Job - Commentaries by Algernon James Pollock

Comforted of God, Peacock's Feathers, The

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"Gavest thou the goodly wings unto the peacocks?"

(Job 39:13)

Who is there that has not gazed with wonder and admiration at those "goodly wings" with their ever-varying tints, their rich and glorious effects of color and brilliant metallic luster?

Of all the beauteous feathered tribe the peacock is perhaps the most gorgeously arrayed, and we can but admire the beauty of design in the plumage of this creature of God.

But is this pleasure to our eyes, think you, the object to which our attention is drawn in the words before us? I think the One who speaks here would have us consider something deeper.

It was at a time when I was in much weakness and suffering, I was regarding the beauty of some peacock's feathers on my mantelpiece, and the thoughts that came were a comfort to me, and perhaps may be so to some others in affliction.

I considered how all the different particles of coloring matter had traveled from the root of each feather up the long stem, and into the tiny multitudinous fibers of which the feather is composed, and were deposited in those fibers with such marvelous accuracy; each tint, each shade just in its right proportion, and in its right place. How wonderful that in the journey from root to tip the different pigments do not get mingled, nor yet unduly separated! If either color were out of proportion either in quantity or position, even by a few grains, the harmony of the whole would be marred.

But no! not a shade out of place. Each infinitesimal particle fits itself in beautiful order into its appointed fiber with the most minute exactness, and the result is the grand and bright design which we so admire.

Thus, surely, the same Hand that has so magnificently clothed a mere bird, is at work in the daily details of the surroundings of " His own." It is " God that performeth all things for me," and if He manifests such minute exactness in order that the beauty of His handiwork be seen in a bird's feathers, He surely is taking no less care for me. And if not a fiber is permitted to get too much or too little of the blue, the purple, or the gold, so is measured to me each day, each hour, each moment, I may say each varied circumstance, even the most trivial that goes to make up my life.

Oh! what a comfort it is to know that such a Hand is, with unerring skill, shaping my pathway, measuring each detail of things left out and things brought in; all blending in wisely measured proportion towards the formation of His bright design. Here, then, let me rest, confident that He who allows no confusion to mar " the goodly wings " of the peacock, will allow nothing untoward to intrude or to mar what He is performing for me. " As for God, His way is perfect," and not only so, but "He maketh my way perfect."

On another occasion the lovely colors themselves seemed to speak to me. There is the bright green, which appears to express freshness, gladness, perhaps praise, the outcome of gladness. We have our happy days, when our hearts sing unto Him who has put a new song into our mouth.

Next the violet in the heart of the pattern always makes me think of that lowly submission to chastening which brings our hearts so closely into touch with His holy love, and makes our suffering days so to partake of heavenly grace.

Blue is the heavenly color, and in one light will be seen helping to form both the violet and the green.

Then the more somber brown may perhaps tell us of the ordinary homely days when earthly things seem to predominate, and we see but little that we think of any worth. This is a sort of background for the more vivid tints. Only take it to the light and it will shine with lustrous gold, reminding us of the words of Scripture that "surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life."

But what of those many ribs all along the stalk of each feather, which do not appear to have any part in the beautiful pattern traced out at the tip? May they not remind us of the earlier days of our life before our conversion, when we knew nothing of the work of God in us? Yet when seen in the sunshine, they, too, will be found to have a golden brightness—"lustered with His love," even when we knew it not. And thus, if looked at in the light of Scripture, where God's precious things are made known, we can discern the halo of His loving kindness and tender mercy over "all the days of our life."

A faithful God, "wonderful in counsel, and excellent in working," is He with whom we have to do. And why, we may ask, is He taking all this infinite care for us? Ah! He has a bright design indeed. He has purposed that we should be for the glory of His beloved Son. We are dear to Him as belonging to that dear Son, and in the soon-coming day something of His glorious image will be seen to have been wrought in us. "When He hath tried me, I shall come forth as gold." "Changed into the same image from glory to glory." "I shall be satisfied when I awake, with Thy likeness."