

PROBLEMATATA MUNDI.

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PROBLEMATATA MUNDI.

“Of unknown date and unknown authorship, the language impregnated with strange idioms and strange allusions, unjewish in form, and in fiercest hostility with Judaism, it [the Book of Job] hovers like a meteor over the old Hebrew literature, in it, but not of it; compelling the acknowledgment of itself by its own internal majesty, yet exerting no influence over the minds of the people; never alluded to, and scarcely ever quoted, till at last the light which it had heralded rose up full over the world in Christianity.”

J. A. FROUDE, M.A.

“I call that [the Book of Job], apart from all theories about it, one of the grandest things ever written with pen. There is nothing written, I think, either in the Bible or out of it, equal to it.”

THOMAS CARLYLE.

PROBLEMATA MUNDI.



Exegetically and Practically Considered.

CONTAINING NINETY-ONE HOMILETIC SKETCHES.

BY

DAVID THOMAS, D.D.

AUTHOR OF

"THE PRACTICAL PHILOSOPHER," COMMENTARIES ON "MATTHEW" AND "ACTS OF THE APOSTLES;" "PHILOSOPHY OF HAPPINESS." EDITOR OF "THE HOMILIST;" COMPILER OF "BIBLICAL LITURGY;" ETC. ETC.

CRITICALLY REVISED, WITH

BY

SAMUEL DAVIDSON, D.D., LL.D.,

AUTHOR OF

"INTRODUCTIONS TO THE OLD AND NEW TESTAMENTS," "THE CANON OF THE BIBLE," ETC. ETC.

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TO YOU
SISSIE AND ANGELENE,

MY LOVED AND LOVING DAUGHTERS,
WHO JOINTLY WROTE THIS AND NEARLY THE WHOLE OF MY
OTHER WORKS,

WITH DEVOUT ASPIRATIONS FOR YOUR WELL-BEING HERE AND YONDER,
NOW AND FOR EVER.

ALSO TO THE

MY FAITHFUL COMPANION AND LOVING HELPMET DURING
THE GREATER PORTION OF MY LIFE,

WITH TENDEREST RECOLLECTIONS OF HER MANY VIRTUES, AND IN
TRUSTFUL ANTICIPATION OF A REUNION WITH HER AND
OUR CHILDREN, IN THAT STATE WHICH IS UNCLOUDED
BY IGNORANCE, UNTAINTED BY WRONG, AND
UNDISTURBED BY ANY REGRETS OF
THE PAST, OR FOREBODINGS
OF THE FUTURE.

DAVID THOMAS.

PROLOGUE.

IN this volume I have not sought to determine the question as to whether Job, Eliphaz, Bildad, Zophar, and Elihu are historical characters, or are the mere creations of dramatic genius, nor have I endeavoured to settle either the authorship or the date of the book. Many have been and are engaged in these attempts, and no satisfactory results have been or are likely to be reached.

Nor have I sought to furnish a new translation. Renderings of this book abound, and are increasing. And in comparing them I find that they differ amongst themselves as much as many of them differ from our common version. A new translation was offered to me by a distinguished professor of Hebrew in one of our Colleges, which I did not accept, because I deemed it superfluous.

Nor have I concerned myself much with philological criticism. I find many of those who have written critically on this book have engaged themselves more in strictures on the opinions of each other, than in the endeavour to throw light on the text. I count myself fortunate, however, in having obtained, for the purpose of philological accuracy, the supervision of Dr. SAMUEL DAVIDSON, who is acknowledged throughout Europe as one of our most accomplished Biblical scholars.

Nor, again, have I set myself to determine whether the book has any special Divine inspiration in it or not. That it reveals genius of the highest order, and teems with lofty sentiments, both ethical and religious, all uttered in the grandest forms of speech, is manifest to the most cursory reader.

I have been concerned in getting at, evolving, and systematizing the thoughts which the marvellous utterances contained or suggested. If there be "sermons in stones," there must be sermons in human thoughts, whether inspired or uninspired. A human thought is of all the phenomena on this earth the most wonderful, and significant, and the most deserving of scientific and devout investigation. My aim, in one word, has been to develop those ideas which are vital to man as man in all lands and ages, and to frame them in an order as philosophic and as suggestive as I could; and this for the purpose of making this ancient book a living power to all classes of thoughtful men. The theology that may be found in my pages I have not brought *to* the text, but *from* it.

The propriety of the title, "*Problemata Mundi*," will scarcely be questioned by those who have read thoughtfully all the verses and chapters of this remarkable production. Such readers will have found it teeming with such transcendent problems as, Can man serve God disinterestedly? "How shall man be just with God?" "Where shall wisdom be found?" "If a man die, shall he live again?" "Man giveth up the ghost, and where is he?" "Where is God, my Maker?" &c.

Though I profess not to have solved its problems, I have carefully examined them, and that with a view to public usefulness. The work is in some respects *sui generis*. It

stands alone, has an unoccupied place, and proffers services—such as they are—hitherto unrendered.

I have consulted many writers on the book, such as Wemyss, Mason Goode, Noyes, Lee, Delitzsch, Bernard, Professor Davidson, Froude, Cox, Robinson, Canons Cook, Barry, Plumptre, and many others. If I have used the thoughts of any without a due acknowledgment of their authorship, it has been an oversight, for which I crave consideration.

It may be necessary to say that the several portions of this work have been written at various times, extending over many years, under various circumstances, and in various moods of mind and conditions of body. Hence they are not of equal length, vivacity, or completeness.

In sending the volume forth I scarcely dread criticism, for no candid writer will discover imperfections of which I am not already too conscious. I launch it as a humble craft on the great sea of human thought. I know there is some living seed in it, which, if sown, will grow, multiply, and produce fruit to nourish and strengthen human souls. May Heaven guide its rudder and fill its sails, that it may visit many climes, scatter its grain upon many shores, and thus render service to the men that are, and to the men that are to be!

D. T.

EREWYN, UPPER TULSE HILL,
LONDON, JULY, 1878.

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A HOMILETIC COMMENTARY ON THE BOOK OF JOB.

INTRODUCTION.

BY SAMUEL DAVIDSON, D.D., LL.D.

THE Book of Job is a dramatic poem. A prose prologue stands at the commencement, which is followed by the action itself. A controversy with the friends of the hero is contained in three acts or series of the dialogue. Each act consists of three attacks by the opponents, and as many defences. The conclusion is formed by a monologue of Job. Finally, God Himself appears as Judge of the combat, and pronounces His decision; after which comes an epilogue in prose. The internal or dialectic development corresponds to the outward structure.

The theatre of Job's trials was the land of Uz, which lay on the borders of Idumea and Arabia, in the north-eastern part of Arabia Deserta. He belonged to the patriarchal period; and the few facts embodied in tradition respecting him were taken as the ground-work of a poem, disposed, enlarged, and moulded according to the object in view. The historical, the legendary, and the fictitious are inseparably blended together. The author was an Israelite, not a foreigner, since Hebrew culture shines forth from his bold philosophy; but the scene is in Arabia. Whether the poet lived in Egypt is uncertain. If he did not, he travelled into that and other lands, where he saw their products and wonders. Traces of his acquaintance with Egypt are

numerous, such as the descriptions of the hippopotamus and crocodile, figures taken from the Nile, the pyramids of the Egyptian kings (iii. 14, 15), and the Egyptian myth of the phoenix (xxix. 18). These and similar details point to a personal knowledge of the country. But the name of the minstrel is lost in the oblivion of antiquity. His work, however, will live for ever, reflecting a light amid the darkness of the old economy. Like a star of the first magnitude, his brilliant genius attracts the admiration of men, as it points to the Almighty ruler chastening yet loving His people. Of one whose sublime conceptions (mounting the height where Jehovah is enthroned in light inaccessible to mortal eye) lift him far above his time and people—who climbs the ladder of the Eternal as if to open heaven—of this giant philosopher and poet we long to know something, his habitation, name, appearance. The very spot where his ashes rest, we desire to gaze upon. But in vain. Probably his contemporaries were not alive to the unique excellence of his work, towering as it did above all the effusions of the Hebrew muse, and overleaping the slow growth of Hebrew ideas. The great poem itself is all we can have. And it is enough. In the emanation of this gifted spirit,—shrouded as he now is in miraculous concealment, in the imperishable monument of his genius,—he still speaks to men of the Divine Justice, Omnipotence, and Wisdom, with a daring merging into the modest humility befitting the creature.

The age of the book, which must not be confounded with that of the hero, is the beginning of the seventh century before Christ. Jeremiah, whose prophecies are characterized by much imitation, pre-supposes the existence of the poem; and the general character of the language agrees best with this time. It bears some marks of decay, like that of the later, not the exile, books.

The integrity of the book has been impugned in different ways and places. But criticism has failed to remove any portions except the discourses of Elihu contained in chapters xxvii.—xxxvii. These are unquestionably of later origin than the rest. They remove the connection between Job's last discourse and that of the Almighty in the 38th chapter, whose commencement necessarily implies that Job had just

spoken. They weaken the speech of Jehovah by anticipating, in xxxvi., xxxvii., the appeal to the Divine Power and Wisdom. They even make it superfluous, because they give the solution of the problem in the way of knowledge; while Jehovah demands unconditional subjection to His Almighty Power and hidden Wisdom. Elihu misunderstands or perverts the language of Job (xxxiv. 9; xxxv. 2, 3). The style and language are also peculiar, differing remarkably from the rest. The diction is more strongly Aramæan—rough, heavy, prolix, difficult. It is impossible to tell how long after the older poet, the author of Elihu's discourses wrote. A century at least must be assumed.

The problem discussed by the author is, how the sufferings of the righteous are connected with the providence of a just God. The Jewish mind must have had great difficulty in resolving a problem of this nature, because the religion of Moses presented nothing else than temporal rewards and punishments. The beginnings of speculation respecting it are seen in the Psalms; especially in the 37th, 49th, and 73rd. But in Job the question takes a more comprehensive range, rising to the consideration of the moral government of the world; or how far the wisdom and justice of God appear to pervade the present system. The design of the writer was to demonstrate the insufficiency of the current doctrine of compensation. As a man lives, so he fares in the world—that was the genius of Mosaism. Experience, however, is often at variance with this doctrine. We see the godly suffering the blight of adversity, while the wicked flourish and prosper. The mind of the poet-philosopher, powerfully affected by the sufferings of the pious, could find no comfort in the popular Hebrew faith. He tried therefore to get beyond it into a region where all might not be dark. There must be a deeper and more comprehensive view of the ways of Providence towards men. How far then is Job the representative of a better doctrine? Though struggling to free himself from the trammels of national belief, he attains to nothing more than the doctrine of unlimited acquiescence in the Divine counsels and will. Man's duty is to acquiesce in the arrangements of Infinite Power and Wisdom. The prologue,

indeed, indicates a glimpse of sufferings being something else than retributive, viz., permitted for the trial and strengthening of faith. And there are two passages in the speeches of Job, which carry the problem a little farther, by *intimating* a state of conscious existence beyond the grave. The germ of the doctrine of immortality lies in them. In them there is the dawning of a future existence in which the spirit should not be separate from God. But such moments of high inspiration did not continue; and the epilogue reverts to the doctrine of strict retribution in this life. See xix. 25-27; xiv. 13-15.

The view given of Satan is peculiar. He is different from the being so called in later times. As yet there is no impassable gulf between good and bad spirits. The kingdom of Satan is not separated from the kingdom of light by an infinite chasm. The great evil spirit is not at the head of an innumerable host of spirits malevolent like himself, whom he employs as instruments of evil. He is admitted alone into the Divine assembly in heaven. The conception of Satan was in progress of formation. The view given of angels is also peculiar in some respects. They are supposed to be a kind of mediators, who intercede with God that He should listen to man's prayers. They also interpret the Divine will, observing the conduct of men, and pointing out the right path from which they had strayed (v. 1; xxxiii. 23, 24).

For a copious discussion of all questions connected with the Book of Job, the reader is referred to the second volume of Davidson's Introduction to the Old Testament. Our space here allows nothing but an outline of the chief results arrived at there. It is unfortunate that good comments on Job are not to be found in English. The language is difficult; and many have undertaken to expound it with a very imperfect knowledge of the original. Hence Barnes, Wemyss, Mason Good, Lee, and such-like cannot be relied upon. The English translation of Umbreit is also inadequate; but that of Delitzsch is much better. The latter is probably the best in our language; though it is not the best commentary. Thoroughly to understand the book, recourse must be had to Schlottmann, Ewald, Hitzig, Hirzel, and

Merx, in conjunction with Delitzsch. Where these differ, as they do not unfrequently, the reader must judge for himself.

The author of the work before us has adapted the old poem to homiletic purposes, making it speak to Christians as well as Jews; ay, to humanity. Divesting it of the temporary, he finds in it suggestive lessons for all times. With the great talent he possesses for such peculiar exposition,* he breathes into the grand poetry of the past the spirit of a catholic religion which survives perishable forms. He makes it profitable for humanity. He does not offer an exegetical book properly so called, one occupied with questions of criticism or varying expositions, though these are not neglected; but a series of instructive lessons clothed in terse and vigorous language. The strength of the writer lies in the direct inculcation of weighty truths involved in the book. We believe, therefore, that it will prove useful both to preachers and general readers—to that large class who wish to know at once whether Job and his friends have aught to say to them, whether these ancient worthies may not intimate things that promote spiritual life and widen the apprehension of God, whether they may not enlarge the understanding in its survey of Nature and Providence. Dr. Thomas is happy in seizing the point and pith of the sayings which the poet puts into the mouths of his disputants. We cannot doubt that the volume will be welcomed by many, especially by such as have long availed themselves of the valuable aid which his fertile pen has yielded for years, giving them a new interest in the Hebrew Scriptures, and quickening their religious susceptibilities.

* In proof of his abilities in this department we have only to refer to the numerous volumes of *The Homilist*—a periodical which continues with unwearied activity amid so many imitations that ended in failure. Nothing of the same kind has succeeded, because it lacked inherent vitality. The great resources of the author have carried him onward amid all the vicissitudes of taste and the varieties of ephemeral publications.

A GLANCE AT THE MORAL PURPOSE OF THE BOOK.

HOMILY No. I.

THE GREAT PROBLEM: IS RELIGION DISINTERESTED OR UTILITARIAN?

“Doth Job fear God for nought?”—JOB i. 9.

By universal consent the Book of Job stands in matchless splendour among the great books of the world. Thomas Carlyle,—than whom we have no better judge of true genius, far-reaching thought, elevated moral sentiment, and magnificent composition,—thus speaks of this marvellous production: “I call that, apart from all theories about it, one of the grandest things ever written with pen. One feels, indeed, as if it were not Hebrew; such a noble universality, different from noble patriotism or noble sectarianism, reigns in it. A noble book; all men’s book. It is our first, oldest statement of the never-ending problem—man’s destiny and God’s ways with him here in this earth. And all in such free flowing outlines; grand in its sincerity and in its simplicity, in its epic melody and repose of reconciliation. There is the seeing eye, the mildly understanding heart. So true every way; true eyesight and vision for all things, material things no less than spiritual. . . . Such living likenesses were never since drawn. Sublime sorrow, sublime reconciliation; oldest choral melody, as of the heart of mankind; so soft and great; as the summer midnight, as the world with its sea and stars! There is nothing written, I think, in the Bible or out of it, of equal merit.”

The book is full of God and humanity. It has no Church or formulated creed. It is as universal as nature. No Jews, priests, scribes, or Pharisees figure on its pages. The scenes

of its narration are somewhere outside the boundaries of Palestine.

There is no good reason for believing that all the characters here are not historic. Job, Eliphaz, Bildad, Zophar, Elihu, come before you, not as the creations of fiction, but as veritable personalities, men with like passions as ourselves. Job, who is mentioned in Ezekiel and James, in all probability lived after the Deluge, between Abraham and Moses; for whilst there is no reference to Israel's great lawgiver, there is an undoubted allusion to the flood.*

Who wrote the book? Was it Job himself? Is it autobiographic? The wonderful thoughts and sublime utterances that fell from his lips show that he was equal to such a task, equal to the developing of his life in this grand poetic drama. But probably some man of stupendous genius in later times came into possession, either by record or tradition, of the strange and startling facts of Job's life, and worked them into this unique drama—worked them as our own Shakspeare has worked the lives of old celebrities into his imperishable compositions. Who can determine, and what matters it?

The chief point worthy of consideration is, What is the grand purpose of this poetic drama?—for drama it is, full of action and progress, deep passions and grand issues. Carlyle says, "It is our first, oldest statement of the never-ending problem—man's destiny and God's ways with him here in this earth."

It seems to me that this magnificent poem helps to solve (I say not that it was *intended* to do so) at least *five* great problems—problems which have agitated the hearts of men in all ages and lands.—I. Is it possible for man in his religious services to be actuated by pure, disinterested love for his Maker?—II. Is there any being in the universe but God to whom the terrible evils that afflict humanity can with philosophical satisfaction be ascribed?—III. Are man's

* "Ewald," says Canon Cook, "whose judgment in this case will not be questioned, asserts positively that in all the descriptions of manners and customs, domestic, social, and political, even in the indirect allusions and illustrations, the genuine colouring of the age of Job, that is, of the period between Abraham and Moses, is very faithfully observed; that all historical examples and allusions are taken exclusively from patriarchal times, and that there is a complete and successful avoidance of direct reference to later occurrences, which in his opinion may have been known to the writer."

external circumstances to be taken as a test of his moral character?—IV. Is it possible for men, by their unaided investigations, rightly to interpret the Providence of God?—V. Considering the enormous afflictions to which the righteous are subject in this world because of their righteousness, will a righteous life prove of any advantage to them in the long run? The passage at the head of this sketch bids me confine my attention at present to the first. The other problems will receive attention as I proceed in my homiletic remarks on this book.

Is it possible for man to be actuated by disinterested love for his Maker? Can he "fear God for nought?"

This is the point on which I now wish to fasten attention. And before I notice the severe tests by which this world problem was to be tried once for ever, it may be well to glance for a moment at the *man on whom the experiment was made*. He is summarily described (chap. i. 1-5).* And we learn that he was great in wealth and position, great in intellect and genius, above all, great in *moral character*. On this distinguished man the experiment is made. He is tried, in order to settle the question once for all, as to whether man is capable of serving God free from all selfish and utilitarian motives. "*Doth Job fear God for nought?*" said the evil spirit. As if he had said,—He is religious because Thou hast prospered him, because he finds it to answer his purpose. "*Hast not Thou made an hedge about him? . . . Thou hast blessed the work of his hands.*" It is all selfishness, there is no disinterestedness at the root.

Now for the *tests to which he was subjected*. They were threefold: the one extending to his circumstances; the other to his health; the other to his creed.

I. He was tried CIRCUMSTANTIALLY. The Almighty is poetically represented as holding a council with His ministers of state. "*The sons of God came to present themselves before the Lord.*" Into this august council-chamber the arch-enemy of God and His happy universe with impious hardihood intrudes. Summoned by the Eternal to give an account of himself, he declares that he is one who is "*going*

* For an exposition of this passage, see pages 14, 15.

to and fro in the earth, and walking up and down in it." His attention is then called by the Almighty to Job: "*Hast thou considered My servant Job, that there is none like him in the earth?*" To this, this hideous Mephistopheles replies, as with a sneer on his ghastly lips, "*Doth Job fear God for nought?*" Whereupon he receives Divine permission to try the patriarch by ruining him in his circumstances. "*The Lord said unto Satan, Behold, all that he hath is in thy power: only upon himself put not forth thine hand. So Satan went forth from the presence of the Lord.*" With this licence the giant fiend begins at once. He loses no time—he spreads his black pinions, and like a hungry vulture in a carrion atmosphere pounces down upon his victim and inflicts the most tremendous trials; and that at a *time* which would add considerably to their severity. It was on one of the brightest days of Job's life as a father: "*There was a day when his sons and his daughters were eating and drinking wine in their eldest brother's house.*" Perhaps each of his children had a set day in the year for domestic festivity. This was the festive day of the eldest son, which would, for many reasons, be regarded as the most important. What a jubilant day for the father! how delighted he would be to see all his children bright and happy under one roof. Such a day Satan selected for his work. On no day does a trial fall so heavily as on the day when we are full of joy and hope. "*The darkest shade falls on the sunniest spot.*" He sends trial after trial, and that in rapid succession, in order so to confound him as to bring from his lips a curse on God.

He begins by sending a messenger to the joyous house with the intelligence that "*The oxen were ploughing, and the asses feeding beside them: and the Sabeans fell upon them, and took them away; yea, they have slain the servants with the edge of the sword; and I only am escaped alone to tell thee.*" What a terrible stroke! Five hundred yoke of oxen, five hundred she-asses, and numerous faithful servants slain. How does the patriarch bear this stroke? Does he curse God? No; he stands well this terrible shock. Hence another messenger is despatched in haste to the house with tidings of more calamities: "*While he was yet speaking, there came also another, and said, The fire of God is fallen from heaven, and hath*

burned up the sheep, and the servants, and consumed them : and I only am escaped alone to tell thee.” Has Job yielded ? Is his trust in his Maker shaken ? Is the curse rising to his lips ? Not so, but still firm : hence another stroke. “ *While he was yet speaking, there came also another, and said, The Chaldeans made out three bands, and fell upon the camels, and have carried them away, yea, and slain the servants with the edge of the sword ; and I only am escaped alone to tell thee.*” How now ? Still firm—firm as a rock. Hence another and a more terrible blow is given. While the third messenger is yet speaking there came another, and said, “ *Thy sons and thy daughters were eating and drinking wine in their eldest brother’s house : and, behold, there came a great wind from the wilderness, and smote the four corners of the house, and it fell upon the young men, and they are dead ; and I only am escaped alone to tell thee.*” How stands he this ? Surely his faith has given way—his love for the Almighty is changed into a wrath that goes out in the wild curses of rebellion ? Not so. Though bereft of everything, he does not throw off his allegiance to Heaven, nor shriek blasphemies into the ears of the Infinite. Here is the result : “ *Then Job arose, and rent his mantle, and shared his head, and fell down upon the ground, and worshipped, and said, Naked came I out of my mother’s womb, and naked shall I return thither : the Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away ; blessed be the name of the Lord. In all this Job sinned not, nor charged God foolishly.*”

II. He was tried PHYSICALLY. The period comes round, —perhaps twelve months after the first trial, —for another Cabinet Council in heaven. Satan intrudes again into that august assembly. He had tried Job to the full extent of the licence granted to him, and he was foiled. The Almighty calls his attention again to Job, repeats His testimony to his high moral excellence, and says : “ *He holdeth fast his integrity, although thou movedst Me against him, to destroy him without cause.*” As if He had said, Thou hast done thine utmost, and yet in loving loyalty he stands unmoved. To this Satan replies : “ *Skin for skin, yea, all that a man hath will he give for his life. But put forth Thine hand now, and touch his bone and his flesh, and he will curse Thee to Thy*

face." As if he had said, Thou hast only allowed me to try him in his *circumstances*; I have not touched his *personality*; he is a strong man with a full flow of health in his veins; he enjoys life, and this makes him so steadfast. Permit me to touch his vitals; let me act on *him*. This power is granted. "*Behold, he is in thine hand; but save his life.*" With an infernal promptitude, he sets to work once more. "*Satan went forth from the presence of the Lord, and smote Job with sore boils from the sole of his foot unto his crown.*" He is smitten with a disease which is, of all diseases that flesh is heir to, the most painful and loathsome. He writhes in agony. His existence is intolerable; his appearance is so abhorrent, even to his own wife, that she says, "*Dost thou still retain thine integrity? Curse God, and die.*" How stands he this? Does he hold on to his integrity? or does he give way? Surely he now turns in flaming indignation against his Maker? Nay. Hear him. "*What? shall we receive good at the hand of God, and shall we not receive evil? In all this did not Job sin with his mouth.*"

Can you conceive of greater trials? When all his property and servants were swept away, he might have said, "I have my sons and my daughters who will comfort me, help me to bear my losses, and perhaps to repair my fortune;" and when they were removed, he might have said, "I have still my health and strength, and may be able by my own efforts to obtain the means of subsistence." Still more, when his health was gone, he might have said, "My wife is left, who will attend on me in my anguish and minister to my necessities." But she turned against him. All this tremendous force of trial is brought to bear upon this lonely man, in order, if possible, to show that his religion was nothing but a form of selfishness, that he did not "*fear God for nought.*" And yet all this failed—gloriously failed; firm as granite he stood, amid the dashing billows and furious hurricanes.

