

¹But now they that are younger than I have me in derision, whose fathers I would have disdained to have set with the dogs of my flock.²Yea, whereto might the strength of their hands profit me, in whom old age was perished?³For want and famine they were solitary; fleeing into the wilderness in former time desolate and waste.⁴Who cut up mallows by the bushes, and juniper roots for their meat.⁵They were driven forth from among men, (they cried after them as after a thief;)⁶To dwell in the cliffs of the valleys, in caves of the earth, and in the rocks.⁷Among the bushes they brayed; under the nettles they were gathered together.⁸They were children of fools, yea, children of base men: they were viler than the earth.⁹And now am I their song, yea, I am their byword.¹⁰They abhor me, they flee far from me, and spare not to spit in my face.¹¹Because he hath loosed my cord, and afflicted me, they have also let loose the bridle before me.¹²Upon my right hand rise the youth; they push away my feet, and they raise up against me the ways of their destruction.¹³They mar my path, they set forward my calamity, they have no helper.¹⁴They came upon me as a wide breaking in of waters: in the desolation they rolled themselves upon me.¹⁵Terrors are turned upon me: they pursue my soul as the wind: and my welfare passeth away

as a cloud.¹⁶And now my soul is poured out upon me; the days of affliction have taken hold upon me.¹⁷My bones are pierced in me in the night season: and my sinews take no rest.¹⁸By the great force of my disease is my garment changed: it bindeth me about as the collar of my coat.¹⁹He hath cast me into the mire, and I am become like dust and ashes.²⁰I cry unto thee, and thou dost not hear me: I stand up, and thou regardest me not.²¹Thou art become cruel to me: with thy strong hand thou opposest thyself against me.²²Thou liftest me up to the wind; thou causest me to ride upon it, and dissolvest my substance.²³For I know that thou wilt bring me to death, and to the house appointed for all living.²⁴Howbeit he will not stretch out his hand to the grave, though they cry in his destruction.²⁵Did not I weep for him that was in trouble? was not my soul grieved for the poor?²⁶When I looked for good, then evil came unto me: and when I waited for light, there came darkness.²⁷My bowels boiled, and rested not: the days of affliction prevented me.²⁸I went mourning without the sun: I stood up, and I cried in the congregation.²⁹I am a brother to dragons, and a companion to owls.³⁰My skin is black upon me, and my bones are burned with heat.³¹My harp also is turned to mourning, and my organ into the voice of them that weep.