in the ground, a trap for him on the path.

JOB 18: 11 Terrors shall make him afraid on every side, and shall chase him at his heels.

JOB 18: 12 His strength shall be famished. Calamity shall be ready at his side.

JOB 18: 13 The members of his body shall be devoured. The firstborn of death shall devour his members.

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Verse 13

It shall devour the strength of his skin - This may refer to the elephant, or to the rhinoceros, whose skin scarcely any dart can pierce: but in the case referred to above, the animal is taken in a pitfall, and then the first-born of death - a sudden and overwhelming stroke - deprives him of life. See the account of hunting the elephant in the East at the end of the chapter, Job 18:21 (note). The Chaldee has: "The strength of his skin shall devour his flesh; and the angel of death shall consume his children."

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JOB 18: 14 He shall be rooted out of his tent where he trusts. He shall be brought to the king of terrors.

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Verse 14

His confidence shall be rooted out - His dwelling-place, how well soever fortified, shall now be deemed utterly insecure.

And it shall bring him to the king of terrors - Or, as Mr. Good translates, "And dissolution shall invade him as a monarch." He shall be completely and finally overpowered. The phrase king of terrors has been generally thought to mean death; but it is not used in any such way in the text. For בלהות למלך lemelech ballahoth, to the king of destructions, one of De Rossi's MSS. has כמלך kemelech, "as a king;" and one, instead of בלהות ballahoth, with ו vau holem, to indicate the plural, terrors or destructions, has בלהות ballahuth, with ו vau shurek, which is singular, and signifies terror, destruction. So the Vulgate seems to have read, as it translates, Et calcet super eum, quasi rex, interitis; "And shall tread upon him as a king or destroyer. Or as a king who is determined utterly to destroy him." On this verse the bishop of Killala, Dr. Stock, says, "I am sorry to part with a beautiful phrase in our common version, the king of terrors, as descriptive of death; but there is no authority for it in the Hebrew text." It may however be stated that death has been denominated by similar epithets both among the Greeks and Romans.

So Virgil, Aen. vi., ver. 100. -

Quando hic inferni janua regi Dicitur. "The gates of the king of hell are reported to be here."

And Ovid, Metam. lib. v., ver. 356, 359.

Inde tremit tellus: et rex pavit ipse silentium.

Hanc metuens cladem, tenebrosa sede tyrannus Exierat. "Earth's inmost bowels quake, and nature groans;

His terrors reach the direful King of Hell.

Fearing this destruction, the tyrant left his gloomy court."

And in Sophocles, (Oedip. Colon., ver. 1628, edit. Johnson). Εννυχίων ἀνάξ, Αἰδωνεύ. "O Pluto, king of shades."

That is, the invisible demon, who dwells in darkness impenetrable. Old Coverdale translates: Very fearfulnesse shall bringe him to the kynge.

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JOB 18: 15 There shall dwell in his tent that which is none of his. Sulfur shall be scattered on his habitation.

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#### Verse 15

It shall dwell in his tabernacle - Desolation is here personified, and it is said that it shall be the inhabitant, its former owner being destroyed. Brimstone shall be scattered upon his habitation, so that, like Sodom and Gomorrah, it may be an everlasting monument of the Divine displeasure. In the Persian poet Saady, we find a couplet which contains a similar sentiment: -

Purdeh daree meekund dar keesri Keesar ankeboot

Boomee Noobat meezund ber kumbed Afraseeab. "The spider holds the veil in the palace of Caesar; The owl stands sentinel on the watchtower of Afrasiab."

The palaces of those mighty kings are so desolate that the spider is the only chamberlain, and the owl the only sentinel. The web of the former is all that remains as a substitute for the costly veil furnished by the chamberlain in the palace of the Roman monarch; and the hooting of the latter is the only remaining substitute for the sound of drums and trumpets by which the guards were accustomed to be relieved at the watchtower of the Persian king. The word (Persic) Keesur, the same as kaiser or Caesar, is the term which the Asiatics always use when they designate the Roman emperor. Afrasiab was an ancient king who invaded and conquered Persia about seven hundred years before the Christian era. After having reigned twelve years, he was defeated and slain by Zalzer and his son, the famous Rustem. The present reigning family of Constantinople claim descent from this ancient monarch.

Brimstone shall be scattered upon his habitation - This may either refer to the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah, as has already been intimated, or to an ancient custom of fumigating houses with brimstone, in order to purify them from defilement. Pliny says, Hist. Nat., lib. xxxv., c. 15, speaking of the uses of sulphur, Habet et in religionibus locum ad expiandas suffitu domos; which Dr. Holland paraphrases thus: "Moreover brimstone is employed ceremoniously in hallowing of houses; for many are of opinion that the perfume and burning thereof will keep out all enchantments; yea, and drive away foul fiends and evil sprites that do haunt a place."