III. He was tried THEOLOGICALLY. "His creed," says Dr. H. B. Davidson, in his excellent Commentary on Job (which I regret is incomplete), "contained two elements, or at least

one, which ran the risk of ruining him. The article was: Affliction comes immediately from the hand of God. Whom God is angry with He afflicts. When God afflicts, it is proof that He regards him whom He afflicts as a grievous sinner." A most natural doctrine was this, an instinctive *a priori* faith. But Job's consciousness now rebelled against it; he *knew* that he was not a great sinner. His so-called friends, in their discussion with him, as well as Elihu, enforced on him this theology, and consequently regarded and denounced him as a great sinner. Against their arguments,—although they accorded with his own theology,—his whole nature rebelled; he *felt* he was not a heinous sinner. Though Satan does not personally appear in all this long contention, no doubt he inspired it and gloated in it. Thus, for many a long day Job is tortured in his deepest convictions, the tenderest nerves of the soul. His religious consciousness is under the iron harrow of fierce religious controversy. How does he stand this, perhaps the *greatest* of all his trials? Does his loyalty to Heaven give way; does his trust in the Almighty die out? True, he often uses language that it would be difficult if not impossible to justify. Suffering often maddens the soul, and the mad soul will ever speak extravagantly—speak in the wild poetry of passion. Still he holds on, and we hear him uttering such words as these: "*Though He slay me, yet will I trust in Him.*" And lifting his head above the burning waves of agony, he exclaims: "*I know that my Redeemer liveth, and that He shall stand at the latter day upon the earth: and though after my skin worms destroy this body, yet in my flesh shall I see God: whom I shall see for myself, and mine eyes shall behold, and not another; though my reins be consumed within me.*"

Here then, in this Job, is the question settled for all time; that the human soul is *not essentially* selfish; that it can "*fear God for nought,*" that genuine religion is to its possessor infinitely dearer than all things—dearer than *wealth, children, reputation, health, theological convictions, life itself.* In sooth, this is the only *true* religion, the religion which our Lord inculcated. Genuine religion is comparatively indifferent to futurities, concerns itself but little with gains and losses, heavens and hells.

“ My God, I love Thee, not because
I hope for heaven thereby ;
Nor yet because who love Thee not
Must burn eternally.

“ Not with the hope of gaining aught,
Nor seeking a reward ;
But as Thyself hast lovèd me,
O ever loving Lord.”—*Xavier.*

HOMILY No. II.

A GOOD MAN IN GREAT PROSPERITY.

“ There was a man in the land of Uz, whose name was Job ; and that man was perfect and upright, and one that feared God, and eschewed evil. And there were born unto him seven sons and three daughters. His substance also was seven thousand sheep, and three thousand camels, and five hundred yoke of oxen, and five hundred she asses, and a very great household ; so that this man was the greatest of all the men of the east. And his sons went and feasted in their houses, every one his day ; and sent and called for their three sisters to eat and to drink with them. And it was so, when the days of their feasting were gone about, that Job sent and sanctified them, and rose up early in the morning, and offered burnt offerings according to the number of them all : for Job said, It may be that my sons have sinned, and cursed God in their hearts. Thus did Job continually.”—CHAP. i. 1-5.

EXEGETICAL REMARKS. *Ver. 1.*—*“ There was a man in the land of Uz.”* Uz, north of Arabia Deserta, lying towards the Euphrates. It was in this neighbourhood, and not in that of Idumea, that the Chaldeans and Sabeans, who plundered Job, dwelt. A “man,” not a Jew: in the land of Uz, not Judea, but some vast desert. Truth is independent of tribes and lands. *“ Whose name was Job.”* Some say the name is derived from an Arabic word, signifying, to return or repent; others from a Hebrew word, signifying, “one greatly tried.” Among the Ancients, names were often given to persons to indicate something special in their lives. The Emir of Uz received, perhaps, his name for this reason. Canon Cook supposes that the name is “derived from a

word, signifying jubilant exultation, and expressing the joy of a noble family at the birth of an heir.”

“ And that man was perfect and upright, and one that feared God and eschewed evil.” This clause has been rendered thus:—“And that man was pious and upright, a fearer of God, and a turner away from evil.” The meaning is, that he was a righteous man, worshipping the one God and abstaining from all evil. The language implies that he was an ideally perfect man.

Ver. 2.—*“ And there were born unto him seven sons and three daughters.”* In the east, and in primitive times, it was considered a great privilege to have children, and a great curse to be without them; also, a greater blessing to have many sons than many daughters.

Ver. 3.—“*His substance also was seven thousand sheep,*” &c. No houses or land are mentioned as belonging to him, for this great Emir led a nomadic life, according to the customs of his age and times. He dwelt in moveable tents. With the oxen he tilled the soil, and with the camels he prosecuted his journeys. His stock of cattle was truly very large. “*And a very great household.*” In the margin, “*husbandry.*” The productions which he reaped from the soil he cultivated were very abundant. “*So that this man was the greatest of all the men of the east.*” By the east is meant, those living east of Palestine. He was the magnate of the region in which he dwelt; a man of great authority, both on account of his high moral character and great possessions.

Ver. 4.—“*And his sons went and feasted in their houses, every one his day.*” From chap. iii. ver. 1, it may be that reference is here made to their birthdays. Some, however, think that the reference is to the Sabbath, the day on which God rested from His works. In ancient times, as at present, the custom prevailed of celebrating the birthday by feasting,—see Gen. xl. 20, where we find that Pharaoh made a feast to his household on the occasion of his birthday. These periodical domestic gatherings indicate the great harmony that prevailed in the Emir’s family. “*And sent and*

called for their three sisters to eat and to drink with them.” It was the custom in the east for the daughters to live in their mother’s home (Gen. xxiv. 27), whilst the sons went out to follow their agricultural and other pursuits. The fact that the sisters were invited attests that the feast was not one of intemperate revelries, but one of affectionate family intercourse.

Ver. 5.—“*And it was so, when the days of their feasting were gone about.*” This means, most probably, “*gone round in a circle;*” when the whole circle of their birthdays had been kept, and they commenced anew. It was the first banquet of another social circuit. “*That Job sent and sanctified them, and rose up early in the morning, and offered burnt offerings according to the number of them all.*” The father acted as the priest of the family; he sanctified them by cleansing ablutions (Gen. xxxv. 2; Exod. xix. 10-14; 1 Sam. xvi. 5). After this he offered burnt offerings according to the number of his sons. This was done in the morning. It is well to begin the day with worship. “*For Job said, It may be that my sons have sinned and cursed God in their hearts.*” This is the special reason why Job officiated: fear, lest in their conviviality his children had dismissed God from their hearts and descended into the profane. “*Thus did Job continually.*” At all their feasts he acted like this.

HOMILETICS.—Here we have the *picture of a good man in great prosperity.*

I. Here is A GOOD MAN. He was “*perfect.*” By this is meant, not that he was sinless and perfectly holy, but that he was single-hearted and complete in all the parts of his moral and religious character; he did not attend to one class

of duties to the exclusion of others, cultivate one attribute of virtue regardless of the rest. He was *complete*. All the parts of the plant of goodness within him grew simultaneously and symmetrically. First: In relation to his *general conduct* he was *upright*. He pursued the road of rectitude, turning neither to the right nor left hand; he did what his conscience dictated, and marched onward with a fearless, joyous soul, regardless of all issues. He who "walks uprightly" beats out music at every step. Secondly: In relation to his *God* he was *devout*. He "*feared God*;" not with a slavish dread, but with a loving reverence. Reverential love expels all slavish sentiment. It smiles defiantly at all hells. It fills the horizon of the soul with God, and lights up the whole sphere of life with Divine love. This is piety: and piety is the well-spring of all philanthropy, and the root of all ethical excellence. Thirdly: In relation to *wrong* he was *antagonistic*. He "*eschewed evil*;" he departed from it; he hurried from it as from the presence of a monster. However fashionable, gorgeously attired, institutionally and socially powerful, he loathed it, and fled from it as Lot from Sodom. "Depart from evil, and do good," &c. Fourthly: In relation to his *family* he was a *priest*. "*He offered burnt offerings according to the number of them all.*" Burnt offerings are as old as the race, and were evermore a practical and solemn expression of man's obligation to God for all the blessings of his existence. What is worship but this? He interposed with God on their behalf; he was a mediator between his own children and the Great Father of spirits. Like a good father he sought the moral cleansing of his children and their reconciliation to the Eternal. We may observe that in his worship (1) He recognized his religious responsibilities as a father. His offerings were "*according to the number of them all.*" It is the duty of parents to concern themselves profoundly and chiefly with the spiritual interests of *each* child; they should "train them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord." (2) He discharged his religious responsibilities as a father with earnestness and constancy. He "*rose up early in the morning.*" Early, because no work is so great and urgent. Morning worship, if genuine, gives a sacredness and a soul-

inspiring significance and elevation to the day. Early devotion is a key-note that turns the day into sacred music. But his worship was constant as well as earnest. "*Thus did Job continually.*" His family worship was not an occasional service, but a prevailing spirit; not a performance, but a presiding life. Constancy enters into the very essence of genuine worship. "They rest not day nor night." The whole language sets him forth as an ideally perfect man.

II. Here is a good man VERY PROSPEROUS. First: He was prosperous as a *Father*. (1) His children were numerous. "*There were born unto him seven sons and three daughters.*" In ancient times, to be destitute of children was esteemed a great calamity: the larger the family the greater the parental blessing. Things have changed now: here in England a large family is regarded as a terrible infliction. Children are called "impedimenta." But what greater blessing in this world can a man have than a large number of loving loyal hearts to call him father? (2) His children were *harmonious*. "*His sons went and feasted,*" &c. They seem to have had houses of their own, were prosperous and socially united. They had their fixed days for domestic festivity. The happiness of their children pours sunshine into the hearts of loving parents. Secondly: He was prosperous as a *Farmer*. "*His substance was seven thousand sheep,*" &c. Men of old counted their wealth not by their acres but by their cattle. The stock here described has been estimated to amount in our money to the sum of £30,000. Here, and now, this is a good fortune, but yonder, and then, it stood for at least fifty times the amount. Piety disciplines man to that industry, adroitness, temperance, economy, power of application, that are often favourable to the accumulation of wealth. "Seek first the kingdom of heaven," &c. Thirdly: He was prosperous as a *Citizen*. "*For this man was the greatest of all the men in the east.*" There were many great men in the east in those days, no doubt, men whose names would strike awe in the soul of the populace, but Job was the greatest of them all. Elsewhere he describes the power which he wielded over men. "When I went out to the gate through the city, when I prepared

my seat in the street; the young men saw me, and hid themselves," &c. He was truly a great man, great not only in wealth and social influence, but in intellectual power and moral excellence.

CONCLUSION: We offer two remarks on this subject.

First: *That a good man in great prosperity is what antecedently we might have expected to find everywhere in the world.* Under the government of a righteous God, one would naturally expect that the best man would everywhere be the most prosperous, and that goodness and poverty would never be found in association. This, peradventure, would have been the case had man not sinned; and, in all probability, is the case in all worlds but this. Will not kind Heaven explain the anomaly to our satisfaction ere long?

Secondly: *That a good man in great prosperity is not a common object in human life.* Generally, up to this hour, in the world's history the best men have been the poorest, and the worst men amongst those who hold the prizes of the world in their hand, and determine the material destinies of their age. This has been the trying problem of all times; this was that which now grievously afflicted the soul of Job.

"Providence," says Froude, "will not interfere to punish a man. Let him obey the laws under which prosperity is obtainable, and he will obtain it, let him never fear. He will obtain it, be he base or noble. Nature is indifferent: the famine and the earthquake, the blight or the accident, will not discriminate to strike him. He may insure himself against those in these days of ours with the money which perhaps a better man would have given away, and he will have his reward. He need not doubt it."

HOMILY No. III.

A PICTURE OF THE FOE OF FOES.

“Now there was a day when the sons of God came to present themselves before the Lord, and Satan came also among them. And the Lord said unto Satan, Whence comest thou? Then Satan answered the Lord, and said, From going to and fro in the earth, and from walking up and down in it. And the Lord said unto Satan, Hast thou considered my servant Job, that there is none like him in the earth, a perfect and an upright man, one that feareth God and escheweth evil? Then Satan answered the Lord, and said, Doth Job fear God for nought? Hast not thou made an hedge about him, and about his house, and about all that he hath on every side? thou hast blessed the work of his hands, and his substance is increased in the land. But put forth thine hand now, and touch all that he hath, and he will curse thee to thy face. And the Lord said unto Satan, Behold, all that he hath is in thy power; only upon himself put not forth thine hand. So Satan went forth from the presence of the Lord.”—CHAP. i. 6-12.

EXEGETICAL REMARKS.—*Ver. 6.* —“*Now there was a day.*” “*Now when it was the day*”—*Bernard*; “*And it came to pass as it might be to-day*”—*Lee*; “*And the day came*”—*Goode*;—“*When the sons of God came to present themselves before the Lord.*” Before Jehovah. The “*sons of God*” here evidently denote celestial intelligences, angels—*Dr. Samuel Davidson*. “*And Satan came also among them.*” The word “*Satan*” means “*adversary.*” Some translate it the “*accusing angel,*” and suppose that the being represented here is not that great arch-enemy of souls, the prince of the power of the air, so often spoken of in the New Testament; but some high officer in God’s spiritual kingdom, whose mission it is to inspect and test the moral characters of God’s children in this world, and to report the same to his Great Master—a *recording angel*. This is the view of *Herder*, *Eichhorn*, *Wemyss*, and others. There are many reasons against this opinion.

Ver. 7.—“*And the Lord said*

unto Satan, Whence comest thou? Then Satan answered the Lord and said, From going to and fro in the earth, and from walking up and down in it.” Some render this, “*from roaming round the earth and walking about it.*” “*The language means not so much the going backwards and forwards as making a circuit and circumference, going round about.* The language means constant action in a wide sphere of activity.”—*Goode*.

Ver. 8.—“*And the Lord said unto Satan, Hast thou considered my servant Job?*” In the margin, the last clause is, “*set thine heart on,*” and this is the literal translation. The meaning may be, *Hast thou in thy vast peregrinations specially marked my servant Job? “That there is none like him in the earth, a perfect and an upright man, one that feareth God and escheweth evil?”* The character which was given to Job in the first verse is here repeated by the Almighty Himself, and therefore Divinely endorsed.

Ver. 9.—“*Then Satan answered*

the Lord, and said, Doth Job fear God for nought?" Is his worship disinterested? Is he not serving Thee for the sake of Thy kindness to him, and for the advantages he still expects? "Here he charges Job with an interested piety. The accusing angel means to say, Strip Job of his splendour, and see if he will care for God then; humble him to poverty and wretchedness, so only shall we know what is in his heart."—Froude.

Ver. 10.—"Hast Thou not made an hedge about him, and about his house, and about all that he hath on every side? Thou hast blessed the work of his hands, and his substance is increased in the land." The last clause has been thus translated:—"The work of his hands Thou hast blessed, and Thou hast spread abroad his substance in the earth." The idea is—"Hast Thou not so wondrously protected himself, family, and property, from plunderers, and so blessed the labour of his hands, that he therefore serves Thee?" He serves Thee, not because

of what Thou art in Thyself, but because of what Thou art to him!

Ver. 11.—"But put forth Thine hand now, and touch all that he hath, and he will curse Thee to Thy face." The last clause of this verse has been differently rendered. "Will he bless Thee to Thy face?"—Goode. "In Thy presence will he bless Thee?"—Lee. "Will he not blaspheme Thee because of Thine anger?"—Bernard. The received version is right.—Dr. Samuel Davidson. The idea in all cases is the same, viz., that if Jehovah ceased to bless him, Job would not only cease to serve Him, but oppose Him.

Ver. 12.—"And the Lord said unto Satan, Behold, all that he hath is in thy power." Margin, "in thy hand." "Only upon himself put not forth thine hand." The licence the adversary here received to afflict Job extended to his sons, daughters, and property, but no farther. He was not at present to touch Job. "So Satan went forth from the presence of the Lord." He left the Council Chamber of the Eternal.

HOMILETICS.—We have two things here to notice as introductory to that subject, which we shall make the dominant theme of these verses.

First: *A highly figurative representation of the Eternal and His spiritual kingdom.* The language cannot be taken as a literal history of what actually occurred: it is a poetic representation; such a representation as Christ Himself often made in His parables of spiritual and eternal things. Indeed, all representations of God must be figurative, must be in accommodation to our modes of conception; for how else could any creature get an idea of the Infinite Spirit, a Being without limits in time, capacity, or space? "The language here," says a modern expositor, "is taken from the proceedings of a monarch who had sent forth messengers or ambassadors on important errands through the different

provinces of his empire, and who now returned to give an account of what they had observed, and of the general state of the kingdom. Such a return would, of course, be on a fixed day, when their report would be 'returnable,' and they required to give in an account of the state of the kingdom."

Secondly: *A remarkable meeting of the Great God and some of His intelligent creatures.* Here is an insight into the Privy Council of the Eternal; the veil which separates the visible from the invisible is drawn aside, and we see the assembly of God's ministers, and He amongst them. Is there anything improbable in the Almighty periodically bringing certain orders of His intelligent creatures into a special proximity to Himself for special purposes? I trow not. The Bible in many places favours the idea. What seems remarkable is, that the arch-fiend should gain admission to those councils, get a hearing, and receive power. I should not be astonished to find Michael and his angels, Gabriel, the "elect angels," and the "spirits of just men made perfect," in that wonderful assembly; but I am astonished to find that the Evil One should find an entrance there. One of the great problems that has pressed upon the heart of men in all ages is this,—Is *God the author of Evil*: or is *there some other personality in the universe to whom its origin may be ascribed*? Now in these verses there is a ghastly and gigantic personality presented to whom we may philosophically attribute all the moral evil in the world.*

It is to this being—this *foe of foes*—that I shall now direct special attention.

I. He has A PERSONAL EXISTENCE. Throughout the paragraph he is spoken to as a *person*, and he represents himself as acting as a *person* "*going to and fro in the earth,*" &c. His personality is by some denied. In the school of Kant, Satan is the Idea of what is absolutely displeasing in the sight of God. It is merely the principle of Evil

* For a full and masterly disquisition on the existence, nature, history, and power of this being, I would refer the reader to an article, by Rev. A. Barry, B.D., in *Smith's Bible Dictionary*.

derived from the system of dualism prevalent in the East. For my own part, I am utterly unable to form an idea of an evil principle apart from an evil personality, originating, working, and directing it.

First : The personality of his existence is *suggested by reason*. (1) As there are existences gradually sinking beneath man down to nothing, so there may be intelligent beings existing above man, up to the highest point of creatureship. (2) As men have fallen and become rebels against God, there is nothing improbable in the supposition that there are beings above man who have done the same. (3) As the fallen amongst men become the tempters of others, and this in proportion to their depravity and power, it is very probable that amongst the fallen ones above us there are leaders in wickedness. Because of this natural probability, almost all peoples in all lands have believed in an arch-fiend, a malignant "god of this world."

Secondly : The personality of his existence is *confirmed by human history*. It is almost impossible to account for the absurdities which men entertain, and the enormities which they perpetrate, without going up to some foul spirit who blinds the eyes and inflames the passions of men. The soul of the world is under the spell of some mighty enchanter.

Thirdly : The personality of his existence is *declared in the Bible*.* He is called by different names, Satan, Devil, Old Serpent, Prince of the Power of the Air, Beelzebub, Dragon, &c., &c. Such a being then exists. When he commenced his career of wickedness is not known. He prowled peradventure about the universe when this world was in its youthhood and Adam in his prime.

II. He is AN INTRUDER INTO THE SACRED. "*Now there was a day when the sons of God came to present themselves before the Lord, and Satan came also among them.*" I have said it was remarkable that the devil should be thus permitted to intrude into the sacred, but we find him doing so elsewhere. A scene similar to this is described in the

* Matt. iv. 3; John viii. 44; Acts xxvi. 18; Eph. vi. 12; 1 Thess. iii. 5; 2 Peter ii. 4; Jude 6; Rev. xii. 10, &c.

Old Testament,* where Jehovah is represented “as sitting on His throne, and all the host of heaven standing by Him on His right hand and on His left.” He inquires who would go and persuade Ahab that he might go up and fall at Ramoth-Gilead? “And there came forth a spirit, and stood before the Lord, and said, I will persuade him.” This he promised to do by being a “lying spirit in the mouth of all the prophets.” We find also † that he intruded into the very presence, ay, into the very thoughts, of the Holy Son of God; and, ‡ in the synagogue at Capernaum, where Christ preached, we find the devil intruding; he entered the congregation and heard the sermon. “*Satan came also among them.*” Ay, and so he ever does. Wherever the sons of the Almighty assemble, whether it be to inquire into the laws of nature, or to study the doctrines of inspiration, to project schemes of usefulness, or to worship, Satan is amongst them; he is there, there to bias the intellect, and to pollute the feelings. Tell me where there is an assembly of good men, and you will tell me not only where God is in a special manner, but where the devil is also. Satan is amongst them. He attends prayer-meetings, goes to church, and listens to sermons; whoever is absent, he is present wherever “*the sons of God*” are congregated.

III. He is AMENABLE TO THE ETERNAL. Two questions Jehovah addresses to him. One as to his *movements*. “*Whence comest thou?*” In what part of My universe hast thou been wandering? The other as to his *opinion*. “*Hast thou considered my servant Job?*” The Eternal claims an authority over Satan’s activities and thoughts. He does not interrogate the Evil One for the *sake of information*, for He knows his most secret steps, and sounds the depths of all his thoughts. The prince of darkness stands ever unveiled to the eye of Omniscience. The interrogatory is designed to strike conviction into the heart of the Evil One and to startle him with the sense of his amenableness.

First: However *great* a creature is, he is still accountable to his Maker. Satan, perhaps, is one of the greatest of God’s creatures; he has power enough to “lead the world

* 1 Kings xxii. 19-23.

† Matt. iv. 3.

‡ Luke iv. 33.

captive at his will," yet he is not an irresponsible despot. No creature spirit in the universe can outgrow his responsibility.

Secondly: However *wicked* a creature is, he is still accountable to his Maker. This arch-fiend, with all his gigantic power, with all his daring rebellions, with all his profound machinations, and powerful confederates, has not been able through all these ages to snap one link of the chain of responsibility that binds him to the throne of God. Whilst you can never sin away your responsibility, you may sin your guilt up to crushing mountains, and into adamantine chains.

IV. He is A VAGRANT IN THE UNIVERSE. "*From going to and fro in the earth, and from walking up and down in it.*" The language implies two things:—

First: *Homelessness*. "*Going to and fro in the earth.*" He is the "unclean spirit," that is everlastingly walking through barren places, "seeking rest and finding none." He is roaming the earth. There is no repose in sin. "The wicked are like the troubled sea." There is no spot in all space on which a depraved spirit can settle down, and be at rest. Satan and all his children are homeless wanderers in the universe; they have no shelter from the stormy blast or the scorching ray; they are gyrating for ever on furious and unabating tempests. The language implies:—

Secondly: *Zealousness*. The expression, "*going to and fro,*" has in the original the idea of heat or haste. He is in a hurry; he moves with swift step, or perhaps on rapid wing. He does not saunter in his movements; he is no laggard; he is in earnest; malevolence burns within him, and as a "roaring lion he goeth about seeking whom he may devour." All evil passions are zealous. Greed, ambition, jealousy, envy, revenge, these never slumber or sleep. They are as active as the flame shooting out in all directions.

V. He is A SLANDERER OF THE GOOD. "*Then Satan answered the Lord, and said, 'Doth Job fear the Lord for nought?'*" &c. "*Hast Thou not made an hedge about him, and*

about his house, and about all that he hath on every side?" &c. First:—He slanders *God to man*. To our great progenitor he said, "Thou shalt not surely die, for God doth know the day on which thine eye is opened, thou shalt know both good and evil." He is constantly at this work; shaking men's faith in the Eternal by injecting suspicious thoughts. "Yea, hath God said," &c. Secondly:—He slanders *man to God*. This he does here. He insinuates that what appeared religious and good in Job was simply a manifestation of selfishness. In this department of slander he acts the fool, for the Omniscient One knows the heart; in the other department, viz., slandering God to man, he is more sagacious and more successful. He is Diabolus, breaking the harmony of God's moral universe by slander. Trust in God is the only foundation of moral order. Destroy it, and anarchy runs riot.

VI. He is A SLAVE OF THE INFINITE. "*And the Lord said unto Satan, Behold, all that he hath is in thy power; only upon himself put not forth thine hand. So Satan went forth from the presence of the Lord.*" He acts only *by permission*. Licence is now given him to deal with Job's externalities, but as yet he is not to touch his personality. He is to deal only with his property and relations. Great as Satan is, mighty as is his influence in the world, he is not an independent existence, he is in the hands of the Everlasting Father, Who sustains him every hour, and Who uses him as His instrument. Infinite Goodness makes this foul fiend an engine for good in His government. He links him to His triumphant chariot. No rider has such command over his steed as God has over him. He may bound and prance, fired with all the passions of hell, but he can never break away. If he tempts us, he tempts us by Divine permission; and "God is faithful, Who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it."

HOMILY No. IV.

A PICTURE OF THE FOE OF FOES.

(Continued.)

“And there was a day when his sons and his daughters were eating and drinking wine in their eldest brother’s house : and there came a messenger unto Job, and said, The oxen were plowing, and the asses feeding beside them : and the Sabeans fell upon them, and took them away : yea, they have slain the servants with the edge of the sword ; and I only am escaped alone to tell thee. While he was yet speaking, there came also another, and said, The fire of God is fallen from heaven, and hath burned up the sheep, and the servants, and consumed them ; and I only am escaped alone to tell thee. While he was yet speaking, there came also another, and said, The Chaldeans made out three bands, and fell upon the camels, and have carried them away, yea, and slain the servants with the edge of the sword ; and I only am escaped alone to tell thee. While he was yet speaking, there came also another, and said, Thy sons and thy daughters were eating and drinking wine in their eldest brother’s house : and, behold, there came a great wind from the wilderness, and smote the four corners of the house, and it fell upon the young men, and they are dead ; and I only am escaped alone to tell thee. Then Job arose and rent his mantle, and shaved his head, and fell down upon the ground, and worshipped, and said, Naked came I out of my mother’s womb, and naked shall I return thither : the Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away ; blessed be the name of the Lord. In all this Job sinned not, nor charged God foolishly.”—CHAP. i. 13-22.

EXEGETICAL REMARKS. Ver. 13. —“And there was a day.”—“And it came to pass as it might be to-day.” “And it came to pass one day.”—*Delitzsch*. This was probably the regular day for their domestic banquet. It was a convivial family party.

Ver. 14.—“The oxen were plowing, and the asses feeding.” Probably female asses. Female asses were then and there much more valuable than male ones on account of their milk. On the journey they carried support for the traveller, as well as the traveller himself and his baggage. It is important to observe that the ploughing determines very precisely the season of the transaction. This takes place in January, and hence the various references

through the whole book, as Canon Cook observes, to winter weather, snow, ice, swollen streams, &c.

Ver. 15.—“And the Sabeans fell upon them, and took them away.”—“When the Sabeans fell upon them and carried them away.”—*Delitzsch*. The idea is that these nomadic plunderers rushed violently on them. These Sabeans were evidently a predatory tribe prowling through the districts of Arabia for purposes of outrages and plunder. “Yea, they have slain the servants with the edge of the sword.” Not only were the oxen and the asses taken, but the servants who were at work with them in the field they slaughtered with the sword. “And I only am escaped alone to tell thee.” “I,” who was the messenger? The word

translated messenger here is usually translated angel, but its meaning here is, one who is sent. Who was the bearer of the terrible errand? Was he in Job's employ, or was he a stranger who had happened to witness the outrage?

Ver. 16.—“*While he was yet speaking, there came also another, and said, The fire of God is fallen from heaven, and hath burned up the sheep, and the servants, and consumed them; and I only am escaped alone to tell thee.*” “The fire of God” here refers in all probability to lightning. In the margin it is called “a great fire.” A terrible electric flash came and burnt up the sheep and the servants.

Ver. 17.—“*While he was yet speaking, there came also another, and said, The Chaldeans made out three bands, and fell upon the camels, and have carried them away, yea, and slain the servants with the edge of the sword; and I only am escaped alone to tell thee.*” “The Chaldeans were a fierce and warlike people; and when they were subdued by the Assyrians, a portion of them appear to have been placed in Babylon to ward off the incursions of the neighbouring Arabians. In time they gained the ascendancy over their Assyrian masters, and grew into the mighty empire of Chaldea and Babylonia.” A very striking description of these Chaldeans we have in Habakkuk i. 6-11. This messenger who followed so swiftly in the steps of the first declares that he only escaped alone to tell him.

Ver. 18.—“*Whilst he was yet speaking, there come also another.*” What sad tidings did this third messenger bring? He says, “*Behold, there came a great wind from the wilderness, and smote the four corners of the house, and it fell upon the young men* (young people—

D-litzsch) and they are dead; and I only am escaped alone to tell thee.” Though the word here rendered “young men” is the same as that rendered “servants” in verse 17, it is generally believed that here it represents Job's sons and daughters, the young people. The great wind from the wilderness was one of those tornadoes more common in Oriental countries than others more distant from the equator. This fearful hurricane from the wilderness came in all its force upon the house where Job's sons and daughters were enjoying their convivial banquet.

Ver. 20.—“*Then Job arose, and rent his mantle.*” “Job arose” not necessarily from sitting, but from the wonted calmness of his soul he was mentally roused. He seems to have heard with calmness the other messages, but when tidings of the destruction of his children met him, he was moved to the depths of his nature. The rending of the mantle was the conventional mark of deep grief (Gen. xxvii. 34). Orientals wore a flowing mantle over their shirt and loose pantaloons. “*Shaved his head.*” This also was an old symbol of grief (Jer. xli. 5; Micah i. 16). “*Mother's womb.*” By this he poetically means the earth. The earth is the universal mother of mankind. Out of it, as to our bodies, we came; into it we return, as destitute as when we first appeared.

Ver. 21.—“*The Lord (Jehovah) gave, and the Lord (Jehovah) hath taken away; blessed be the name of the Lord.*” Job here realizes God's assertion (verse 8) against Satan's (verse 11). Instead of cursing, he blesses the Lord Jehovah, that is, Jehovah himself.

Ver. 22.—“*In all this Job sinned not, nor charged God foolishly.*” “In all this,” that is, in all his ex-

pressions and feelings on this occasion Job did no wrong, nor did he attribute folly to his Maker; that is, he vented no murmuring remarks against God.

HOMILETICS.—The great subject here is a continuation of the former homiletic sketch, namely—the FOE OF FOES. In the former passage he appeared before us as a being who had a personal existence, who intruded into the holy, who was amenable to his Maker, a vagrant in the universe, and *a servant of the Infinite*. It is in the latter aspect that he still appears before us in these words. He has received from the Almighty permission to deal with Job; and here we have him malevolently dealing with the patriarch's *circumstances*. In the next paragraph we shall have to study him as malevolently dealing with Job's *personality*. In dealing with Job's circumstances as here recorded, we are struck with four things concerning him—the enthusiasm of his malignity, the variety of his agents, the celerity of his movements, and the folly of his calculations.

I. THE ENTHUSIASM OF HIS MALIGNITY. No sooner does he receive permission than he begins in terrible earnestness. He does not seem to have lost a moment. Like a hungry vulture in a carrion atmosphere, he pounces down upon his victim. Now he strikes at the cattle that were ploughing the field, and the "*she asses*" that were beside them. Then he slays the servants, then with a shaft of fire from heaven he burns up the "*sheep and servants*," and then he breathes a hurricane through the wilderness, and levels to the dust the house in which Job's children are revelling in the festive pleasures of family love, and destroys them all. He chooses an hour when his stroke would be most terrible, the hour of hilarity and joy. The more unexpected the calamity the heavier it falls. Thus he goes to the utmost point of the liberty which his great Master granted him. He could do no more with Job's circumstances. He deprived him as in a moment of all his property and his children. In one short hour, it would seem, he reduced this, the greatest of all the men in the East, to a pauper; and, perhaps, one of the happiest of fathers to the desolation of childlessness. He had no authority to go beyond this point at

present. He had to wait for another Divine communication before he could touch the *body* of Job. He did his utmost, and did it with an infernal delight.

Notice :—

II. THE VARIETY OF HIS AGENTS. He employed—

First : *Wicked men*. He breathed his malign spirit into the men of Sheba, and they rushed to the work of violence and destruction. He inflamed the Chaldeans with the same murderous passions, and then, “*three bands fell upon the camels,*” carried them away, and slew the servants, &c. Alas! this arch-fiend has access to human souls. “He worketh in the children of disobedience.” He leadeth them captive at his will. He employed—

Secondly : *Material nature*. The great God gave him power over the elements. He kindled the lightning, and made it consume the sheep and the servants. He raised the atmosphere into a tempest, levelled its fury against the house and brought it down to the destruction of all within. With Heaven’s permission this mighty spirit of evil can cause earthquakes to engulf cities, breathe pestilences to depopulate countries, create storms that will spread devastation over sea and land. “He is the prince of the power of the air.” “As he is prince of the power of the air (taking the air for the elementary world), how easily could he at one blast sweep all the surface of the earth into the sea, or drive the weighty immense surges of the ocean over the whole plane of the earth, and deluge the globe at once with a storm ; or how easily could he, who from the situation of his empire might be supposed able to manage the clouds, draw them up in such a position as should naturally produce thunders and lightnings, cause those lightnings to blast the earth, dash in pieces all the fine buildings, burn all the populous towns and cities, and lay waste the world ; and at the same time command sufficient quantities of sublimated air to burst out of the bowels of the earth, and overwhelm and swallow up in the opening chasm all the inhabitants of the globe! In a word, Satan, left to himself as a devil, and to the power which, by the virtue of his seraphic origin, he must be vested with, was able to have made devilish work

in the world if by a superior power he was not restrained.”
—*De Foe*.

Notice :—

III. THE CELERITY OF HIS MOVEMENTS. How rapidly his fell strokes followed each other. Before the first messenger of evil had told the patriarch his terrible tale, another appeared. Whilst the first was “*yet speaking*,” another came; and whilst the second was “*yet speaking*,” came the third. The bearers of misery trod on the heels of each other. Why this hurry? Was it because this work of violence was agreeable to the passions of this foul fiend? Or was it because the rapidity would be likely so to shock Job’s moral nature as to produce a religious revulsion, and cause him to do what he desired him—curse the Almighty to his face? Perhaps both. Perhaps the celerity was both his pleasure and his policy. Trials seldom come alone. The first is generally the harbinger of the second, and so on. It is true what our great dramatist has said :

“When sorrows come
They come not single spies,
But in battalions.”

Notice :—

IV. THE FOLLY OF HIS CALCULATIONS. What was the result of all this on Job? The very reverse of what Satan had calculated. He had told the Almighty that such visitations would rouse Job to curse Him to His face. Instead of which Job falls down and blesses his Maker :—“*Then Job arose and rent his mantle, and shaved his head, and fell down upon the ground, and worshipped, and said, Naked came I out of my mother’s womb, and naked shall I return thither : the Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away ; blessed be the name of the Lord.*” He “*worshipped.*” He did not curse. In his worship we discover three things :—

First : *His profound sensibility.* “*He rent his mantle and shaved his head.*” He was no Stoic. He deeply felt his trial, and falling prostrate under its heavy load, he worshipped. Great was his grief. There would be no virtue in his not feeling. He would have been less than a man not to have done so. Genuine religion, instead of deadening

the human sensibilities, gives them depth and refinement. Jesus wept at the grave of Lazarus. In his worship we discover—

Secondly : *His exalted philosophy.* He traced all to the Great First Cause, *God.* All that he had *lost* he felt God had given him. When he came from the “*womb*” of the great mother of all—the earth—he had nothing, and when he returned back into his chambers of everlasting forgetfulness, he would go “*naked*” as he came.

He felt that all that he had possessed came to him as a gift from Jehovah. He did not trace it to *luck*, to *fortune*, or to his own *industry.* “*The Lord gave,*” he says. “The Lord gave me my sheep and oxen ; the Lord gave me my children. All are His gifts.” And what he had lost the Lord had also taken away. He does not trace his loss to *chance*, *necessity*, *misfortune* ; nor does he trace it to the plundering Sabeans or ruthless Canaanites ; nor to the lightnings or the winds ; nor even to the great arch-enemy of humanity ; but up *directly* to Jehovah. He knew that the forces of nature, the passions of wicked men, and the plots and workings of infernal spirits, were all under the master control of Jehovah. This was his *philosophy* ; and is it not true ? The philosophy that traces the events of our history up to some secondary causes, or the laws of nature, is but a philosophy “*falsely so called.*” All is under the Absolute One. He originates all good, He controls all evil.

“ All good proceedeth from Thee,
As sunbeams from the sun ;
All evils fall before Thee,
Thy will through all is done.”

In his worship we discover—

Thirdly : *His religious magnanimity.* “*Blessed be the name of the Lord.*” Wicked men would have vented their rage in curses on the Sabeans and Chaldeans, on the lightning and on the wind ; or would have risen up in rebellious hostility against Heaven. This is what Satan expected. But instead of this, Job says, “*Blessed be the name of the Lord.*” I praise Him, I adore Him in all. This is something more than submission to the Divine will under suffering ; something even more than acquiescence in the Divine will in

suffering. It is exultation in the manifestation of the Divine will in all the events of life. It amounts to the experience of St. Paul, who said, "I glory in tribulation," &c.

How disappointed this Mephistopheles must have been with the result. The result was the very opposite to what he had expected—to what he had wrought for. Thus it has ever been, and thus it will ever be. God may permit Satan to blast our worldly prospects, to wreck our fortunes, and destroy our friendships. But if we trust in Him He will not allow him to touch our souls to their injury. He only uses the fiend to try His servants. An old Welsh minister, in preaching on this text, is reported to have said that God permitted Satan to try Job as the tradesman tries the coin that his customer has tendered in payment for the purchased wares. He strikes it on the counter and hears it ring as rings the true metal, before he accepts it, and places it in his drawer. The Heavenly Merchant employed Satan to ring Job on the counter of trial. He did so—did so with all the force of his mighty arm, and in the Divine ear the moral heart of the patriarch vibrated as the music of Divine metal, fit for the treasury in the heavens.

HOMILY No. V.

A PICTURE OF THE FOE OF FOES.

(Continued.)

"Again there was a day when the sons of God came to present themselves before the Lord, and Satan came also among them to present himself before the Lord. And the Lord said unto Satan, From whence comest thou? And Satan answered the Lord, and said, From going to and fro in the earth, and from walking up and down in it. And the Lord said unto Satan, Hast thou considered my servant Job, that there is none like him in the earth, a perfect and an upright man, one that feareth God, and escheweth evil? and still he holdeth fast his integrity, although thou movedst me against him, to destroy him without cause. And Satan answered the Lord, and said, Skin for skin, yea, all that a man hath will he give for his life. But put forth thine hand now, and touch his bone and his flesh, and he will curse thee to thy face. And the Lord said unto Satan, Behold, he is in thine hand; but save his life. So went Satan forth from the presence of the Lord, and smote Job with sore boils from the sole of his foot unto his

crown. And he took him a potsherd to scrape himself withal; and he sat down among the ashes. Then said his wife unto him, Dost thou still retain thine integrity? curse God, and die. But he said unto her, Thou speakest as one of the foolish women speaketh. What? shall we receive good at the hand of God, and shall we not receive evil? In all this did not Job sin with his lips.—CHAP. II. 1-10.

EXEGETICAL REMARKS. As the 1st, 2nd, and part of the 3rd verses of this chapter are almost identical in phrase as well as meaning with the 6th, 7th, and 8th verses of the first chapter, the same exegetical remarks will apply, and we need not quote them here.

Ver. 3.—“*Still he holdeth fast his integrity, although thou movedst me against him, to destroy him without cause.*” Satan had tried Job once and failed. Here is the second attempt. It cannot be determined as to the length of time intervening between the first attack and this, the second. The first storm had expended itself, and Job remained firm as a rock. Now Satan is authorized to deal a still heavier blow, as we shall see under ver. 5.

Ver. 4.—“*And Satan answered the Lord, and said, Skin for skin.*” Bernard renders this, “Limb for limb.” We see no sufficient reason for such a reading. “Skin for skin” is true to the original. “This is a proverbial expression, of which various explanations have been given. It means like for like”—*Dr. Samuel Davidson.* “*And all that a man hath will he give for his life.*” In plain English this means, sovereign after sovereign, all the sovereigns that a man has, will he give in exchange for his life. The idea is, that life is dearer to a man than his property, however great his property may be.

Ver. 5.—“*But put forth Thine hand now, and touch his bone and his flesh, and he will curse Thee to Thy face.*” “Renounce Thee.”—

Delitzsch. “Bone and flesh” represent his corporeal life. The hand of destruction had bereft Job of all his property—his “skins”—as well as of his children, and thus far his piety had stood the test. But life is dearer than property; let that be touched and the piety will give place to blasphemy. This was Satan’s idea.

Ver. 6.—“*And the Lord (Jehovah) said unto Satan, Behold, he is in thine hand; but save his life.*” Here permission is granted Satan again to afflict Job, but that permission has its limitation—“but save his life.” Torture him to the utmost; let every nerve quiver in burning anguish, but spare his life. Take everything from him but sheer existence.

Ver. 7.—“*So went Satan forth from the presence of the Lord (Jehovah), and smote Job with sore boils from the sole of his foot unto his crown.*” “Sore boils.” As it is in the singular, in the Hebrew, a “burning sore” would perhaps be a better rendering. “Job was covered with one universal inflammation.” “With burning ulcerations.”—*Goode.* “The disease of Job,” says a modern expositor, “seems to have been an universal ulcer, producing an eruption over his entire person, and attended with violent pain and constant restlessness. A universal boil, or group of boils, over the body would accord with the account of the disease in the various parts of the book. In the Elephantiasis the skin is covered with incrustations like those of an

elephant. It is a chronic and contagious disease, marked by a thickening of the legs, with a loss of hair and feeling, a swelling of the face, and a hoarse, nasal voice. It affects the whole body: the bones as well as the skin are covered with spots, and tumours, at first red, but afterwards black.*

Ver. 8.—“*And he took him a potsherd to scrape himself withal; and he sat down among the ashes.*” “Potsherd, not a piece of a broken earthen vessel, but an instrument made for scratching (the root of the Hebrew word is scratch). The sore was too disgusting to touch. To sit in the ashes marks the deepest mourning (Jon. iii. 6); also humility, as if the mourner were nothing but dust and ashes, so Abraham (Gen. xviii. 27).”

Ver. 9.—“*Then said his wife unto him, Dost thou still retain thine integrity? curse God, and die.*” The expression, “Curse God and die,” is translated by *Lee*, “bless the gods and die;” by *Wemyss*, “bless God and die;” by *Bernard*,

“blaspheme God and die;” by *Delitzsch* and others, “renounce God and die.” If it means “bless,” she is probably ironic, and means to say, “You have been blessing God, go on blessing Him, and all you will get for it is dying.” But “curse God” is most probably the correct rendering, and accepted by most expositors. “There is perhaps nothing too sharp for an angry woman’s tongue.” — *Professor Davidson*.

Ver. 10.—“*But he said unto her, Thou speakest as one of the foolish women speaketh.*” The word “foolish” is here used in the sense of wicked; and the idea is that the sentiments she uttered were impious, and such as were on the lips of the wicked. “*What? shall we receive good at the hand of God, and shall we not receive evil? In all this did not Job sin with his lips.*” “In all this”—in all his physical tortures, in his wife’s taunts, and all his grievous calamities, Job “sinned not with his lips.” So far Satan was still unsuccessful.

HOMILETICS.—I have had under consideration the dealing of Satan with Job’s *circumstances*, depriving him of all his property, bereaving him of his children, and leaving him destitute and disconsolate; here I find him dealing with his *personality*, afflicting him with sufferings of inexpressible anguish. From the words we learn Satan’s *low estimate* of human nature, his *great power* over human nature, and his *grand purpose* with human nature.

Notice:—

I. Satan’s LOW ESTIMATE of human nature. His language here clearly implies that even a good man’s love of goodness is not supreme and invincible. He states—

First: *That goodness is not so dear to him as life.* “*Skin*

* See also Professor Davidson on Job, p. 27.

for skin, yea, all that a man hath, will he give for his life." Self-preservation is a strong instinct in human nature, and therefore a Divine principle; but it is not true that it is ever the strongest feeling in the human heart. A man who has come under the dominion of love for the true, the beautiful, and the good, holds his life as subordinate to the high principles of genuine religion and godly morality. This is a fact which the history of martyrdom places beyond debate. From the Hebrew youths in Babylon, and the martyrdom of Stephen, down to the present period, unnumbered instances have occurred in demonstration of this. Thousands of men in Christendom to-day can say with Paul, "I count not my life dear unto me." It is true that to unregenerate men life is everything, and they will give "*skin for skin,*" yea, all that they have, for it; but it is a libel on human nature, both in its normal and redeemed condition, to say that love of life is its supreme law. He states—

Secondly: *That great personal suffering will turn even a good man against God.* "Put forth thine hand now and touch his bone," &c. Such is the connection of the body with the the soul, that great bodily suffering has undoubtedly a tendency to generate a faithless, murmuring, and rebellious spirit. Affliction is not the soil in which the principles of virtue naturally spring up and grow. Will purgatorial fires discipline souls into virtue and holiness? I have no such conviction. Albeit genuine godliness can not only stand against the severest bodily sufferings, but often gets strength and development from them. There have been good men in all ages who could say, "We glory in tribulation, knowing that tribulation worketh patience," &c. Satan therefore, in intimating that goodness is not so dear to man as life, and that personal sufferings would turn good men against God, utters a foul libel on human nature; a libel, however, which the unregenerate world has ever endorsed.