Ovid refers to the same, De Arte. Am., lib. ii. ver. 329.

Et veniat, quae lustret anus lectumque locumque:

Praeferat et tremula sulphur et ova manu.

This alludes to the ceremony of purifying the bed or place in which a sick person was confined; an old woman or nurse was the operator, and eggs and sulphur were the instruments of purification.

On this and other methods of purgation see an excellent note in Servius on these words of Virgil, Aen. vi., ver. 740. -

Aliae panduntur inanes

Suspensae ad ventos: aliis sub gurgite vasto

Infectum eluitur scelus, aut exuritur igni. "For this are various penances subjoin'd;

And some are hung to bleach upon the wind;

Some plunged in waters, others, plunged in fires."

Unde etiam, says Servius, in sacris Liberi omnibus tres sunt istae purgationes: nam aut taeda purgantur et sulphure, aut aqua abluuntur, aut aere ventilantur. "These three kinds of purgation are used in the rites of Bacchus: they are purged by flame and sulphur, or washed in water, or ventilated by the winds."

But it is most likely that Bildad, in his usual uncharitable manner, alludes to the destruction of Job's property and family by winds and fire: for the Fire of God fell from heaven and burnt up the sheep and the servants, and Consumed them; and a great wind, probably the sulphureous suffocating simoom, smote the four corners of the house, where Job's children were feasting, and killed them; see Job 1:16, Job 1:19.

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JOB 18: 16 His roots shall be dried up beneath. Above shall his branch be cut off.

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Verse 16

His roots shall be dried up - his branch be cut off - He shall be as utterly destroyed, both in himself, his posterity, and his property, as a tree is whose branches are all lopped off, and whose every root is cut away.

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JOB 18: 17 His memory shall perish from the earth. He shall have no name in the street.

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Verse 17

His remembrance shall perish - He shall have none to survive him, to continue his name among men.

No name in the street - He shall never be a man of reputation; after his demise, none shall talk of his fame.

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JOB 18: 18 He shall be driven from light into darkness, and chased out of the world.

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Verse 18

He shall be driven from light - He shall be taken off by a violent death.

And chased out of the world - The wicked is Driven Away in his iniquity. This shows his reluctance to depart from life.

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JOB 18: 19 He shall have neither son nor grandson among his people, nor any remaining where he lived.

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#### Verse 19

He shall neither have son nor nephew - Coverdale, following the Vulgate, translates thus: He shall neither have children nor kynss folk among his people, no nor eny posterite in his countrie: yonge and olde shall be astonysed at his death.

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JOB 18: 20 Those who come after shall be astonished at his day, as those who went before were frightened.

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#### Verse 20

They that come after him - The young shall be struck with astonishment when they hear the relation of the judgments of God upon this wicked man. As they that went before. The aged who were his contemporaries, and who saw the judgments that fell on him, were affrighted, אַחַז אַחַזוּ אַחַזוּ אַחַזוּ achazu saar, seized with horror - were horrified; or, as Mr. Good has well expressed it, were panic-struck.

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JOB 18: 21 Surely such are the dwellings of the unrighteous. This is the place of him who doesn't know God."

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#### Verse 21

Such are the dwellings - This is the common lot of the wicked; and it shall be particularly the case with him who knoweth not God, that is Job, for it is evident he alludes to him. Poor Job! hard was thy lot, severe were thy sufferings. On the elephant hunt to which I have referred, Job 18:13, I shall borrow the following account extracted from Mr. Cordiner's History of Ceylon, by Mr. Good: - "We have a curious description of the elephant hunt, which is pursued in a manner not essentially different from the preceding, except that the snares are pallisadoed with the strongest possible stakes, instead of being netted, and still farther fortified by interlacings. They are numerous, but connected together; every snare or inclosure growing gradually narrower, and opening into each other by a gate or two that will only admit the entrance of a single animal at a time. "The wood in which elephants are known to abound is first surrounded, excepting at the end where the foremost and widest inclosure is situated, with fires placed on moveable pedestals, which in every direction are drawn closer and closer, and, aided by loud and perpetual shouts, drive the animals forward till they enter into the outer snare. After which the same process is continued, and they are driven by fear into a second, into a third, and into a fourth; till at length the elephants become so much sub-

divided, that by the aid of cordage fastened carefully round their limbs, and the management of decoy elephants, they are easily capable of being led away one by one, and tamed. A single hunt thus conducted will sometimes occupy not less than two months of unremitting labor; and the entrance of the elephants into the snares is regarded as an amusement or sport of the highest character, and as such is attended by all the principal families of the country." Account of Ceylon, p. 218-226.