Notice:—

II. Satan's GREAT POWER over human nature. "*And the Lord said unto Satan, Behold, he is in thine hand; but save his life.*" I infer from the words—

First: That his great power *moves within fixed limits.*

“Behold, he is in thine hand; but save his life.” Independently he has no power, he derives his energy from the Almighty, he is in the hands of Omnipotence. In God he “lives and moves and has his being.” His power to move a faculty or to think a thought is derived from the Creator of his being. “Save his life.” This means, do not kill him. Here is the limitation. “So far shalt thou go, and no farther.” I infer from the words—

Secondly : That his great power *is used to torture the body and corrupt the soul.* See how he afflicts Job’s *body.* “So went Satan forth from the presence of the Lord, and smote Job with sore boils.” The ancients ascribed many physical diseases direct to the devil. Perhaps they were not far wrong in their philosophy. Do not physical evils spring from moral, and is not the devil the instigator of the morally bad? What a merciless torturer he is; how soon he makes poor Job writhe in agony. He covered him with ulcers from “*the sole of his foot to his crown,*” so that “*he took him a potsherd to scrape himself withal; and he sat down among the ashes.*” See, too, how he corrupts Job’s wife. “*Then said his wife unto him, Dost thou still retain thine integrity? curse God, and die.*” If you substitute the word “bless” for “curse,” you still have the impious spirit of the wife: then in heartless irony she counsels her husband to blaspheme his Maker. Perhaps she meant, “Thou hast been blessing God under thine affliction thus far, go on with thy cant, and die, for death would be desirable both to thyself and me.” Satan acted thus not only on *Job’s body,* but on the *soul of Job’s wife,* and both in order to tempt the patriarch to sin against his Maker. There would not, I trow, be much difficulty in thus exciting the patriarch’s wife. What woman that loved her husband with strong, deep love would not be easily moved to furious rage against Heaven in thus torturing to the utmost severity the dearest object of her heart? There is something womanly in her language after all.

Notice:—

III. Satan’s GRAND PURPOSE with human nature. —
What was his master-aim? To turn Job against God, and

to demonstrate that Job's religion was only another form of selfishness. And in this he failed, signally failed, gloriously failed. Three things here show his failure:—First: *Job reproves his wife.* “*Thou speakest as one of the foolish women speaketh.*” Secondly: *Job vindicates his Maker.* “*What? shall we receive good at the hands of God, and shall we not receive evil?*” Thirdly: *Job is commended by inspiration.* Here is the Divine testimony to Job's state of mind amid the torturing of the devil. “*In all this did not Job sin with his lips.*”

CONCLUSION. — First: *What a moral triumph is here.* Here is demonstrated the fact, which worldly men in all ages have denied, that moral goodness to a good man is dearer to him than everything else; that genuine piety is absolutely disinterested. Satan had charged Job with selfishness in his religion. “*Doth Job fear God for nought?*” Is he not religious because religion answers his purpose? Thou hast “*hedged him about*” with every blessing; deprive him of his possessions, and then see. Divine permission is given Satan to try the question on Job. Secondly: *What a portrait of the devil we have here.* What a remarkable correspondence there is between this old Arabian picture of the devil, and the devil as he appears in the Gospels, the Epistles, and the Apocalypse. Strange that different artists, in different ages and countries, should draw a picture so strikingly similar of this invisible, mighty Anarch of the universe—

“He above the rest,
 In shape and gesture proudly eminent,
 Stood like a tower: his form had not yet lost
 All its original brightness, nor appear'd
 Less than archangel ruin'd, and th' excess
 Of glory obscured: as when the sun, new risen,
 Looks through the horizontal misty air,
 Shorn of his beams; or from behind the moon,
 In dim eclipse, disastrous twilight sheds
 On half the nations, and with fear of change
 Perplexes monarchs: darken'd so, yet shone
 Above them all th' archangel: but his face
 Deep scars of thunder had entrench'd, and care
 Sat on his faded cheeks, but under brows
 Of dauntless courage, and consid'rate pride,
 Waiting revenge: cruel his eye, but cast
 Signs of remorse and passion, to behold
 The fellows of his crime, the followers rather,
 (Far other once beheld in bliss!) condemn'd
 For ever now to have their lot in pain.”—*Milton.*

Thus far we have two problems solved. First: *That it is possible for the human soul to serve God with disinterested love.* This is illustrated in the first homily. Secondly: *That there is a being in the universe beside God to whom we may philosophically ascribe evil.* There are five facts which show this. (1) *That rational and moral existences constitute the chief part of the glory of creation.* Without these what would the universe have been?—a college without students, a temple without worshippers. (2) *That it is the essence of rational and moral intelligences that they should be free to obey or to disobey.* No being can be moral that is not endowed with the power of spontaneity and self-motion. Each moral being is a fountain, not a channel; a free agent, not an engine; the maker of his own character. It is the characteristic of such beings that they have the power of sinning; it is their glory when they sin not. (3) *That disobedience begets a tendency in its author to tempt others to wrong.* Sin has in it the tempting instinct. (4) *That the greater the rebel, the more powerful in propagating evil.* (5) *That Infinite Goodness turns moral evil to a good account.* These facts render it far more philosophical to ascribe all moral evil to Satan than to God. Had God not permitted His creatures to become devils He would only have been the Maker and Manager of machines.

HOMILY No. VI.

GENUINE FRIENDSHIP.

“Now when Job’s three friends heard of all this evil that was come upon him, they came every one from his own place; Elipluz the Temanite, and Bildad the Shuhite, and Zophar the Naamathite: for they had made an appointment together to come to mourn with him and to comfort him. And when they lifted up their eyes afar off, and knew him not, they lifted up their voice, and wept; and they rent every one his mantle, and sprinkled dust upon their heads toward heaven. So they sat down with him upon the ground seven days and seven nights, and none spake a word unto him: for they saw that his grief was very great.”—CHAP. ii. 11-13.

EXEGETICAL REMARKS. Ver. 11. *heard of all this evil that was come*
 —“Now when Job’s three friends *upon him, they came every one from*

his own place; *Eliphaz the Temanite, and Bildad the Shuhite, and Zophar the Naamathite.*" Here begins Job's third trial, a trial which goes right into his soul, tortures his deepest religious faiths and feelings, which are the tenderest nerves of a man's being. This trial goes on so long as the discussion continues. These three friends were, in all probability, the patriarch's most particular friends. Elsewhere in the book we are given to understand that his admiring and grateful acquaintances were numerous. A man of his high intellectual power; deep, tender, and practical philanthropy; high social influence and affluent means, could scarcely fail to gather around him a large number of attached friends; but these "three" were *special*—hence they came to visit Job in his deep affliction. How they "heard of all this evil" we are not told. There were no postal communications in those days, but in all societies ill news has swift pinions. They came together, we are told, by pre-appointment; each left his own house and started on his mission. "*Eliphaz the Temanite.*" From the fact that he seems to take the lead in nearly all the conversations of the book, and the others to have followed and sustained his propositions, we may infer that he was the most influential man and the oldest friend. The name signifies "My God's strength," and his parents, in all probability, were religious people. He is called the Temanite, perhaps because he was a native of Teman, a country of Idumea, the home of one of the descendants of Esau. (Gen. xxxvi. 10; comp. Jer. xlix. 7, 20; Ezek. xxv. 13; Amos i. 11, 12; Obad. i. 8, 9.) "*Bildad the Shuhite.*" It is supposed that he

son of Abraham by Keturah. This Shuhite is the only person to whom we can trace the denomination of Shuhite (Gen. xxv. 2). "*And Zophar the Naamathite.*" "Naamah, from which Naamathite is derived, was a town mentioned in Josh. xv. 41, in a list of the uttermost cities of Judah's lot, 'toward the coast of Edom southward' (ver. 21). It is, further, among that portion of those towns that lay 'in the valley,' which is supposed to have been Petra. Naamah was probably, therefore, in or near the Ghor, or valley, which extends from the Dead Sea to the Gulf of Akabah."—*Kitto*. The residences of these three friends render it probable that the scene of this book was laid in the land of Edom. Of these three friends *Canon Cook* says, "Eliphaz represents the patriarchal chieftain, grave and dignified, erring only by too strict an adherence to tenets hitherto unquestioned. Bildad, without much originality or independence of character, reposes partly on the wise saws of antiquity, and partly on the authority of his older friend. Zophar differs from both. He seems to have been a young man. His language is violent, sometimes even coarse and offensive; he represents the bigots of his age." "*For they had made an appointment together, to come to mourn with him, and to comfort him.*" The fact that they "made an appointment" to visit Job indicates that they did not live far apart; and the fact that they came to mourn with him and to comfort him shows that the strong reproaches which they afterwards addressed to him never entered into their purpose at first.

Ver. 12.—"*And when they lifted up their eyes afar off, and knew him not.*" His terrible afflictions had

so transfigured him that his friends could not recognize him. "From our being told here," says *Bernard*, "that his friends lifted up their eyes from afar, and did not recognize him, together with the fact that he was sitting amidst ashes, we may fairly conclude that Job had taken up his seat in the open air: and there the reader will do well to imagine he continued during the whole time occupied by the events recorded in this book; as thereby will not only the grandeur of the description given in the latter chapters of this book, of the phenomena of nature, and of the approach of the whirlwind, from which God addresses Job, be greatly enhanced; but also some passages be cleared up which might otherwise seem obscure." "*They lifted up their voice and wept; and they rent every one his mantle, and sprinkled dust upon their heads toward heaven.*" Here we have a natural and a conventional way of showing grief; the natural way is by tears—they "wept." It is natural, the world over and the ages through, for sorrow to flow forth in tears. But the rending of the mantle and the sprinkling of dust on their heads toward heaven seem to have been acts of fashion or custom among the Ancients. (Josh. vii. 6; 1 Sam. iv. 12; Ezek. xxvii. 30; Acts xxii.

23.) "This custom," says a modern expositor, "resembles in a remarkable manner the mode in which Achilles gave utterance to his sorrow when informed of the death of Patroclus."—

"A sudden horror shot through all the chief,
And wrapp'd his senses in the cloud of grief;
Cast on the ground, with furious hand he spread
The scorching ashes o'er his graceful head.
His purple garments and his golden hairs—
Those he deforms with dust, and these he tears;
On the hard soil his groaning breast he threw,
And roll'd and grov'ell'd as to earth he grew."—*Pope.*

Ver. 13.—"*So they sat down with him upon the ground seven days and seven nights and none spake a word unto him.*" "They did not remain in the one posture and without food all this time, but for the most of this period daily and nightly. Sitting on the earth marked mourning (Lam. ii. 10). Seven days was the usual length of it (Gen. 1. 10; 1 Sam. xxxi. 13). This silence may have been due to a rising suspicion of evil in Job; but chiefly because it is only ordinary griefs that find vent in language—extraordinary griefs are too great for utterance."—*A. R. Fausset.*

HOMILETICS.—Here is a record of the visit of these three friends to Job. "What a picture is here," says *Froude*. "What majestic tenderness! His wife had scoffed at his faith, bidding him leave God and die. His acquaintance had turned from him. He had called his servant, and he had given him no answer. Even the children, in their unconscious cruelty, had gathered round and mocked him as he lay among the ashes. But his friends sprinkle dust towards heaven, and sit silently by him, and weep for him

seven days and seven nights upon the ground. That is, they were true-hearted, truly loving, religious, devout men, and yet they with their religion were to become the instruments of the most poignant sufferings, the sharpest temptations, which he had to endure. So it was, and is, and will be—of such materials is this human life of ours composed.” The passage suggests a few of the leading features of *genuine friendship*.

I. IT IS DEEPENED BY ADVERSITY. — The effect on his friends of the overwhelming calamities which overtook Job, was not to *drive* them *from* him, but to *draw* them *to* him. When they “*heard of all this evil that was come upon him, they came every one from his own place.*” His afflictions so roused and intensified their affections, that they left their homes and hastened to his presence. Adversity is one of the best tests of friendship. The Germans have a proverb, “Let the guests go before the storm bursts.” False friends forsake in adversity. When the tree is gay in summer beauty, and rich in aroma, bees will crowd around it and make music amongst its branches; but when the flower has fallen, and the honey has been exhausted, they will pass it by, and avoid it in their aerial journeys. When your house is covered with sunshine, birds will chirp at your windows, but in the cloud and the storm their notes are not heard—such bees and birds are types of *false* friends. Not so with true friendship; it comes to you when your tree of prosperity has withered; when your house is shadowed by the cloud and beaten by the storm. “True friends,” says an old writer, “visit us in prosperity only when invited, but in adversity they come to us without invitation.” I have seen an oak-tree, once the ornament of the forest, leafless, blanched, dead; but the ivy that had clung to it in its better days seemed to clasp it more tenaciously in its decay, as if so to cover every branch with its own beauty as to conceal the wrinkles and deformities that time had made. This is true friendship.

“When true friends meet in adverse hour,
 ’Tis like a sunbeam through a shower;
 A watery ray an instant seen,
 The darkly closing clouds between.”—*Sir Walter Scott.*

In this respect, Christ is the highest manifestation of genuine friendship. He came down from His own bright heavens because of our adversity. "He came to seek and to save the lost." Another thought suggested concerning genuine friendship is—

II. IT IS PRACTICALLY HELPFUL.—The friendship of these men was not a passing sentiment, an evanescent emotion, it was a working force; it set them to—

First: A *self-denying work*. They left their homes and directed their footsteps to the scene of their afflicted friend. We know not the exact distance they had to travel; it was probably a long journey, otherwise it was not likely they would have made an appointment to travel together. Travelling, too, in those days meant something more than it does in these times, when means of transit are so accessible, agreeable, and swift. And then, no doubt, it required not a little self-denying effort to break away from their homes, their numerous associations, and the avocations of their daily life. Their friendship meant *self-denying* effort. This is always a characteristic of genuine friendship—spurious friendship abounds in talk and evaporates in sighs and tears; it has no work in it. As a rule, it is not the man whose affection for you is the most garrulous, and whose words are the most glozing, that you can trust; the stronger and deeper the love a man has for you, the more modest and mute. It set them to—

Secondly: A self-denying work *in order to relieve*. They came "*to mourn with him and to comfort him.*" Man can comfort man. The expressions of true sympathy are balm to a wounded heart, and courage to a fainting soul. They have often broken in as sunbeams through the black clouds of sorrow, under which the spirit had quivered and quailed. These men did not come to pay Job a complimentary visit; address to him a few flattering words, and then depart; they came "*to mourn with him and to comfort him.*"

In this feature of genuine friendship Christ was again transcendent. "He came to preach deliverance to the captive—to open the prison door to them that are bound—to bind up the broken-hearted," &c.

Another thought suggested concerning genuine friendship is—

III. IT IS VICARIOUSLY AFFLICTED. “*And when they lifted up their eyes afar off, and knew him not, they lifted up their voice and wept: and they rent every one his mantle, and sprinkled dust upon their heads toward heaven.*” If this language means anything, it means *soul suffering*. The very sight of their friend’s overwhelming afflictions harrowed their hearts. We are so constituted that the personal sufferings of our friend can bring sufferings to our heart as great, and often greater. What is the pain endured by the child with the burning fever on it, compared with the agonizing distress of its mother’s heart? The more love we have in us, the more vicarious suffering we endure, in scenes where sufferings abound. In this respect again the friendship of Christ excels all others. In all our afflictions He is afflicted. So great was the Divine love within Him, that “He bore our griefs and carried our sorrows.”

Another thought suggested here concerning genuine friendship is—

IV. IT IS TENDERLY RETICENT. “*So they sat down with him upon the ground seven days and seven nights, and none spake a word unto him: for they saw that his grief was very great.*” Why were they silent? We are sometimes silent with amazement; we are struck dumb by astonishment. We are sometimes silent because we know not what words to utter on the occasion; and sometimes we are silent because the tide of our emotion rises and chokes the utterance. Why were these men silent? For any of these reasons? Perhaps for all. Anyhow, in their silence there was wisdom—silence on that occasion was better than speech. They let their flowing tears, their symbolic mantle, their heads turned towards heaven with imploring looks, their sobs and sighs, do what words could not do—express the profound sympathy of their hearts. *Silence, not speech, is the best service that friendship can render in sorrow.* First, Because silence is the strongest evidence of the depth of our friendship towards our suffering friend; Secondly, Be-

cause silence is most consistent with our ignorance of Divine Providence towards our suffering friend; Thirdly, Because silence is most congenial to the mental state of our suffering friend.*

HOMILY No. VII.

JOB'S FIRST SPEECH—THE MADDENING FORCE OF SUFFERING.

"After this opened Job his mouth, and cursed his day," &c.—CHAP. iii. 1-26.

EXEGETICAL REMARKS. — This chapter commences the poetic debate of the book, which extends to the 6th verse of the 42nd chapter. Here Job begins. For "seven days and seven nights" he sat in mute anguish; meanwhile his sufferings abated not, but probably increased. The passions of soul which they generated grew and became irrepressible, and he speaks. The swelling waters break through the embankment, and rush forth with fury and foam.

Ver. 1.—"After this Job opened his mouth, and cursed his day." His natal day. "This chapter," says Mr. Cox, in his admirable exposition of the Book, "divides itself into three sections, three strophes, in which life is execrated through its whole course. (1) Job asks (ver. 3-10), since life is such a burden, why was I born? (2) He demands (11-19), why was not I suffered to die as soon as born? (3) If that were too great a boon, why may I not die now? (20-26).

Ver. 2, 3.—"And Job spake, and said, Let the day perish wherein I was born, and the night in which it

was said, There is a man child conceived." From this to the twelfth verse the patriarch employs language of terrible grandeur and wild extravagance in reviling his natal day. "There is nothing that I know of, in ancient or modern poetry, equal to the entire burst, whether in the wildness and horror of the imprecations, or the terrible sublimity of its imagery." Jeremiah, one of the boldest of the Hebrew poets, has language strikingly similar (chap. xx. 14-16).

Ver. 4.—"Let that day be darkness; let not God regard it from above, neither let the light shine upon it." "Let not Eloah ask after it."—*Delitzsch*. The curse is against the day of his birth and the night of his conception as recurring yearly, not against the first. His wish is that his birthday may become *Dies alta*, swallowed up in darkness.

Ver. 5.—"Let darkness and the shadow of death stain it; let a cloud dwell upon it; let the blackness of the day terrify it." The idea is the same as that already expressed, a desire that his birthday should be buried in black oblivion.

* For remarks on this point see *Homilist*, Second Series, vol. iii., p. 416.

Ver. 6.—“*As for that night, let darkness seize upon it; let it not be joined unto the days of the year, let it not come into the number of the months.*” “Darkness is to seize it, and so completely swallow it up, that it shall not be possible for it to pass into the light of day. It is not to become a day, to be reckoned as belonging to the days of the year, and rejoice in the light thereof.”—*Delitzsch.*

Ver. 8.—“*Let them curse it that curse the day, who are ready to raise up their mourning.*” “May the day cursers execrate it; they who are able to raise up leviathan. The day cursers were supposed to make days unlucky by their enchantments. It was also the popular belief that they possessed the power to call forth the great dragon against the sun and moon, so as to produce darkness.”—*Dr. Samuel Davidson.*

Ver. 9.—“*Let the stars of the twilight thereof be dark,*” &c. “If the night on which he was conceived is to become day, then let the stars of the twilight (*i. e.* the stars which as the messengers of the morning twinkle through the twilight of dawn) become dark.”—*Delitzsch.*

Ver. 10.—“*Because it shut not up the doors of my mother's womb, nor hid sorrow from mine eyes.*” A terrible reason he here assigns for cursing the night of his birth. Thus speaks his storm-tossed soul, as speaks the ocean in a hurricane, in wild grandeur and savage majesty. He has no language too strong, no figures too bold, to express his detestation of his natal day.

Ver. 13.—“*For now should I have lain still and been quiet, I should have slept: then had I been at rest.*” Job means by this, that had he died as an infant, instead of undergoing his present torture, he would have been sleeping quietly in the dust.

Ver. 14-18.—“*With kings and counsellors of the earth, which built desolate places for themselves,*” &c. He seems in this passage to speak with equal grandeur, but with a more subdued and reflective soul. Never was the physical condition of the dead more magnificently and impressively described. A condition of *rest*,—a condition common to men of all social grades,—the king and his subject, the prince and the pauper, the good and the bad, the oppressor and his victim.

Ver. 19.—“*The small and great are there.*”—This text should be, “the small and the great are the same;” and the “small and the great are there” should be in the margin. Schlottman is wrong in thinking the personal pronoun a copula in all passages like the present, and so refusing it the meaning of the same.—*Dr. Samuel Davidson.*

Ver. 20, 21.—“*Wherefore is light given to him that is in misery, and life unto the bitter in soul?*” &c. “Why is light given to the miserable, and life to the bitter soul who waits for death?”—*Lee.*

Ver. 22, 23.—“*Which rejoice exceedingly, and are glad, when they can find the grave? Why is light given to a man whose way is hid, and whom God hath hedged in?*” The question here asked is, Why should man, whose misery leads him to desire death, be kept in life? A very natural question this. A modern expositor has answered the question thus:—“(1) Those sufferings may be the very means which are needful to develop the true state of the soul. Such was the case with Job. (2) They may be the proper punishment of sin in the heart, of which the individual was not fully aware, but which may be distinctly seen by God. There may be pride, the love of ease, self-confidence, ambition,

and a desire of reputation. Such appear to have been some of the besetting sins of Job. (3) They are needful to teach true submission, and to show whether a man is willing to resign himself to God. (4) They may be the very things which are necessary to prepare the individual to die. At the same time that men often desire death, and feel that it would be a great relief, it might be to them the greatest possible calamity. They may be wholly unprepared for it."

Ver. 24.—"*For my sighing cometh before I eat, and my roarings are poured out like the waters.*" Noyes explains this thus:—"My sighing comes on when I begin to eat, and prevents me taking my daily nourishment." He compares his roarings to the waters: they were like the restless billows, numerous and tumultuous.

Ver. 25.—"*For the thing which I greatly feared is come upon me.*"—Margin, "I feared a fear, and it has come upon me." Perhaps he had a deep presentiment, even in his pros-

perity, that some terrible catastrophe lay before him; or perhaps he refers to the apprehensions which the first trials awakened; for it is common in human nature to apprehend a second when a first calamity comes: when one child is taken away, the parent naturally fears lest a second should fall.

Ver. 26.—"*I was not in safety, neither had I rest, neither was I quiet: yet trouble came.*"—"If I rightly apprehend," says Lee, "the drift of the context here, Job means to have it understood that he is conscious of no instance in which he has relaxed from his religious obligations: of no season in which his fear and love of God have waxed weak: and on this account, it was the more perplexing that such a complication of miseries had befallen him." At the close of this speech it is natural to ask—Does it not seem that the assertion of Satan was about to be confirmed? Delitzsch asks this question, and he answers it. (See Commentary, vol. i. p. 84.)

HOMILETICS.—This chapter is the language of a man overwhelmed with suffering. There have been suffering men in all ages, and there are suffering men still, but we can scarcely conceive of a greater sufferer than Job. He suffered in his *circumstances*. The fortune which, perhaps, he had gained by years of industry, which he had long enjoyed, and with which he had done great good, was utterly destroyed as in a moment. He suffered in his *body*. He was smitten with "sore boils from the sole of his foot unto his crown." A virulent poison rankled in his blood, and covered his frame with burning eruptions. He suffered in his *heart*. His faithful servants, and his beloved sons and daughters, who were rooted in his affections, were ruthlessly snatched away, and his heart was bleeding at every pore. The partner of his bosom, too, instead of

soothing him with kind words and loving attentions, taunted him with impious remarks. He was wounded in his *intellect*. His calamities broke in upon his religious belief, and confounded his judgment. He was involved in the most agonizing perplexity concerning the character and procedure of his Maker. The amount of his anguish we can scarcely exaggerate. Now this chapter is the language of a man overwhelmed with suffering, and we must explain it accordingly. We must not apply to it the same canons of interpretation as we would to the language of a man in calmness, in health, and in prosperity. A man's language must be construed according to the mood of his soul.

Here is suffering urging a man—

I. TO THE USE OF EXTRAVAGANT LANGUAGE.—The language of Job in this chapter is confessedly extravagant. It reads to us more like the eloquent ravings of a maniac, than the sober expressions of a saint. “*Let the day perish wherein I was born,*” &c. Wild and extravagant as the language seems to be it is *natural*. Three facts will show this:—

First: Great sufferings *generate great passions in the soul*. Hope, fear, love, anger, and other sentiments may remain in the mind, during the period of ease and comfort, so latent and quiescent as to crave no expression. But let suffering come, and they will rush into passions that shake and convulse the whole man. What elements sleep in every human heart, now latent, which a certain class of suffering would rouse into fury! Suffering often acts on certain attributes of the soul as fire on powder.

Secondly: Great passions *often become irrepressible*. Some men have a wonderful power of restraining their feelings. They keep them down, and will not allow them a revelation in words, or looks, or acts. But passion sometimes rises to such a pitch that no man, however great his self-control, is able to repress. Like the volcanic fire, it breaks through all the mountains that lie upon it, and flames up to the heavens.

Thirdly: When great passions become irrepressible, *they express themselves extravagantly*. The flood that has broken through its obstructions does not roll on at once in calm

and silent flow, but rushes and foams : and the passion that has become irrepressible will not express itself in calm looks, but in facial contortions ; not in peaceful movements of the body, but in muscular violence ; not in calm prose, but in tumultuous poetry. Hence the language of Job in the text. What man who endured his sufferings would speak with less wildness and hyperbole ? The Psalmist describes the process of feeling taking the form of speech.

“ I said, I will take heed to my ways,
That I sin not with my tongue :
I will keep my mouth with a bridle,
While the wicked is before me.
I was dumb with silence,
I held my peace, even from good ;
And my sorrow was stirred.
My heart was hot within me,
While I was musing, the fire burned :
Then spake I with my tongue.”—*Psalm xxxix. 1-3.*

Here is suffering urging a man—

II. TO DEPLORE THE FACT OF HIS EXISTENCE. “ *Why died I not from the womb ? Why did I not give up the ghost ?* ” &c. In this passage he deplores—

First : The *fact that he existed at all*. “ *Let the day perish wherein I was born.* ” Language which means—“ O had there never been such a day ! Would that I had never come into being, never opened my eyes on the universe, never felt an impression, or conceived a thought ! I had rather a thousand times never to have been at all, than to be what I am, to endure the agonies that now overwhelm me.” Many sufferers have felt the same. What Sophocles said expressed the experience of millions in all ages, “ Not to be born is best in every way. Once born, by far the better lot is then at once to go back whence we came.”

In this passage he deplores—

Secondly : That having existed, he *did not die at the very dawn of his being*. “ *Why died I not from the womb ? why did I not give up the ghost when I came out of the belly ? Why did the knees prevent me ? or why the breasts that I should suck ?* ” We ought to observe here that the word “ *prevent* ” does not mean as now, obstruct, but to anticipate, to go before ; and the expression, “ *why did the knees prevent me ? or why the breasts that I should suck ?* ” means

“ why was the nursing lap of my mother and her nutritious breasts made ready for me when I came into life, so as to continue me in existence ? ” Incidentally, I cannot but remark how good is God in making provision for our support before we enter on the stage of life. The Patriarch says that, had not such provision been made for him, he would have died at once. “ *For now should I have lain still and been quiet, I should have slept ; then had I been at rest, with kings and counsellors of the earth, which built desolate places for themselves,* ” &c.

The fact that suffering can thus make existence intolerable suggests the following thoughts—(1) Annihilation is not the worst of evils. Existence, especially an existence like man’s, with so many capacities for pleasure, is undoubtedly an immense blessing, and to lose it would be a terrible calamity ; but *non*-existence is preferable to *ill*-existence. Better not to be at all than to be in misery ; better to be quenched than to burn. Another truth suggested is—(2) Desire for death is no proof of genuine religion. Mere suffering has the power not only to destroy our natural love of life, but to generate a desire to go out of existence. Many a man, destitute entirely of all Christliness, like Job often exclaims, “ I would not live alway.” Another truth suggested is—(3) Hell must be an overwhelmingly terrible condition of existence. Hell, the Bible tells us, is a condition of excruciating suffering, where death is sought, but not found.

Here is suffering urging a man—

III. TO HAIL THE CONDITION OF THE DEAD. “ *For now should I have lain still and been quiet,* ” &c. (verses 13-19). With what an earnest longing does Job look to the grave ; with what admiration does he seem to speak of the state of the dead. He speaks of it as a general *resting* place where dwelt “ *kings and counsellors of the earth,* ” “ *princes that had gold, and filled their houses with silver,* ” where “ *the wicked cease from troubling,* ” and where “ *the weary be at rest,* ” where “ *the prisoners rest together and hear not the voice of the oppressor,* ” where are “ *the small and great,* ” and where the “ *servant is free from his master.* ” He looked to death—

First: As a *real* rest. How profound is the rest of the grave! The loudest thunders cannot penetrate the ear of the dead; the hottest fires cannot touch the nerves of the dead; no tyrant, no oppressor, can disturb the slumbers of the dead. He looked at death—

Secondly: As a *common* rest. "*Kings and counsellors,*" princes and paupers, tyrants and their victims, the illustrious and the obscure—all are there together. His description here of the grave is as true as it is grand. The state of the dead, as here described, suggests two practical thoughts:—(1) The transitoriness of all worldly distinctions. The flowers that appear in our fields in the summer season of the year vary greatly in form, size, hues. Some are far more imposing and beautiful than others; but in a few weeks all the distinctions are utterly destroyed. It is so in society. Great are the secular distinctions in this generation, but a century hence, and the whole will be common dust. How egregiously absurd to be proud of mere secular greatness. The state of the dead, as here described, suggests—(2) The folly of making corporeal interests supreme. Men are prone to make the body paramount in everything. The great question is, "What shall we eat, what shall we drink, wherewithal shall we be clothed?" Material pleasures, material distinctions, material resources; for these, alas! the present generation crave and toil. But how soon are all these over; the grave puts an end to all! "The rich and the poor meet together."

"Not to thy eternal resting place
Shalt thou retire alone

Thou shalt lie down

With patriarchs of the ancient world, with kings,
The powerful of the earth, the wise and good,
Fair forms and hoary seers of ages past,
All in one mighty sepulchre. The hills,
Rock-ribbed and ancient as the sun; the vales
Stretching in pensive quietness between;
The venerable wood; rivers that move
In majesty, and the complaining brooks
That make the meadows green; and poured round all,
Old ocean's gray and melancholy waste—
Are but the solemn decorations all
Of the great tomb of man."

Here is suffering urging a man—

IV. TO PRY INTO THE REASONS OF A MISERABLE LIFE.

“Wherefore is light given to him that is in misery, and life unto the bitter in soul?” &c. (verses 20-26). The great question running through these verses is, Why should God continue the existence of a miserable man? “A man whose way is hid.” A very natural question this! Has the Great Author of existence any pleasure in the sufferings of His creatures? Is the writhing frame a pleasant object to His eye? Are groans and shrieks of anguish music to His ear? It cannot be. Man’s instinctive belief in His benevolence, and the plan of happiness on which the universe is organized, condemn the thought. Why then? There are, no doubt, good reasons, reasons that we shall understand and appreciate ere long.

First: Great sufferings are often spiritually useful to the *sufferer*. They are storms to purify the dark atmosphere of his heart, they are bitter ingredients to make spiritually curative his cup of life. Suffering teaches man the evil of sin; for sin is the root of all anguish. Suffering develops the virtues:—patience, forbearance, resignation. Suffering tests the character:—it is a fire that tries the moral metal of the soul.

Secondly: Great sufferings are often spiritually useful to the *spectator*. The view of a suffering human creature tends to awaken compassion, stimulate benevolence, and excite gratitude.

CONCLUSION.—From this subject we learn—

First: *The utmost power that the Devil is capable of exerting on man.* All these afflictions came upon Job through the agency of the Wicked One. The Eternal had given him permission to deal thus with His servant. And what did he do? (1) He did not destroy *life*. Mighty as is this Great Fiend, he can neither create nor annihilate. (2) He did not destroy *piety*. He expected—he engaged, indeed, to make Job curse his God, but the Patriarch did not do so. Amidst the ravings of his agony, he utters no words of irreverence towards his Maker. He reviles his natal day, and deploras the fact of his existence, it is true, but does no more. What then did Satan do? He rendered existence intolerable, and this is all he can do. We learn—

Secondly : *The strength of genuine religion.* It is wonderful, yet glorious, to find that Job, in the midst of all his sufferings, did not blame God in these words. This is the more wonderful, inasmuch as he had not two things, which we have, to help him under his sufferings. (1) The example of Christ as a Sufferer. Christians, in suffering, have great consolation in comparing their afflictions with those of Christ, but Job had no such comfort. He had not (2) The assurance of a future life. There is no evidence clear that Job believed in a future state. This world bounded his whole horizon. It is, therefore, wonderful that, under such circumstances, he should have refrained, in these terrible utterances of suffering, to reflect upon the Author of his being. How much more elevated should our piety be than his ! What higher light has fallen on us ! he lived in starlight, we under solar beams.

HOMILY No. VIII.

THE FIRST SPEECH OF ELIPHAZ TO JOB :

(1.) WRONG CRITERIA OF CHARACTER.

“ *Then Eliphaz the Temanite answered and said,*” &c.—CHAP. iv. 1-11.

EXEGETICAL REMARKS. *Ver. 1.* —“ *Then Eliphaz the Temanite answered and said.*” Up to this time, Job’s friends had maintained a strict silence : they seemed mute with amazement at the greatness of his afflictions, and reluctant, from sympathy, to disturb him with their convictions. Job’s bitter complaint, however clothed in extravagant, and what they considered blasphemous, language, left them no alternative but to speak. Here begins the three-fold colloquy between Job and his friends. Each speaks in

turn. Eliphaz first, then Bildad, and then Zophar. They all proceed on three principles on which they had agreed : (1) That under the righteous administration of Heaven good always comes to the good, and evil to the evil. (2) That sufferings here imply great sin. Because Job was a great sufferer, he was a great sinner. (3) That if the great sinner would repent he would be restored to the favour of God and the enjoyment of life. Eliphaz is the first speaker here, and indeed, in all the series of arguments in the

discussions of the book. He is so, perhaps, because he might be the oldest of Job's friends, and regarded by the others as more experienced in wisdom. Though mild, courteous, and candid, his severity at times is sharp and scathing.

Ver. 2.—“*If we assay to commune with thee, wilt thou be grieved?*” “*If one attempts a word with thee, will it grieve thee?*”—*Delitzsch*. *Umbreit* makes two questions: “*May we attempt a word with thee? Wilt thou be grieved at it?*” But the English version is good sense, and accords with the Hebrew. “*But who can withhold himself from speaking?*” Margin, “*Refrain from words.*” He speaks not for the sake of discussion, but for the sake of what he believed to be the truth. Strong convictions overcame his taciturnity.

Ver. 3, 4.—“*Behold, thou hast instructed many, and thou hast strengthened the weak hands,*” &c. I see no sarcasm, as some do, in these words: on the contrary, a generous acknowledgment of the noble services which Job had rendered to others, in instructing the ignorant and strengthening the weak.

Ver. 5.—“*But now it is come upon thee, and thou faintest; it toucheth thee, and thou art troubled.*” “*Now it cometh on thee thou grieveest, now it toucheth thee thou despondest.*”—*Delitzsch*.

Ver. 6.—“*Is not this thy fear, thy confidence, thy hope, and the uprightness of thy ways?*” There are different renderings of this: “*Is not the fear of God thy confidence, and the perfectness of thy way, thy hope?*”—*Lee*. “*Is thy piety then nothing? thy hope, thy confidence, or the uprightness of thy ways?*”—*Goode*. “*Ought not*

thy piety to inspire with hope, and the integrity of thy life with confidence?”—*Wemyss*. “*Ought not the fear of thy God be thy confidence, and the integrity of thy ways thy hope?*”—*Bernard*. The idea seems to me to be as Coverdale has it, “*Where is now thy fear of God, thy steadfastness, the patience and the perfectness of thy life?*”

Ver. 7.—“*Remember, I pray thee, who ever perished, being innocent? or where were the righteous cut off?*” By this appeal he means to imply that, inasmuch as Job was such a sufferer, he was neither righteous nor innocent. Never does the innocent perish. You are perishing, therefore you are not innocent.

Ver. 8.—“*Even as I have seen, they that plow iniquity, and sow wickedness, reap the same.*” There is nothing wonderful in this. Who has not seen this? It is the eternal principle of Divine government. “*Whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap.*”

Ver. 9.—“*By the blast of God they perish, and by the breath of his nostrils are they consumed.*” Destruction is here described by the image of a furious tempest—a common figure. (Job i. 16; Is. v. 25; Ps. xviii. 15.)

Ver. 10.—“*The roaring of the lion, and the voice of the fierce lion, and the teeth of the young lions, are broken,*” &c. Wicked men are frequently compared to wild animals (Is. xi. ; Ps. x. 9; lxviii. 6); and to the lion especially (Ps. xxii. 14; xxxiv. 11; xxxv. 17). By the lion, Eliphaz means wicked, ferocious, and rapacious men. The number of words that he here employs to represent the lion is somewhat remarkable: “*roaring,*” “*fierce,*” “*old,*” “*stout.*” Wicked men differ in ferocity, age, and strength.

HOMILETICS.—The introduction of this first address of Eliphaz to Job is admirable. Mark, First: His *politeness*. “*If we assay to commune with thee,*” that is, may we attempt a word with thee? He does not approach his venerable friend intrusively, and break forth abruptly into speech. With the true spirit of a gentleman, in the Bible sense, he entreats permission to say a word. “He speaks in a soft, subdued, suggestive strain, contriving in every way to spare the feelings of the sufferer.” Courteousness is no mean attribute of excellence. Mark, Secondly: His *tenderness*. “*If we assay to commune with thee, wilt thou be grieved?*” He means, shall I wound thy feelings if I speak out my mind? Respect for the feelings of another is not only the dictate of a noble nature and the mark of good breeding, but an element of Christian morality. We are commanded to be tender-hearted one toward another. Mark, Thirdly: His *fidelity to conviction*. “*Who can withhold himself from speaking?*” As if he had said, with the tenderest regard for thy feeling and the utmost reluctance to give pain, I feel bound by my conscience to speak. He sincerely believed—though his faith was ill-founded—that Job was not a good man because he was a sufferer; and loyalty to his faith prompted him to speak. Mark, Fourthly: His *candour*. He gives Job full credit for what he had done. “*Behold, thou hast instructed many,*” &c. Though he felt that Job was at fault, and that he had now to dispute with him on a vital question, he gave him full credit for all that was excellent in the past of his life. In all this, he is an example; an example which puts to shame millions who profess their Christian morality; it is an example of a natural religionist.

The religion he had was, in all probability, derived from the light of nature. He was not of the seed of Abraham, and there is no proof that he had a documental revelation. He was outside the circle to whom the written oracles of Heaven were vouchsafed. He drew his doctrines from the pages of material nature, and the tablets of the human soul. These verses show his criteria of moral character.

I. He regarded the FACT that a man suffered as a proof

that he was not innocent. He saw his old friend Job now in afflictions unparalleled, and well nigh intolerable; and he drew the conclusion that he was not what he once thought him to be—a good man. “Remember, I pray thee, who ever perished, being innocent? or where were the righteous cut off? Even as I have seen, they that plow iniquity, and sow wickedness, reap the same. By the blast of God they perish, and by the breath of His nostrils are they consumed.” In these words of his, there are certain *implicates* which reveal his knowledge of several cardinal theological truths: such as (1) The *existence of One Supreme Being*. He was neither Atheist, Pantheist, nor Polytheist: he believed in *one* God. (2) That this One Supreme Being superintends the affairs of *individual* life. The wretchedness and ruin of wicked men he ascribes to the “*blast of God*.” (3) That this One Supreme Being, in His superintendence of individual life, *administers retribution*. He refers to Him as preserving the “*innocent*,” and as destroying the “*wicked*.”

Now it is just at this point that Eliphaz makes the mistake. It is true that the principle of retribution is at work amongst men in this world; that there is a connection as close and indissoluble between man's character and man's condition, as there is between the seed that is sown in spring and the grain that is reaped in autumn. “They that plow iniquity, and sow wickedness, reap the same.” It is true also that this principle is often manifested in most signal judgments. “*By the blast of God they perish; and by the breath of His nostrils are they consumed. The roaring of the lion, and the voice of the fierce lion, and the teeth of the young lions, are broken. The old lion perisheth for want of prey, and the stout lion's whelps are scattered abroad.*” The deluge, the fiery showers that came down on Sodom, and the destruction of Jerusalem, are such displays of Divine retribution. All men have seen what Eliphaz had seen,—suffering growing out of sin, signal judgments coming down on flagrant criminals. But Eliphaz must have seen something more than this: he must have seen oftentimes the opposite. He must have often seen adversity linked to goodness, and prosperity to guilt. He only states a part of what he saw, and what is to be seen in God's dealing with mankind.

It is undoubtedly true that God, in His dealing with men, has respect to their moral character, but His providential treatment of them is not always regulated by this. Retribution here, though often manifest, is not *invariable* and *adequate*: the wicked are not always made wretched, nor are the good always made happy in this life. Eliphaz is not the only man that has made this mistake: his two friends, and indeed men in all ages, have fallen into the same error. So prevalent was the error in the days of Christ, that He had to lay down, with all His authority and force, the opposite principle (Luke xiii. 1-5). To judge a man's character by his external circumstances is a most flagrant mistake. The following facts reveal this: (1) *That suffering is not necessarily connected with sin.* Suffering was in the world before sin existed, and suffering pervades those sentient existences throughout the world that are incapable of sin. "The whole creation groaneth." (2) *Suffering seems almost necessary to the human creature in this world.* Pain is one of the best ministers that man has. It is one of his greatest incentives to study, to labour, to prudence, and to sympathy. I see not how the human race could advance without pain. Pain is the power that whips all the faculties of the soul into strenuous exercise.* "Suffering," says Dr. Channing, "comes to us through and from our whole nature. It cannot be winked out of sight. It cannot be thrust into a subordinate place in the picture of human life. It is the chief burden of history. It is the solemn theme of one of the highest departments of literature—the tragic drama. It gives to fictions their deep interest. It wails through much of our poetry. A large part of human vocations are intended to shut up some of its avenues. It has left traces on every human countenance over which years have passed. It is, to not a few, the most vivid recollection of life." (3) *Suffering, as a fact, has a sanitary influence upon the character of the good.* Affliction is disciplinary. "It worketh out the peaceable fruits of righteousness to them that are exercised thereby." The millions who have reached the world of perfection are those who "have come out of great tribulation."

* See Homilist, Fourth Series, vol. iii. p. 176.

“O fear not in a world like this,
And thou shalt know ere long,
Know how sublime a thing it is
To suffer and be strong.”—*Longfellow.*

This is a scene of probation : men are not dealt with here according to their works ; there is a future where retribution, which is here partial, will be full and complete.

II. He regarded the MURMURING of a man under suffering as a proof of his wickedness. Job had uttered terrible complaints in the preceding chapter : and these complaints tended to confirm the conviction which the fact of his sufferings gave him, that Job was not a genuinely righteous man in the sight of God. He was right here : a *murmuring* spirit is essentially an evil. In this complaining spirit Eliphaz discovers *moral degeneracy*. “Behold, thou hast instructed many, and thou hast strengthened the weak hands. Thy words have upholden him that was falling, and thou hast strengthened the feeble knees. But now it is come upon thee, and thou faintest ; it toucheth thee, and thou art troubled. Is not this thy fear, thy confidence, thy hope, and the uprightness of thy ways ?” The meaning of all this is, thou hast fallen from thy past excellence : thou hast in days gone by exhorted sufferers to be resigned, courageous, and magnanimous ; but now, when thou thyself art touched by affliction, thou art frantic with excitement and complaints. Is this thy religion ? Is this thy “*fear of God,*” thy “*confidence,*” thy “*hope,*” of which thou hast so often spoken ? What is it worth ? Nothing. Thy complaining spirit now proves that thou art not true to thy original profession and character. Here Eliphaz does what narrow theologians have always done and are still doing,—he judged a man’s character by a religious dogma.* Somehow or other the ill-digested idea had got into this man’s heart, as well as into the hearts of the other two, that great suffering in a man always indicated his great sin ; and through this idea he treated a noble man, a man worthy of his commiseration and admiration, as one who had greatly fallen.

• See Book of Job. By J. A. Froude, M.A. Page 8.

HOMILY No. IX.

THE FIRST SPEECH OF ELIPHAZ TO JOB.

(2.) MAN'S FELLOWSHIP WITH THE UNSEEN WORLD.

"Now a thing was secretly brought to me, and mine ear received a little thereof," &c.—CHAP. iv. 12-21.

EXEGETICAL REMARKS. — *Ver.* 12. — "Now a thing was secretly brought to me," &c. "Now a word was brought to me secretly, and my ear received a portion of it."—*Lee*. He refers to this vision, no doubt, in order to reprove what he considered Job's unfounded state of confidence.

Ver. 13.—"In thoughts from the visions of the night, when deep sleep filleth on men." The original suggests disturbing thoughts—thoughts that heave and agitate the soul: such thoughts came to Eliphaz in the season of profound slumber. Probably he had been pondering on the problem of God's government during the day; and, as often happens, the most absorbing thoughts of the day are reproduced in strange visions in the night.

Ver. 14.—"Fear came upon me and trembling, which made all my bones to shake." "It is impossible," says Dr. Barnes, "to conceive anything more sublime than this whole description. It was midnight. There was solitude and silence all around. At that fearful hour this vision came, and a sentiment was communicated to Eliphaz, of the utmost importance, and fitted to make the deepest possible impression. The time, the quiet, the form of the image, its passing along, and then suddenly standing still; the silence, and then the deep and solemn voice—all were fitted to

produce the profoundest awe. So graphic and so powerful is this description, that it would be impossible to read it—and particularly at midnight, and alone—without something of the feeling of awe and horror which Eliphaz says it produced on his mind. It is a description which, for power, has probably never been equalled, though an attempt to describe the invisible world has often been made. Virgil has attempted such a description, which, though exceedingly beautiful, is far inferior to this of the Sage of Teman. It is the description of the appearance of the wife of Æneas:—

'Infelix simulachrum atque ipsius umbra
Creüsa
Visa mihi ante oculos, et nota major
imago
Obstupui; steteruntque comæ, et vox
faucibus hæsit.'—*Æn.* ii. 772.

— 'At length she hears,
And sudden through the shades of night
appears:
Appears no more Creüsa, nor my wife,
But a pale spectre, larger than the life.
Aghast, astonished, and struck dumb
with fear
I stood; like bristles rose my stiffened
hair.'—*Dryden*."

Ver. 15, 16.—"Then a spirit passed before my face; the hair of my flesh stood up: it stood still, but I could not discern the form thereof: an image was before mine eyes; there was silence, and I heard a voice, saying." The spirit first

glided silently before his eye, then it stood in a form shadowy and indistinct; it was silent for a time, and then it spoke. "I heard a voice," or, as the margin has it, "I heard a still voice." The effect of this vision is told with physiological accuracy. "*The hair of my flesh stood up.*" Fear drives the blood from the extremities of the body, contracts the skin, the hair becomes erect, and often blanched. Sudden alarm has been known to turn the hair white in an hour. Shakespeare, in his speech of the ghost to Hamlet, describes the effect of fear upon the flesh:—

———"But that I am forbid
To tell the secrets of my prison-house,
I could a tale unfold, whose lightest word
Would harrow up thy soul, freeze thy
young blood,
Make thy two eyes, like stars, start from
their spheres,
Thy knotty and combined locks to part,
And each particular hair to stand on end,
Like quills upon the fretful porcupine."

Ver. 17.—"*Shall mortal man be more just than God? Shall a man be more pure than his Maker?*" "Is a mortal man just before Eloah?"—*Delitzsch*. The idea is, shall mortal man be just before, or in the presence of, God?

HOMILETICS:—Whether this vision was within or without the mind of Eliphaz—to the imagination or the senses; whether the address of the "*spirit*" that passed before him and spoke was divinely inspired or not, the three following propositions which it suggests and illustrates would be true. They are true independent of the vision, and independent of the Bible itself.

I. THAT MAN HAS A CAPACITY TO HOLD INTERCOURSE WITH THE SPIRITUAL WORLD. The existence of a spiritual world is one of the fundamental faiths of humanity. It is a felt *sentiment* with man in his unreasoning state, peopling with ghosts the whole sphere of his being; a *theory* with

Ver. 18.—"*Behold, he put no trust in his servants; and his angels he charged with folly*" (imperfection). "*Servants*" and "*angels*" here point to the same class of existences, God's highest and purest intelligent creatures. They even are unworthy of God's confidence.

Ver. 19.—"*How much less in them that dwell in houses of clay, whose foundation is in the dust, which are crushed before the moth?*" "Much more the inhabitants of houses of clay, whose foundation is in the dust, who are beaten to pieces before the moth."—*Lee*. "Whose origin is in the dust."—*Delitzsch*.

Ver. 20, 21.—"*They are destroyed from morning to evening: they perish for ever without any regarding it. Doth not their excellency which is in them go away? They die, even without wisdom.*" "From morning to evening they are broken to pieces, without heeding it; they continually are perishing. Hath not their superiority which is in them been removed? They are even dying, but without wisdom to perceive it."—*Bernard*. Or better, "Is not the tent-cord torn from them? They die, without wisdom."—*Dr. S. Davidson*.

man in his reflective state, accounting for a class of phenomena otherwise inexplicable; a living *conviction* with man in his Christian state, bringing him under the "powers of the world to come." The material universe is but the creature, the instrument, and the sensuous form of the spiritual—a vesture which shall wear out with age, and be folded up. Now man's capacity for intercourse with the spiritual is two-fold—to *receive* and to *feel* its communications. Eliphaz had a capacity to receive the utterance of the spirit that broke his slumbers, and startled into fearful earnestness every power of his soul. It was but a little that his ear received, but a few sentences that he caught. Our ignorance of the spiritual arises not from the lack of communication. God speaks freely: the spiritual speaks in everything; there is no "speech nor language where its voice is not heard;" but from the lack of a capacity to take in all, our ears receive a little, and only a little. We are in the universe like a child who enters a lecture-room when a profound philosopher is in the midst of a discourse on some great branch of science, and who leaves before the subject has concluded: his ear received a little, and all it received he understood not. God's great discourse commenced ages before we entered the scene of knowledge, and will go on when we are in the dust. We only hear a part, and much of that we understand not; still though little it is something—something great, solemn, suggestive, sanctifying—something that proves the existence of a capacity to receive. But he has not only a capacity for receiving, but also for *feeling* spiritual communications. "*Fear came upon me, and trembling, which made all my bones to shake.*" There may be existences of sheer intellect possessing no susceptibilities of feeling, who would receive the most momentous thoughts from the spiritual universe without the slightest emotion. Such is not man's nature—he has a heart as well as a head. One thought may act on his soul as the fierce winds on the seas—lash it into foaming and battling billows of every emotion. Often, as in the case before us, deep spiritual impressions come most unexpectedly. It is night; the toils of the day are over, and the man has retired to rest. All is dark, lonely, and silent around him; the doors

are fastened, and with conscious security he sinks into repose. But see! a vision approaches; it halts right before his eye; it illumines midnight with its brightness; it breaks the silence with its voice, and delivers a message from the Everlasting. What a symbol is this of a spiritual thought! It often comes into the chamber of a man's soul at night on his bed, breaks his slumbers, and shakes his spirit to its centre. Nothing can exclude it—no walls, gates, bolts, or locks, can shut out a thought. He who made the mind knows its every avenue, and can reach it whenever and however He pleases. Friend! God can impart at any moment into thy nature thoughts, either hideous and malignant, that shall scare and terrify thee as demons, or lovely and benevolent, that shall, as angels, delight thy spirit and help thee on thy destiny. It is frequently the case that man's communication from the spiritual world is connected with terror and alarm. "*The hair of my flesh stood up,*" says Eliphaz. Such is the connection between mind and body, that the force of the emotion caused the blood to rush back to the heart, leaving the extremities to contract with cold, and thus produce the effects here expressed. The fact that an invisible and intangible agent, like thought, should produce such a physical phenomenon as this, is no feeble argument in favour of the immateriality of the soul. But why should alarm be the general effect of spiritual communication upon man? Why should he be so frequently overwhelmed in fear when in contact with the spiritual? Is he not spirit? Is not his Father spirit? Is not his ultimate home a realm of spirits? Ought he not, therefore, to hail, rather than dread, spiritual communications—be delighted with them than be alarmed? Yes, every sound from the spiritual universe ought to fall upon his soul with far more exquisite emotion than the sweetest strains of music on the outward ear. His terror confirms the Scripture doctrine, that his spirit is not in its normal state—that it is depraved.

II. THAT MAN'S CHARACTER DETERMINES HIS POSITION IN THE SPIRITUAL WORLD. The address of the "spirit" to

Eliphaz significantly expresses man's *moral inferiority*:—“*Shall mortal man be more pure than his Maker?* Behold, he put no trust in his servants; and his angels he charged with folly: how much less in them that dwell in houses of clay?” There are two ideas implied in this language, powerfully expressive of man's moral meanness in the spiritual empire:—First, *That Jehovah is infinitely superior to angels*; so immeasurable is the moral distance, that he charges them with folly; and secondly, *that man is inferior to angels*:—“*How much less in them that dwell in houses of clay?*”

In the empire of spirit the citizen is estimated, not by the amount of his wealth, the extent of his knowledge, the greatness of his intellect, or the brilliancy of his genius, but by the moral virtues that mark his character; the *holiest is the greatest*. Herein is man's inferiority as a citizen. The best is tainted, and is unworthy of fellowship with those high ones in the universe whom the Almighty charges with folly. If thou, O man, art thus mean in the domain of souls, what humility should ever breathe in thy spirit, and reign in thy life! How monstrous—how surprisingly impious—thy complaining strictures on the operations of a perfect God! How obvious, and how binding, the obligation of boundless trust in the principles of His government, and of a hearty concurrence in all His doings! Above all, how oughtest thou to hail with gratitude, and to seek with earnestness, the mediative help of Jesus to raise thee in the spiritual kingdom, and give to thee the sympathy and friendship of an innumerable company of angels, the spirits of just men made perfect, and of God, the Judge of all!

III. That man's earthly state is but A TEMPORARY SEPARATION FROM A CONSCIOUS EXISTENCE in the spiritual world. We are now in the great universe of spirits, but we are not *conscious* of the fact. This body is spoken of as a “*house*.” Though wondrously and intimately associated with my conscious being, it is not *me*, but *mine*—my dwelling, not myself. As the tenant is independent of his house,—can live though he leave it, or though it falls to

ruins,—so I *myself* am distinct from this body, and shall live after it has crumbled into dust. Death is but the tenant changing apartments. Our present apartments, constructed of gross matter, partition us not from the spiritual world—for we are of it, and in it we ever live, as in an atmosphere—but from the *consciousness* of it. The partition, however, will soon be taken down, and then *spirit* will be more real to us than matter is now.

Several things are here suggested about the departure into the *consciousness* of the spiritual. First:—It is *inevitable*. Our present dwellings are not built of brass, iron, or marble, or granite—they are “*houses of clay*,” exposed to all the changes of the outward elements; the sun may harden the clay, but the shower will wear it away; the frost may bind it, but it will crumble in the thaw. Its foundation, too, is not the everlasting rock, but the “*dust*.” It requires not some behemoth force to tear it down—it is “*crushed before the moth*.” A breath, a worm, a thought, an atom, can break up this house of clay. Secondly: It is *constantly progressing*. The progress of decay proceeds without pause. We are being “*destroyed from morning to evening* :” every hour, every minute, we are moving towards the felt spiritual; we cannot halt a moment in our course; we are impelled by a force as resistless as that which rolls the planets in their spheres. Thirdly: It is *frequently disregarded*. Our departure from this world, however active our lives or influential our positions, will not awaken much attention among the men we leave behind. “*We perish for ever, without any regarding it*.” My proud friend, whatever thou mayest think about the wondrous esteem in which thou art held by thy compeers, and of the importance of thy life to society; though thou art a merchant, whose vast transactions influence the markets of the world; or a statesman, whose speeches control the doings and destinies of cabinets; or, what is greater still, a writer, moving the minds of the millions,—but few of the men that know thee will pause in their business to think of thy death, and fewer still will drop a tear on thy grave. The sorrow of those that love thee most will soon be but as a cloud upon the sky, however dark for the moment, soon

dispersed. In a few short days after the earth has closed on thy remains, thy very children shall gambol on the hearth, with their little hearts as gladsome as ever, and the convivial laugh and jest of domestic joy will be heard as usual in thy dwelling. The world can do without thee, my friend; everything will progress as usual when thou art in thy grave. Thy death will be but a blade withered in the fields, the landscape can spare thee; a drop exhaled from the ocean, the mountain billows will not miss thee. Fourthly: The departure *terminates earthly glory*. The adventitious distinctions of birth, beauty, wealth, power, are all ended when men leave their "*houses of clay*." "*Doth not their excellency, which is in them, go away?*" Lastly: Their departure occurs before any perfection in wisdom is attained — "*they die even without wisdom*." The wisest die with scarcely more than the alphabet of knowledge!

Seeing that we are of the spiritual—that we *receive* and *feel* communications from it—that our moral relation to it is not right, and that every moment we are moving into an intensely felt connection with it, is it not madness to have our sympathies, thoughts, and aims, bounded by the earthly? May the Great Spirit regenerate us into the spiritual now! "He that is born of the Spirit is spirit." *Spirit* in him is being felt, developed, and raised into living sympathy with God and His holy universe. Death to such need start no fear. He may say of the last enemy—

"Thou art the shadow of life; and as the tree
 Stands in the sun, and shadows all beneath,
 So, in the light of great eternity,
 Life eminent creates the shade of death:
 The shadow passeth when the tree shall fall,
 But I shall reign for ever over all."—*Tennyson*.

HOMILY No. X.

THE FIRST SPEECH OF ELIPHAZ TO JOB.

(3.) A VIEW OF MORAL EVIL.

"Call now, if there be any that will answer thee; and to which of the saints wilt thou turn?" &c.—CHAP. v. 1-7.

EXEGETICAL REMARKS. In the preceding chapter, Eliphaz had dwelt upon the sinfulness of Job in complaining of the dispensations of Providence; now he tells him that, independently of this flagrant sin of his, he will also ruin himself in public opinion, so that his best friends will shrink from him; meaning, of course, to intimate, that even he himself and the two friends, who, like himself, had come to assure him of their condolence and sympathy, will, if he continues in the course he has adopted, be compelled to renounce his friendship, and abandon him to his fate. He says: "Now, that thou hast uttered all these curses, call for sympathy and consolation, and see whether there will be found any one responding to thy call! And to whom, amongst good and pious men, canst thou turn? that is, look up with the hope that they will commiserate thy affliction!"—*Dr. Bernard.*

Ver. 1.—"Call now, if there be any that will answer thee; and to which of the saints wilt thou turn?" Some see a judicial idea in the word "call" here; as if Eliphaz meant, "summon the Almighty to 'hy tribunal, or any of His holy ones. Enter into discussion with them as to thy conduct, and will they say a word in thy favour?" Go into a judicial controversy with them; will any evidence come out to justify thee? By the saints or "holy ones" he refers to the angels. (Deut.

xxxiii. 3; Zechariah xiv. 5; Psalms lxxxix. 6-8). Grotius, I think, has the idea of the verse. He supposes that Eliphaz, having stated in the preceding chapter that he had received a Divine revelation "in the visions of night, when deep sleep falleth on men," in favour of his position, now calls upon Job to produce, if he can, the same kind of testimony on his own behalf. "Call to the holy ones, and ask them." The language expresses the belief of Eliphaz that the conduct of Job would find no sympathy with any holy intelligence in the universe.

Ver. 2.—"For wrath killeth the foolish man, and envy slayeth the silly one." "For he is a fool who is destroyed by complaining, and envy slays the simple one."—*Delitzsch.* Some suppose that as Eliphaz proceeded, Job, by some exclamation or gesture, had expressed passion. The word "wrath" in the margin is "*indignation*;" and the word "foolish" must be regarded as representing wicked men. Wickedness is moral madness. It is not said that the wrath and envy of God will destroy the wicked, for in the heart of the Infinite no such passions exist, but these foul passions of his own heart will kill him. The verse may be translated thus, "For his own wrath will kill the fool, his own folly the silly one." Eliphaz, no doubt, had reference to those strong, wild passions which Job had expressed in the last chapter.

Ver. 3.—“*I have seen the foolish taking root : but suddenly I cursed his habitation.*” In confirmation of what he had first advanced he adduces his own observation. *Dr. Lee* translates this verse thus: “As for me, I have seen the foolish taking root, and instantly I denounced his habitation.” The words mean “yet I cursed his pasture immediately.”—*Dr. Samuel Davidson*. His experience corresponds with the experience of David, and is expressed in language similar:—

“I have seen the wicked in great power,
And spreading himself like a green bay tree.

Yet, he passed away, and, lo, he was not:
Yea, I sought him, but he could not be found.”

Ver. 4.—“*His children are far from safety (help), and they are crushed in the gate, neither is there any to deliver them.*” Here he quotes what he said when he saw the wicked in prosperity. The children of prosperous sinners are often helpless and exposed; calamity awaits them. All judicial proceedings amongst the Hebrews were carried on in the gates of the city (*Deut. xxi. 19*; *Ruth iv. 1-11*). What *Eliphaz* seems to say, is that the children of the wicked will be so hated on account of their ancestors that even in public assemblies or courts of justice their voice will not be heard.

Ver. 5.—“*Whose harvest the hungry eateth up, and taketh it even out of the thorns.*” This is still a declaration of what he had observed in the history of the wicked. They are plundered of the results of their labour, the fruits of the harvest are taken from them,—even the grains among the thorns. “*And the robber swalloweth up their substance.*” The true reading and translation is, “And the thirsty pant after

his substance.”—*Dr. S. Davidson*. Now *Eliphaz* states the result of his observation on wicked men in such a way as must have cut *Job* to the quick, whether he intended it or not. *Job's* calamities, after a period of great prosperity, had “come suddenly upon him.” His “habitation” had been destroyed, his children had been fatally smitten with a sudden stroke, and robbers and freebooters had plundered him of his worldly substance.

Ver. 6, 7.—“*Although affliction cometh not forth of the dust, neither doth troublespring out of the ground; yet man is born unto trouble, as the sparks fly upward.*” *Eliphaz* hints that the cause of the affliction lay with *Job* himself. The cause of afflictions is not to be sought for extrinsically, but in man himself. Some render this, “as birds by flying soar aloft;” some, “as sons of lightning fly high.” “The English translation should not be changed, for it is the most probable.”—*Dr. S. Davidson*. Some critics, *Dr. Lee* and others, regard the words “affliction and trouble,” in these verses, as meaning moral evil and sin. In the margin, “iniquity” is given for “affliction,” and “labour” for “trouble.” If *Eliphaz* meant sin, he was correct in the sixth verse, but wrong in the seventh. It is true that iniquity does not come from the dust; sin does not rise out of the constitution of things. It is not a something that springs up by the necessity of nature. Indeed its very essence consists in its being against the established order of things. But it is untrue that man is born unto trouble or sin; that he is sent into the world to go wrong, predestinated to wickedness. This is a foul calumny on the Creator. But if suffering, and not sin, is meant by the words, he is correct in the whole passage, if the suffering be regarded

as the suffering of the sinner. It is true that the suffering of the sinner does not come out of the dust as a mere blind force, and that it does come as certain as he comes into existence. Man is born—that is, *sinful* man—unto trouble, as sparks fly upwards.

HOMILETICS.—In the preceding chapter, containing the first portion of the speech of Eliphaz to Job, we noticed wrong criteria of character, and fellowship with the unseen; in this section we have his view of moral evil. He regarded the *fact* that Job suffered, as a proof that he was not innocent; and his *murmuring* under suffering, as a proof that his guilt was very great. He was not, in his view, innocent because he suffered; on the contrary, a great sinner because he murmured.

Now although Eliphaz was a mere natural religionist, we see, from these verses, that his view of sin was tolerably correct. How does he view sin?

I. AS EXCLUDING THE SINNER FROM THE SYMPATHY OF THE GOOD. “*Call now, if there be any that will answer thee; and to which of the saints wilt thou turn?*” He may mean here one of two things—First, Who will sympathize with thy *opinions* as a sinner? Who, amongst holy intelligences, will side with thee in this discussion? Who will defend thy propositions against mine? Who will become thine advocate, and my antagonist, in this dispute? His appeal implies his belief that none of the “holy ones” would sympathize with Job’s opinions; that he had “the *communis sensus fidelium*; that the conscience of the faithful would everywhere be with him.” Or he may mean, Secondly, Who will sympathize with thy *conduct* as a sinner? “*Call now, if there be any that will answer thee.*” Thy conduct is such, that none of the holy will notice thee. Thou hast put thyself, by thy sins, so beyond the pale of the good, as to prevent thy cries touching any holy chord of responsive sympathy.

Now, although all this is very untrue, as applied to Job, and very unjust to his character—for Eliphaz had not properly interpreted his old friend, now overwhelmed in suffering and sorrow—yet it is *perfectly true in relation to sin generally*. Sin always excludes from the sympathy of the

good. All holy intellects in the universe are dead against the *opinions*, and all holy consciences against the *conduct*, of the sinner. God and His holy creation are against the wicked. This fact shows the folly of the sinner—he is waging a war against Omnipotence, a war in which he must inevitably be crushed.

Eliphaz here views sin—

II. AS BY ITS OWN PASSIONS WORKING OUT THE DESTRUCTION OF ITS AUTHOR. “*Wrath killeth the foolish man, and envy slayeth the silly one.*” His *own* wrath, not the wrath of the Almighty,—“for fury is not in me,” says the Infinite. His *own* envy, for no such feeling dwells in the heart of Eternal Love. It is a psychological fact, that the malific passions, in whatever form they appear—“*wrath, envy,*” jealousy, revenge, &c., are destructive. First: Such passion “*killeth*” and “*slayeth*” the *body*. Such is the vital connection between soul and body, that the health of the latter depends upon the condition of the former. Gloomy thoughts, dark forebodings, foul emotions, work disease and death into the body. A man need not take poison into his lips to destroy his physical life; by his own mind he can inject thoughts and passions into his blood, that, like prussic acid, will work out his ruin. Germs of disease float in the atmosphere of depraved souls. Every sinner is a *felo de se*. Secondly: Such passion “*killeth*” and “*slayeth*” the *soul*. “Lust, when it is conceived, bringeth forth sin; sin, when it is finished, bringeth forth death.” Malign feelings quench the light, crush the liberty, blight the hopes, and destroy the peace of souls. They are the moral fiends.

Eliphaz here views sin—

III. AS ENJOYING PROSPERITY ONLY TO TERMINATE IN RUIN. “*I have seen the foolish taking root: but suddenly I cursed his habitation.*” What he means, I presume, is, I have seen cases like thine own, Job; I have seen wicked men prosper as thou hast prospered, and I have seen the same calamity befall them as has befallen thee. Indeed I have always predicted the ruin of such men; therefore, I have never envied them. When I have seen them in their

glory, mine eye has gone on and looked down the tremendous precipice into which they would assuredly fall. It is destiny. What has come to thee has always come to sinners, must always come. Now, what he says here, although untrue in relation to Job, is perfectly true in relation to sin generally. First: *Sinners often prosper in the world.* They “take root.” Indeed, so far as secular prosperity is concerned, the wicked have generally the advantage. Their hearts are more set on gain than the hearts of the good, and they are less scrupulous as to the means they employ to attain it. Hence they frequently rise to opulence, and tenant mansions; whilst the godly have often to live in cots of obscurity and want. The wicked in every age have been seen in great power, “spreading themselves out like a green bay tree.” Secondly: *The prosperity must come to a termination.* It is only temporary. It often vanishes during life. “Riches take to themselves wings and flee away.” At death the largest fortunes are left behind. “Naked came we into the world, and naked shall we return.” Thirdly: *At the termination the ruin is complete.* In the end the sinner loses all, — “habitation,” “children,” “harvest,” all.

Ay, sin brings ruin — ruin into everything connected with the sinner — ruin into his soul, his body, his family, his estate. As autumn brings influences into the fields and forests, that shall end in the cold desolations of winter, so sin brings ruin wherever it goes. Sin is ruin.

He here views sin —

IV. AS FATED TO PRODUCE MISERY WHEREVER IT EXISTS. “*Although affliction cometh not forth of the dust, neither doth trouble spring out of the ground; yet man is born unto trouble, as the sparks fly upward.*” Whatever might have been the real meaning of Eliphaz, there are two thoughts which the words convey to our mind, and which are true — First: *That misery follows sin by Divine ordination.* It does not spring up like weeds or thistles from the earth, but comes by Divine appointment. The Eternal Governor of the universe has, by an inviolable decree, linked misery to sin. And, though it does not spring from the earth; though the dust

may be adorned with verdure, and the ground with flowers, and the whole globe be beautiful in all its aspects, yet misery must come to the sinner. From God's bountihood in nature, do not argue against His retributive decrees. Secondly: *That a sinful man, so sure as he is born, must endure trouble.* "Man is born unto trouble, as the sparks fly upward." If Eliphaz meant man was created for suffering, it was a blasphemous error; but if he meant that man, as a sinner, suffered as sure as he was born, he uttered a truth confirmed by all history. As sure as by a law of nature "sparks fly upward," so sure trouble follows every sinful man through every stage of life.

CONCLUSION: Such was this old Temanite's view of moral evil; and, in the main, his view is true. His view accords with fact,—fact as written in all consciences, history, and the Bible. Sin is truly an abominable thing. God hates it. All holy intelligences hate it. Would that man would loathe and renounce it!

"Oh, cursed, cursed sin! Traitor to God,
 And ruiner of man! Mother of woe,
 And death, and hell! Wretched, yet seeking worse;
 Polluted most, yet wallowing in the mire;
 Most mad, yet drinking frenzy's giddy cup;
 Depths ever deepening, darkness darkening still;
 Folly for wisdom; guilt for innocence;
 Anguish for rapture; and for hope despair:
 Destroy'd, destroying, in tormenting pain'd;
 Unawed by wrath, by mercy unreclaim'd;
 Thing most unsightly, most forlorn, most sad."—*Pollock.*

HOMILY No. XI.

THE FIRST SPEECH OF ELIPHAZ TO JOB:

(4.) A VIEW OF THE GREAT GOD.

"*I would seek unto God, and unto God would I commit my cause,*" &c.—
 CHAP. V. 8-16.

EXEGETICAL REMARKS. *Ver. 8.* approach unto God, and commit
 —"*I would seek unto God, and my cause unto the Godhead.*"—
unto God would I commit my cause." *Delitzsch.* "Therefore, inasmuch
 "On the contrary, I would earnestly as suffering comes to the sinner by

the plan of God, I would have thee go to Him." He might mean, Were I in thy place I would do so. I would have recourse to Him. If chastisement had come upon me as it has upon thee, instead of theorizing and murmuring, I should at once have felt satisfied that as it has come from God I must have deserved it, and I should, therefore, have approached Him with submission and put my cause into His hand.

Ver. 9.—“*Which doeth great things and unsearchable* (margin, “there is no search”), *marvellous things without number*” (margin, “till there be no number”). Here he begins to indicate the reasons why the Almighty should be sought in affliction. What a concise, but comprehensive, representation of God’s works is here. They are “great”—“unsearchable”—“marvellous”—“without number.” Such a representation agrees with all observation and all science. This illustrious Temanite strongly insinuates that a Being whose works are of this description is beyond all human philosophizings in relation to His conduct toward men; and therefore confidence in Him, and not speculation about Him, is at once our duty and interest.

Ver. 10.—“*Who giveth rain upon the earth, and sendeth waters upon the fields*” (margin, “out-places”). He passes here from the general description to detailed specifications, which extend to the end of the chapter. An instance of God’s work in material nature is given in this verse: He sends rain upon the earth. Perhaps by this utterance he intended suggesting to Job that the God who, by sending rain upon the earth, changes and revives the whole face of nature,

could, if he would apply to Him, effect a happy transition in his experience, turn his afflictions into health, and his mourning into joy.

Ver. 11.—“*To set up on high those that be low; that those which mourn may be exalted to safety.*” Here he turns from God as operating in material nature, to Him as working in the fields of human history. In this verse he declares Him to be the Friend of the humble. The illustrious Virgin, blessed mother of our Great Master, expressed in her song the sentiments of this verse—

“He hath put down the mighty from their seats,
And exalted them of low degree.
He hath filled the hungry with good things,
And the rich He hath sent empty away.”—Luke i. 52, 53.

Ver. 12.—“*He disappointeth the devices of the crafty, so that their hands cannot perform their enterprise*” (cannot accomplish anything). “He frustrateth the plots of the crafty, that their hands effect nothing substantial.”—*Dr. Bernard.*

Ver. 13.—“*He taketh the wise in their own craftiness: and the counsel of the froward is carried headlong.*” Whether Eliphaz was an inspired man or not, it is remarkable that Paul quoted these words, “It is written,” he says, “He taketh the wise in their own craftiness”—(1 Cor. iii. 19). It is also a fact that what is here stated has often been done in the history of the world. The case of Haman, who was hanged on the gallows he prepared for Mordecai, is a striking example.

Ver. 14.—“*They meet with* (margin—“run into”) *darkness in the daytime, and grope in the noonday as in the night.*” “The

sense is, that where there is really no obstacle to the accomplishment of an honest plan—any more than there is for a man to walk in the day-time—they become perplexed and embarrassed, as much as a man would be should sudden darkness come around him at mid-day. The same sentiment occurs in chapter xii. 25.”—*Barnes*.

Ver. 15.—“*But He saveth the poor from the sword, from their mouth, and from the haul of the mighty.*” So that He saveth the needy from the sword, from their mouth, and from the hand of the strong. There are two ways by which man injures his brother, by

the mouth and the hand, and these two ways are here mentioned.

Ver. 16.—“*So the poor hath hope, and iniquity stoppeth her mouth.*” “*Hope ariseth for the weak, and folly shall close its mouth.*” —*Delitzsch*. This verse agrees with Psalm cvii. 41, 42.

“*Yet setteth He the poor on high from affliction,
And maketh him families like a flock.
The righteous shall see it, and rejoice:
And all iniquity shall stop her mouth.*”

“*Iniquity stoppeth her mouth.*”
God’s providence often confounds the reasonings of the ungodly, and smites with speechlessness the slanderer and the sceptic.

HOMILETICS.—These verses enable us to discover the view which this old Natural Religionist had of the Supreme Existence. We see—

I. That he regarded Him as a TRUSTWORTHY God. “*I would seek unto God, and unto God would I commit my cause.*” As if he had said to Job, I would recommend thee in this thy affliction to confide in the Almighty: were I in thy position I would do so: to do so is the right thing. This implies his belief that God was infinitely trustworthy: and so He is. Everywhere in the Bible are men invited and encouraged to exercise unbounded trust in the character and procedure of the Supreme, and everywhere is trust in Him represented as the grand duty and privilege of mankind. Four things demonstrate the Trustworthiness of the Almighty:—

First: His *love*. We could not trust an unloving God, still less a malific one. Before we commit our “*cause*,” our interest, our all, to any being we must be assured of his love to us. What an assurance of the Eternal love we have:—sincere, deep, tender, boundless, never-failing. All the love that other beings have for us is only a drop from the immeasurable ocean of the Divine heart. “*God so loved the world,*” &c.

Secondly: His *truthfulness*. Truthfulness lies at the

foundation of trustworthiness. It is, alas, too true that we trust the false, but we trust them believing that they are true. It is not on their falseness, but on their supposed truthfulness, that we rely. God is true in *Himself*. He is truth. He is the One Great Reality in the universe. God is true in His *revelations*. All that He has uttered by works or words is in perfect accord with His own great heart and thought. It is "*impossible for Him to lie.*" "Heaven and earth shall pass away, but not one jot or tittle of His word shall fail."

Thirdly: His *capacity*. Capability of realizing what we expect and need in the object in which we confide is essential to trustworthiness. It is true that we trust beings who cannot meet our exigencies, but we should scarcely do so were we convinced that they could not. God is infinitely capable: capable to counsel, guard, and nourish us for ever. "He is able to do exceeding abundantly," &c.

Fourthly: His *constancy*. Constancy is essential to trustworthiness. Wherever there is inconstancy there is unreliability. How constant is the Eternal. He is of one mind. He is "the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever," — the same in nature, the same in heart, the same in thought and purpose. He stands as an immovable rock amidst the incessant surges of a changing universe. Truly this old Temanite was justified in regarding the Almighty as infinitely trustworthy.

We see from these verses—

II. That he regarded Him as a WONDER-WORKING God. His God was not merely a trustworthy, but an *active* God. His God was not quiescent, sitting down in His universe, having finished His work.

First: Eliphaz refers to His works in *general*. "*Which doeth great things and unsearchable; marvellous things without number,*" or as the margin has it, "till there be no number"—passing beyond the bounds of arithmetical calculation. To all His numerous works he applies the epithets "*great,*" "*unsearchable,*" "*marvellous.*" His works in the *material* Universe are wonderful. Go through all the scientific cyclopædias in the libraries of the world, and you

will only have a few specimens of His marvellous achievements. Take the *microscope*, and you may, like Lauwenhoek, discover a thousand million animalculæ, whose united bulk will not exceed the size of a grain of sand, and all having distinct formations, with all the array of functions essential to life. Take the *telescope*, and survey "the milky way," and you will find the central suns of a million systems all larger than the solar economy to which our little planet belongs. His works in the *spiritual* world are even more wonderful. Who can tell the number of God's mental systems, the millions that belong to each; how multitudinous and vast the hierarchies of souls?

Thy works, O Lord, are wondrous,
 So vast, and yet so small,
 Worlds in bright skies beyond us,
 And atoms on this ball.
 In all there is a meaning
 Beyond the reach of sage,
 Something inside the seeming
 That mortals cannot gauge.

Secondly: Eliphaz refers to His works in *particular*. (1) He refers to the *vegetable* sphere. "*Who giveth rain upon the earth, and sendeth waters upon the fields.*" What a blessed thing is rain! In seasons of drought its value is deeply felt. How its showers change the face of nature, turn death into life, and life into bud and bloom, flower and fruit. Our little sages ascribe rain to certain laws: they point us to the shifting of winds and changing of temperatures as the causes of rain. But this old sage of Teman referred the showers to God. "*Who giveth rain upon the earth.*" This is inspired philosophy. "The Lord our God," said Jeremiah, "giveth rain, both the former and the latter in His seasons." "Thou visitest the earth and waterest it," said David. "He," says Paul, "left not Himself without witness in that He gave us rain from heaven," &c. (2) He refers to the *human* sphere. "*To set up on high those that be low; that those which mourn may be exalted to safety. He disappointeth the devices of the crafty,*" &c., &c. (verses 11-16). He sees God in human history. Human events to him were not fortuitous occurrences, but Divine acts. He indicates that in His conduct to mankind He does two things—(a) Favours the good. He sets "on

high those that be low," and those that "mourn" He exalts. This is true throughout the world: in the long run of things ever the "good comes uppermost." They are often socially exalted, always morally. (b) Confounds the evil. "He disappointeth the devices of the crafty." History abounds with the examples of the bafflement of wrong. The conduct of Joseph's brethren, Abithophel, Sanballat, Haman, and the Jewish Sanhedrim in relation to Christ, are instances. Satan, the arch-enemy of the universe, will exemplify this through all the confounding crises of his accursed future.

HOMILY No. XII.

THE FIRST SPEECH OF ELIPHAZ TO JOB:

(5.) HIS JUDGMENT OF HUMAN AFFLICTIONS.

"Behold, happy is the man whom God correcteth: therefore despise not thou the chastening of the Almighty:" &c.—CHAP. v. 17-27.

EXEGETICAL REMARKS. Ver. 17.—"Behold, happy is the man whom God correcteth: therefore despise not thou the chastening of the Almighty." The translation of this verse cannot be improved. It starts a new argument to assure Job that afflictions, properly borne, are so highly advantageous that they should be submitted to with a calm resignation. The sentiment of this verse will be found elsewhere (Hebrews xii. 5; James i. 12; Prov. iii. 11, 12).

Ver. 18.—"For He maketh sore, and bindeth up: He woundeth, and His hands make whole." "I wound and I heal" (Hos. vi. 1; 1 Samuel ii. 6). An image, from binding up a wound. The healing art consisted much at that time in external applications. "He healeth the broken

in heart, and bindeth up their wounds" (Psalm cxlvii. 3).

Ver. 19.—"He shall deliver thee in six troubles: yea, in seven there shall no evil touch thee." "The Hebrew idiom fixes on a certain number (here six) in order to call attention, as to a thing of importance, then increases the force, by adding, with a 'yea,'—nay, even the next higher number: here seven, the sacred and perfect number. In all possible troubles: not merely in the precise number seven. How many soever may be thy troubles, the Lord will deliver thee out of them all (Psalm xxxiv. 6, 15, 17, 19)."—A. R. Fausset.

Ver. 20.—"In famine He shall redeem thee from death: and in war from the power of the sword." In the margin, "from the hand of the

sword." "It means that he should not be slain by armed men. A *mouth* is often attributed to the sword in the Scriptures, because it devours; *hands* are attributed to it here, because it is by the hand that we perform an undertaking, and the sword is personified, and represented as acting as a conscious agent. (Comp. Ezekiel xxx. 5, *margin*.) The meaning is, that God would protect those who put their trust in Him in times of calamity and war."

Ver. 21.—"Thou shalt be hid from the scourge of the tongue: neither shalt thou be afraid of destruction when it cometh." The tongue of the enemy, it is here suggested, is a whip—a scourge. How often the slanderous tongue cuts and lacerates the soul.

Ver. 22.—"At destruction and famine thou shalt laugh: neither shalt thou be afraid of the beasts of the earth." Wild beasts are always objects of terror; they abounded in the deserts of Arabia, and are often, therefore, in Scripture figuratively employed to represent man's enemies. The Divine promise to the good runs thus: "Thou shalt tread upon the lion and the adder, the young lion and the dragon shalt thou trample under foot" (Psalm xci. 13). The idea is, that those who trust in the Almighty shall be well defended.

Ver. 23.—"For thou shalt be in league with the stones of the field: and the beasts of the field shall be at peace with thee." "For thou art in league with the stones of the field, and the beasts of the field are at peace with thee."—*Delitzsch*. "With the stones of the field." They shall not hurt the fertility of thy soil (2 Kings iii. 19-25; Isaiah v. 2). Arabia abounded with stones which were great obstacles to culti-

vation. "And the beasts of the field." They shall be restrained, so that they shall not hurt thee. Their mouths shall be stopped like the lions' in the den of Daniel.

Ver. 24.—"And thou shalt know that thy tabernacle shall be in peace; and thou shalt visit thy habitation, and shalt not sin." This verse has been differently translated. "So shalt thou know that thy tent shall be in peace: so shalt thou order thy habitation, and shalt not err."—*Lee*. "And thou shalt know that thy tent is in peace: and when thou shalt visit thy dwelling, thou shalt miss nothing."—*Bernard*. "Thou shalt know that thy family is secure, and in choosing thy habitation thou shalt not err."—*Wemyss*. The correct translation is, "Thou mustered thy pasture and missest nothing; *i. e.* all thy flocks are safe."—*Dr. S. Davidson*. The expression "not sin," according to all, is an incorrect translation. In the margin it is "err." Men, in those days, in Arabia, lived in tents; and the idea here is, that a good man would enjoy domestic comfort and protection when absent, and that when he returned to it he should find it all right.

Ver. 25.—"Thou shalt know also that thy seed shall be great, and thine offspring as the grass of the earth." It was considered a great blessing, in those distant days, and in Eastern lands, to have a large family.

"Blessed is every one that feareth the Lord;
That walketh in His ways.
Thy wife shall be a fruitful vine by the sides of thine house;
Thy children like olive plants round about thy table."—*Psal. cxxviii. 1-3.*

Ver. 26.—"Thou shalt come to thy grave in a full age, like as a shock of corn cometh in in his

season." "Thou shalt come,"—not literally, but expressing willingness to die. "Eliphaz speaks from the Old Testament point of view, which made full years a reward of the righteous—'With long years will I satisfy him' (Psalm xci. 16; Exod. xx. 12), and premature death the lot of the wicked—'Bloody and deceitful men shall not live out half their days' (Psalm lv. 23). The righteous are immortal till their work is done. To keep them longer would be to render them less fit to die. God takes them at their best. 'The righteous is taken away from the evil to come' (Isaiah lviii. 1). The good are compared to wheat. 'Gather the wheat into my barn' (Matt. xiii. 30). 'Cometh in,'

literally, ascends. The corn is lifted up off the earth and carried home: so the good man is raised into the heap of sheaves.—*Umbreit*. 'In his season'—in its right time, when the grain is fully ripe. 'He shall be like a tree planted by the waters, that bringeth forth his fruit in his season.'—*Critical and Experimental Commentary*.

Ver. 27. — "Lo this, we have searched it, so it is; hear it, and know thou it for thy good." "Lo this, we have searched it, so it is: hear it, and mark it for thyself."—*Bernard*. The idea here is: These are my ideas of the Divine government in relation to men, and I would have thee to ponder them for thyself.

HOMILETICS.—In this paragraph Eliphaz indicates his idea of human afflictions. His view seems to be—

I. THAT AFFLICTION, THROUGH WHATEVER CHANNEL IT MAY COME, IS TO A GOOD MAN A BENEFICENT DISPENSATION.—"*Behold, happy is the man whom God correcteth: therefore despise not thou the chastening of the Almighty,*" &c. He regards affliction, in these verses, as coming from a variety of sources. He speaks of "famine," of "war," of "the scourge of the tongue" (slander), and points even to the ravages of wild beasts, and the "stones of the field." Truly, human suffering does spring up from a great variety of sources; it starts from many fountains, and flows through many channels. There are elements both within him and without that bring on man unnumbered pains and sorrows.

But his position is that all this affliction, to a good man, is beneficent. "*Behold, happy is the man.*" Why happy? He suggests some reasons:—

First: God *corrects* the good man *by* affliction.—"*Whom God correcteth.*" Afflictions of whatever kind, or from whatever source, are under Divine controlment; they are chastening rods in the hands of the Great Father. The New Testament is full of this doctrine. "Whom the Lord

loveth He chasteneth." He suggests another reason why a good man is happy:—

Secondly: God *redeems* the good man *from* affliction.—“*For He maketh sore, and bindeth up: He woundeth, and His hands make whole. He shall deliver thee in six troubles: yea, in seven there shall no evil touch thee.*” The affliction is only temporary: the Almighty in His time removes it. He that maketh sore binds up, He that woundeth maketh whole. The afflictions may be great, “*six troubles,*” or even “*seven:*” yet they shall cease: the darkest cloud shall be scattered: the severest hurricane shall be hushed. “Many are the afflictions of the righteous, but the Lord delivereth him out of them all.”

Another reason he suggests why a good man under affliction is happy, is—

Thirdly: God *guards* the good man *in* affliction.—“*Thou shalt be hid from the scourge of the tongue: neither shalt thou be afraid of destruction when it cometh. At destruction and famine thou shalt laugh: neither shalt thou be afraid of the beasts of the earth.*” The Eternal is with His people in the furnace: He is a wall of fire round about them, He hides them in His pavilion. “*The scourge of the tongue*” shall not hurt them. “He keeps them secretly in a pavilion from the strife of tongues.” Destruction, “*when it cometh,*” shall not harm them. They need not be afraid of the pestilence that walketh in darkness, nor for the destruction that wasteth at noonday. “*Famine*” shall not consume them. He will keep them alive in “*famine.*” The wild “*beasts of the earth*” shall not injure them. “My God hath sent His angel to shut the lions’ mouths, that they have not hurt me.”

Another reason he suggests why a good man under affliction is happy, is—

Fourthly: God *blesses* the good man *in* affliction. These blessings are indicated—(1) Facility in material progress. “*For thou shalt be in league with the stones of the field: and the beasts of the field shall be at peace with thee.*” Whether the “*stones and beasts of the field*” here point to the obstructions of the agriculturist, or to the progress of the traveller, it does not matter, the idea is the same,—the absence of obstructions. In worldly matters the Great God

makes straight the path of His people. (2) Peace and security in domestic life. God guards the families of the good. "*Blessed shalt thou be when thou comest in, blessed shalt thou be when thou goest out.*" (3) Flourishing posterity. "*Thou shalt know also that thy seed shall be great (margin, much), and thine offspring as the grass of the earth.*" This is a blessing more esteemed in distant ages and eastern lands than in modern times and western climes.

Another reason he suggests is—

Fifthly: God *perfects* the good man *by* affliction. "*Thou shalt come to thy grave in a full age, like as a shock of corn cometh in in his season.*" The idea is, that affliction will ripen the character and prepare for a happy world. Three ideas are suggested here—(1) That true religion is a life which grows in this world to a certain maturity. The ripened sheaf came out of life. (2) That when this maturity in a man is reached, his removal from the world will take place. Some reach maturity earlier than others. (3) That affliction is one of the means that brings about this maturity. The farmer requires frosts and tempests as well as heat and calm. Even so the great Husbandman.*

"So may'st thou live, till, like ripe fruits, thou drop
 Into thy mother's lap: or be with ease
 Gather'd, not harshly pluck'd: for death mature"—*Milton*.

His view seems to be—

II. THAT THIS AFFLICTION, AS A BENEFICENT DISPENSATION TO A GOOD MAN, SHOULD BE DULY PRIZED AND PONDERED BY HIM. First: It should be *prized*.—"Despise not thou the chastening of the Almighty." "More is implied than is here expressed," says Matthew Henry: "reverence the chastening of the Lord." Do not murmur, do not complain; accept it as the suffering patient accepts the bitter draught which is to remove his maladies; accept it as the mariner accepts the strong wind that bears his vessel homeward. Prize it because it comes from the hand of love; prize it because it is needful to discipline character; prize it because it serves to detach you from the material and temporal, and ally you to the spiritual and eternal.

* For further notes on this text see *Homilist*, Second Series, vol. iv., p. 244.

Secondly : It should be *pondered*.—" *Lo this, we have searched it, so it is ; hear it, and know thou it for thy good.*" The idea is, that all this is according to our observations and searching, and we want thee to ponder it well for thyself ! It would be well if the afflicted saint would ever ponder the origin, the design, the necessity, and tendency of his sufferings.

CONCLUSION : This first address of Eliphaz—

First : *Serves to correct popular mistakes.* It is popularly supposed that the farther back we go in the history of the world, the more benighted are men : that broad and philosophic views of God and His universe are the birth of these last times. But here is a man, this old Temanite, who lived in a lonely desert, upwards of 3000 years ago, whose views, in their loftiness, breadth, and accuracy, shall bear comparison, not only with the wisest sages of Greece and Rome, but with the chief *savans* of these enlightened times. It is a popular idea, too, that the men inspired by God, were certain men, of a certain lineage, and in a certain land. But this old Temanite was outside the supposed inspired circle—he was not a Jew but a Gentile—and yet his ideas seem, for the most part, so thoroughly in accord with the utterances of the acknowledged inspired men, that they are even quoted by them. The fact is, that the Great Father, the Source of all true human intelligence, is near to all in every land and age who seek Him. His moral ideas flow like a river through men of all lands and times. All souls are His, and one soul is as near to Him as another.

This first address of Eliphaz—

Secondly : *Suggests a probable theological misunderstanding.* Most Biblical expositors and theological writers regard Eliphaz as considering Job a great sinner, because he was a great sufferer. How can this be reconciled with the fact that Eliphaz starts the paragraph under our notice with : "*Behold, happy is the man whom God correcteth*" ? In the whole of the paragraph, in fact, he shows that it was a good thing for a good man to be afflicted. Does he contradict himself ? It may be so, for he was human, and therefore errable ; but my impression is, that Eliphaz

drew his conclusion that Job was a great sinner, not merely, if at all, from his great sufferings, but from the *murmuring* spirit which he displayed under them, as recorded in the third chapter.

HOMILY No. XIII.

JOB'S REPLY TO THE FIRST SPEECH OF ELIPHAZ :

(1.) GREAT SUFFERINGS.

“*But Job answered and said,*” &c.—CHAP. vi. 1-13.

GENERAL NOTE. — Eliphaz, to whom Job now commences his reply, was undoubtedly a man of great genius, piety, and eloquence. Notwithstanding this he signally fails through the whole of his magnificent addresses to touch the great point in question, which was simply this, Why a man whom God Himself had pronounced to be pious, upright, and a fearer of Himself, should be overwhelmed with such sufferings? He utterly failed to point out what Job had done morally to deserve the chastisement. It is true that he reproves Job in strong language for his murmuring spirit in his sufferings; in this, in all probability, he was right. But why did he suffer? This was the point, and this point Eliphaz touched not. Hence Job begins his reply by exclaiming, “O that my grief,” &c.

EXEGETICAL REMARKS. *Ver. 2.* — “*Oh that my grief were thoroughly weighed, and my calamity laid in the balances together!*” “Oh that my vexation were but weighed, and they would put my suffering in the balance against it!”—*De-*

litzsch. Language this which contains obliquely, but strongly, his conviction that the magnitude of his anguish had not been appreciated by the man who had spoken to him. Eliphaz had not sounded the depths, had not gauged the immensity, of his grief. He either had not weighed them in the balance of a sound judgment or had not such a balance at command. He had reproved Job with excessive passion more than once (chap. iv. 2-11; v. 2). And the patriarch intimated that if his sufferings had been duly estimated such a charge would not have been brought.

Ver. 3.—“*For now it would be heavier than the sand of the sea.*” A poetical manner of declaring that his sufferings were insupportable. Who could bear up under the ponderous weight of the sands over which oceans roll? No more, as if Job had said, is it possible to bear up under the crushing mountain of my sufferings. “*My words are swallowed up.*” Margin, “I want words to express my grief.” “Therefore my words are rash.”—*Delitzsch.* The passion of agony is a sea that

always engulfs language. "I am so troubled," said the Psalmist, "that I cannot speak."

Ver. 4.—"For the arrows of the Almighty are within me, the poison whereof drinketh up my spirit." "For the arrows of the Almighty are in me, the poison of which is drunk in by my spirit, the terrors of God like an army assail me."—*Professor Davidson*. He traces all his anguish to Jehovah. His pains are poignant as arrows; these arrows are poison, that stick fast within him, and their venom drinks up his spirit. Poisoned arrows were not unfrequently used amongst the ancients. The object was to secure certain death, even where the wound caused by the arrow itself would not produce it. Poison was made so concentrated that the smallest quantity conveyed by the point of an arrow would render death inevitable. "The terrors of God do set themselves in array against me." He regarded his sufferings as coming to him from God as an army marshalled for fight.

Ver. 5.—"Doth the wild ass bray when he hath grass? or loweth the ox over his fodder?" Eliphaz had found fault with him for crying out so frantically under his suffering. Job reminds him that such a cry meant great anguish. Even the brute cries not without a cause. Neither the wild ass feeding on the grass nor the ox over his fodder will cry, so long as they are free from pain and well supplied. The wild ass in such condition will not of course bray, nor will the ox low. If the wild ass bray and the ox low, it would mean pain, and so with him. He means to say that his murmurings were not empty sounds, they meant anguish.

Ver. 6.—"Can that which is un-

savoury be eaten without salt? or is there any taste in the white of an egg?" The eastern people often make use of bread, with nothing more than salt, or some such trifling addition, such as summer savoury dried and powdered. Perhaps this language was intended by Job to express his feeling of the insipidity and inappropriateness of the old Temanite's address to him.

Ver. 7.—"The things that my soul refuseth to touch are as my sorrowful meat." "My soul refuseth to touch them: they are unmeaning, in-apid words and similes; are as the loathsomeness of my food; are as loathsome to my soul as food now is to my body. It stands to reason, that a man afflicted with such sores from the sole of his foot to the crown of his head could not relish any food."—*Bernard*.

Ver. 8.—"Oh that I might have my request; and that God would grant me the thing I long for!" "Would that my request were fulfilled, and that Eloah would grant my expectation."—*Delitzsch*. His existence had become intolerable, he longs for death, yet he will not commit suicide; he regards his life as the property of the Almighty, and he asks Him to put it out.

Ver. 9.—"Even that it would please God to destroy me; that He would let loose His hand, and cut me off!"—The continuation of the idea of the eighth verse. He wishes that God would finish that work of destruction which He had commenced, that He would blot him entirely out of existence.

Ver. 10.—"Then should I yet have comfort; yea, I would harden myself in sorrow: let him not spare; for I have not concealed the words of the Holy One." The right translation is, "That I might still have consolation, and rejoice in the pain

He spares not, for I have not denied the words of the Holy One." — *Dr. S. Davidson*. The idea seems to be, that if he were permitted to die he would even exult in his present sufferings, and in the consciousness that he had been faithful to his Maker.

Ver. 11, 12. — "*What is my strength, that I should hope? and what is mine end, that I should prolong my life? Is my strength the strength of stones? or is my flesh of brass?*" There are a great many different translations of this verse. I think it may be thus paraphrased: "What is my strength that I should

hope for a continuation of existence? and what end is there to be gained by my continuing longer in life? Is my strength the strength of stones? Am I like a rock that can bear up under a mountain, or stand the hurricane of ages? Or is my flesh of brass (or brazen, as the margin has it)? I must give way; muscles, nerves, sinews, flesh, must yield to this tremendous pressure."

Ver. 13. — "*Is not my help in me? and is wisdom driven quite from me?*" "Is not my inward help gone, and deliverance thrust away from me?" — *Dr. S. Davidson*.

HOMILETICS: In this reply of Job to Eliphaz, extending over two chapters, there are four subjects to be noticed:— Great sufferings, mistaken friendship, life regarded as burdensome and brief, and a cry to Heaven. The first is the subject of the verses heading this article. Job indicates three things here concerning his *great sufferings*, that they were unappreciated by men, misunderstood by friends, intolerable to himself. His sufferings were—

I. UNAPPRECIATED BY MEN. This is the meaning of the first five verses: "*Oh that my grief were thoroughly weighed, and my calamity laid in the balances together!*" Eliphaz had no conception of the profundity and poignancy of Job's suffering. There are two things indicated here in relation to his sufferings—

First: They were *unutterable*: "*My words are swallowed up.*" His whole humanity was in torture. (1) He suffered in *body*. "*He was smitten with sore boils from the sole of his foot to the crown of his head, and he took a potsherd to scrape himself withal, and sat down amongst the ashes.*" The physical disease with which he was smitten was acute, loathsome, and universal. It tortured every nerve, it rendered him hideous; it spread over his entire frame. (2) He suffered in *mind*. "*The arrows of the Almighty are within me, the poison whereof drinketh up my spirit.*" He suffered *secularly*

in mind. All his earthly possessions were gone, and he was reduced to the most abject pauperism. All that he had inherited or toiled for and valued, so far as this life was concerned, were taken from him with a suddenness that stunned him, and a ruthlessness that made an utter wreck of all his worldly possessions, plans, and hopes. He suffered *paternally* in mind. All his children, in whom his fatherly affections were centred, were snatched from his embraces, and his heart was left in desolation to bleed at every pore. He suffered *religiously* in mind. He was confounded at the procedure of the God whom he had loved and served. Truly "*the arrows of the Almighty,*" with a rankling poison, stuck within his soul. Well might he say, therefore, "*My words are swallowed up.*" "Swallowed up" may mean either that his feelings of distress were so overwhelming as to choke his utterance, or that no words could be found to represent them. Words are always weak when the mind is charged with strong and tumultuous feelings. When the billows of distress roll over the soul they engulf vocabularies and paralyze speech. The other thing indicated here in relation to Job's sufferings is—

Secondly : They were *irrepressible*. "*Doth the wild ass bray when he hath grass? or loweth the ox over his fodder?*" The idea here is, I cannot but cry; my cries spring from my agonies. Had not the wild ass his grass, he would bray with a ravenous hunger; and had not the ox his fodder, he, too, would low in an agony for food: this is nature, and my cries are natural; I cannot help them. Who can be silent in torture? Man's sufferings may be unutterable; they may be beyond all language; but not beyond groans, shrieks, and vehement cries. Why should such a man as Job be thus tortured? That is the problem. Job indicates that his sufferings were—

II. MISUNDERSTOOD BY FRIENDS. "*Can that which is unsavoury be eaten without salt? or is there any taste in the white of an egg?*" This language seems to me to point to Job's impression of the address which Eliphaz had delivered to him. He seemed to feel—First: That the address of Eliphaz was *utterly insipid*. "*Can that which is unsavoury*

be eaten without salt?” As if he had said, your speech lacks that which can make it savoury to me; it does not apply: you misunderstand my sufferings. I suffer not because I am a great sinner, as you seem to imply; my own conscience attests my rectitude; nor because I need this terrible chastisement, as you have said: you neither understand the cause nor the nature of my sufferings, therefore your talk is beside the mark.

He seemed to feel—Secondly: That the address of Eliphaz was *truly offensive*. “*The things that my soul refused to touch are as my sorrowful meat.*” Does not this mean what Dr. Bernard says, “The things you speak—your unmeaning, insipid words and similes—are as the loathsomeness of my food, or are as loathsome to my soul as food now is to my body”? You intrude remarks on me that are not only tasteless, because of their unsuitability, but that are as disgusting as loathsome food. I recoil from them with an ineffable revulsion of heart. Few things are more distressing to the heart of a sufferer than the inane and inappropriate remarks of some friend who comes to comfort. Go to the man in his cell, who has been unjustly convicted of murder, urge upon his attention the enormity of the sin in the sight of God, call upon him to repent, and to pray to the Great Creator for forgiveness, and would not the man feel towards you what Job here poetically expresses, “*The things that my soul refused to touch are as my sorrowful meat*”? You have added to the agony of the man’s feelings, you have driven the nail of insult into his very heart, and he recoils from your speech with an inexpressible abhorrence. Religious teachers have often made great mistakes here, and are doing so still. They talk to men who are true believers, as if they were sceptics; who are unconscious of any great sinfulness, as if they were the chief of sinners. Job indicates that his sufferings were:—

III. INTOLERABLE TO HIMSELF. “*Oh that I might have my request, and that God would grant me the thing that I long for!*” He longed for death, he believed that in the grave he would have rest. “*Then should I yet have comfort.*” He does not seem to have had any idea of a future state; he

looked to Sheol, as the eternal resting-place of humanity. Three remarks are here suggested concerning the felt unbearableness of Job's sufferings.

First: Though his life was unbearable, *he would not take it away himself.* "Oh that I might have my request, and that God would grant me the thing that I long for!" Man can easily take away his own life, for the rope, the razor, the poison, the river are at his service. Cicero, and some of the ancient moralists, not only justified, but even advocated suicide under certain circumstances. The patriarch, however, felt that he was not the proprietor, but the trustee of his life; that it was in the hand of the Creator: and hence he says, "even that it would please God to destroy me." Oh that He would crush me, let loose His hand and despatch me.

Secondly: Though his life was unbearable, *he was not forgetful of his relation to his Maker.* "I have not concealed the words of the Holy One." Does not this mean, I have not denied His word, I have not disregarded His commandments, I have not shunned to declare my attachment to Himself and His cause? His sufferings, unbearable as they were, did not obliterate the memory of his Maker, drive him from His presence, or impel him to blasphemy or atheism. No, he still held on. God was the Great Object in his horizon, he saw Him through the thick hot steam of his fiery trials.

Thirdly: Though his life was unbearable, *he knew that it could not last long.* "What is my strength, that I should hope? and what is mine end, that I should prolong my life?" Whether God will loose His hand, and cut me off, and thus put an end to my existence, or not, I cannot endure long. I am not made "of stone or brass," and I cannot stand these sufferings long. My inward help is gone: the springs of life are all exhausted. My life is shattered and poisoned to the very centre. However powerful the human frame may be, great sufferings must sooner or later break it to pieces. Human life is not like a cedar, which requires the fiercest whirlwind to uproot it; but like a frail flower that a zephyr can blight, and a ray can scorch.

CONCLUSION.—Let the tried, the afflicted, and the tempted think of Job: their sufferings dwindle into insignificance when compared with his. His friends could not speak to him a suitable word: he had no Gospel in his hand, the true light shone not on him, and yet he held fast to his God and his profession.

HOMILY No. XIV.

JOB'S REPLY TO THE FIRST SPEECH OF ELIPHAZ:

(2.) MISTAKEN FRIENDSHIP.

"To him that is afflicted pity should be shewed from his friend; but he forsaketh the fear of the Almighty." &c.—CHAP. vi. 14-30.

GENERAL NOTE.—Eliphaz, it will be remembered, had in his address treated Job with irrelevant rhetoric, but with little or no sympathy. He spoke to him as a great sinner and a heretic rather than as a friend overwhelmed with suffering. And having repulsed this assault, Job here begins an attack himself.

EXEGETICAL REMARKS.—*Ver. 14.* *"To him that is afflicted pity should be shewed from his friend."* "To him who is consumed gentleness is due from his friend."—*Delitzsch.* Eliphaz had not shown pity. After witnessing Job's agony for seven long days and nights he breaks out, not into tears, but into oratoric moralizings. The word "afflicted" is in the margin *meteth*, and indicates that the speaker felt himself consuming away under the fires of his anguish. "To him that is pining away," some render it. *"But he forsaketh the fear of the Almighty."* "Otherwise he might forsake the fear of the Almighty."—*Delitzsch.*

This may be either understood as referring to the language which Job says had been used to him, charging him with forsaking the fear of God, instead of consoling him; or it may mean that Eliphaz had forsaken the fear of God in reproaching him, and in failing to comfort him; or it may mean that if such kindness were not shown to a friend in trial, he would be left to cast off the fear of God. Dr. Goode supposes that it is designed to be a severe reproach of Eliphaz for the course which he had pursued. Some read for "but he" "even if he." This gives a good meaning, and expresses the idea that if the sufferer was a bad man he should have the sympathy of his friends. Perhaps Job means that a man under suffering was likely to lose confidence in God unless his friends helped him with encouraging words. Therefore to him that is afflicted pity should be shown.

Ver. 15.—"My brethren have dealt deceitfully as a brook, and as the stream of brooks they pass

away." A "brook," not a river, it has its existence in winter torrents, but dries up in the summer. In Arabia, rivers are few, but brooks abound; they come when the rains flow down in torrents from the mountains, but are lost in the dry sand when the hot summer sets in. Thus they disappoint Oriental travellers. "In the desert parts of Atrica," says Campbell in his "Travels," "it has afforded much joy to fall in with a brook of water, especially when running in the direction of the journey, expecting it would prove a valuable companion. Perhaps before it accompanied us two miles it became invisible by sinking into the sand, but two miles farther along it would re-appear and raise hopes of its continuance, but after running a few hundred yards would sink finally into the sand, no more again to rise."

Ver. 16.—"Which are blackish by reason of the ice, and wherein the snow is hid." This refers to the melting of the snow in spring and thereby swelling the brooks.

Ver. 17. "What time they wax warm, they vanish: when it is hot, they are consumed out of their place." A repetition of the idea in the former verse. "Job had longed for the true words of friendly sympathy, longed for them as the parched caravans in the desert for the water-streams; and his brethren had dealt deceitfully with him, as the brooks, which in the cool winter roll in a full turbid stream, but what time it waxes warm they have vanished, and are consumed out of their place."—Froude.

Ver. 18.—"The paths of their way are turned aside; they go to nothing, and perish." "Job compares his friends to the waddy-swollen by ice and snow water, and even to the travelling bands themselves lan-

guishing for water. He thirsts for friendly solace, but the seeming comfort which his friends utter is only as the scattered meandering waters in which the mountain brook leaks out."—Delitzsch.

Ver. 19.—"The troops of Tema looked, the companies of Sheba waited for them." Tema was the country of Eliphaz, and he would well understand the figure. No doubt he had often seen what Job described, travellers wearied and parched coming to spots in search of water and finding the streams had disappeared.

Ver. 20.—"They were confounded because they had hoped; they came thither, and were ashamed." Here he describes the vexation and disappointment of the thirsty travellers when they found out their mistake; when they reached the spot and found no water, they looked at each other with shame and confusion.

Ver. 21.—"For now ye are nothing." In the margin the expression "ye are" reads "like to them," that is, not to the travellers but to the waters. Ye are nothing, gone, vanished. You treat me exactly in the same way as the torrents do the travellers who hope for them. "Ye see my casting down, and ye are afraid." "You see misfortune and are affrighted."—Delitzsch.

Ver. 22.—"Did I say, Bring unto me? or, Give a reward for me of your substance?" What Job means here is that he did not ask them any favour, he did not invite them to visit him, but they came voluntarily, their address to him was gratuitous and unasked, they were intruders.

Ver. 23.—"Or, Deliver me from the enemy's hand? or, Redeem me from the hand of the mighty?" (the violent). This means, I have never asked you for a favour, I have never asked you to rescue me from robbers

or from foes, you have never laid me under obligations for any kindness, and why should you address me so?

Ver. 24.—“*Teach me, and I will hold my tongue: and cause me to understand wherein I have erred.*”

This means, bring forward real arguments to me, show me wherein I have erred, and I will be silent.

Ver. 25.—“*How forcible are right words! But what doth your arguing reprove?*” “Words which present a matter in its true light will always be powerful, whether they be plain and unvarnished or elegant and ornate. But what argument can one get out of you?”—*Bernard.*

Ver. 26.—“*Do ye imagine to reprove words, and the speeches of one that is desperate, which are as wind?*” “Do you think to reprove words? The words of one in despair belong to the wind.”—*Delitzsch.* Perhaps the patriarch meant to say, the words you have been criticizing are the words of a man in despair, and they are but wind. Mr. Cox seems to express the true idea: “Are the wild words of his curses the sin that shuts up their bowels of compassion against him? Pshaw! The words of a man crazed with misery are no proof of guilt, no sufficient ground for suspicion and rebuke. Idle as the wind, they should be left for the wind to blow away.”

Ver. 27.—“*Yea, ye overwhelm the fatherless, and ye dig a pit for your friend.*” “Ye would even cast lots

for the orphan, and traffic about your friend.”—*Delitzsch.* What he seems to mean here is this, if you can take advantage of the wild expressions of a man in agony, you may as well cast yourself upon the orphan and devour your friend.

Ver. 28.—“*Now therefore be content, look upon me; for it is evident unto you if I lie.*” Job seems here to have passed into a quieter mood, and invites his so-called friends to give a fairer attention to him. “Look upon me,” look me in the face, see for yourselves whether I am sincere or not; I am willing to be honestly criticized, for I am not playing the hypocrite.

Ver. 29.—“*Return, I pray you, let it not be iniquity; yea, return again, my righteousness is in it.*” “Come back to me, I pray, let there be no wrong. Do not wrong me by deserting me without first hearing me. Yea, come back, then will ye be convinced that my righteousness is still in it.”—*Bernard.*

Ver. 30. — “*Is there iniquity in my tongue? cannot my taste discern perverse things?*” Here he appeals to their consciences. “The meaning is, that Job was qualified to discern what was true or false, sincere or hypocritical, just or unjust, in the same manner as the palate is fitted to discern the qualities of objects, whether bitter or sweet, pleasant or unpleasant, wholesome or unwholesome.”

HOMILETICS: This passage may be taken to illustrate *mistaken friendship.* It would be unfair to call the three men who came from the East to address Job *false* friends. They were undoubtedly sincere, but being mistaken they failed to discharge the high offices of true friendship. From the whole passage we draw two general remarks—that there are times in a man's life when the need of friendship is

deeply felt, and that at these times professed friends are often terribly disappointing.

I. THERE ARE TIMES IN A MAN'S LIFE WHEN THE NEED OF FRIENDSHIP IS DEEPLY FELT.—First: Man is *made* for friendship. Deep and constant is his craving for the love of others, and equally deep and strong is his tendency to reciprocate the same. Indeed, without friendship his nature could no more be developed than could the acorn without the sunshine or the shower. Isolation would be man's death, solitary confinement has always been felt the most severe and intolerable of punishments. Secondly: Man *requires* friendship. Without the aid of friendship he would die in infancy; he requires friendship to nourish, to succour, and to train him. Thirdly: *Affliction intensifies* the need of friendship. In times of suffering the need of friendship is specially felt, and such a time had come on the patriarch, the time of severe and overwhelming affliction. His agonizing heart yearned for human sympathy. Whatever be the nature of our affliction, whether corporeal or mental, constitutional or circumstantial, whenever it comes upon us we involuntarily and earnestly look out for friendship: nothing on earth is so soothing and sustaining as a look, a word, a grasp of sympathy. The presence of a true friend in our sorrows makes the heart beat stronger and the blood flow more vigorously through the veins.

“Friendship is power and riches all to me,
Friendship another element of life;
Water and fire not of more general use
To the support and comfort of the world.”—*Southern*.

II. AT TIMES WHEN FRIENDSHIP IS NEEDED PROFESSED FRIENDS ARE OFTEN TERRIBLY DISAPPOINTING. Job says, in language of great poetic beauty and tenderness, that he was as much disappointed with his friends now as were the troop of Tema, and the companies of Sheba, who travelling over the hot sand, parched and wearied, came to a spot where they expected to find refreshing streams and found none. “*My brethren have dealt deceitfully as a brook,*” &c. He does not mean perhaps that they were false, but that they deceived him not intentionally but by mistake.

First: Instead of pity they gave him *unsympathetic* talk. Had they wept and said nothing he would have been comforted; or had they spoken to the point and expressed sympathy he might have been comforted; or had they tenderly acknowledged the mystery of the Divine procedure in all, it might have soothed in some measure his anguished heart. But Eliphaz talked grandly and perhaps with a cold heart, he never touched the mark but by implication, charged him with being a great sinner because he was a great sufferer, and strongly reprobated his language of distress. Where Job expected pity, tenderness, love, he only met with cold and unsympathetic words.

Secondly: Instead of pity they gave him *intrusive* talk. "*Did I say, Bring unto me? or, Give a reward for me of your substance?*" &c. "If a man applies to his friends for pecuniary aid, and that aid is refused him, he may be disappointed, but he cannot at once condemn them and charge them with unkindness, as they may be under circumstances which render it perfectly impossible for them to comply with his request. But if he asks of them nothing but commiseration and sympathy, and even these are denied him, he cannot but consider such denial as a great piece of inhumanity and cruelty. Now this was precisely the case with Job."

Thirdly: Instead of pity they gave him *irrelevant* talk. "*Teach me, and I will hold my tongue: and cause me to understand wherein I have erred. How forcible are right words! but what doth your arguing reprove?*" In all this he evidently reproves Eliphaz for the irrelevancy of his talk. He seems to say, You have not taught me anything, you have not explained the true cause of my affliction. I am ready to learn—ready to be corrected if I am in error. But you have only given me words that have no application to my case. Give me right words, and I shall feel their force; but what does your argument prove? You do not touch the point. Nothing that you have said is applicable to me in my miserable condition.

Fourthly: Instead of pity they gave him *ungenerous* talk. Here the patriarch acknowledges that the extravagant language which, in the wildness of his anguish, he used in

the 4th chapter was mere "wind." "Do you imagine to reprove words?" &c. He states that their carping at such utterances was as cruel as the overwhelming of the fatherless. Language spoken in certain moods of mind, should be allowed to pass by, almost without notice. Anguish often maddens the mind, and causes the tongue to run riot. It is ungenerous in friends to notice language which, under the tide of strong emotions, may be forced from us. (1) He urges them to look upon *him* and not at his words. "Now therefore be content, look upon me." Look at my face, examine my past history, and see what iniquity you can discover in me. (2) He assures them of the *sincerity* even of his language. "Is there any iniquity in my tongue?" As if he had said, though I may have spoken inconsiderately and extravagantly, there is no hypocrisy in my speech. "Cannot my taste discern perverse things?" I have an inner sense by which I can determine what is right or wrong in speech.

CONCLUSION: *Mistaken friendship* is often an offence and an injury to men in trouble. It comes with a glib tongue, but with an icy heart: its words are often irrelevant, they never touch the point, and throw no light upon our darkness: not unfrequently does it enter our chamber of affliction intrusively and unasked, and begin to criticize words that we have spoken in the wild fury of a nature wrapped in anguish. *Mistaken friendship* is sometimes as pernicious and irritating as false friendship.

HOMILY No. XV.

JOB'S REPLY TO THE FIRST SPEECH OF ELIPHAZ.

(3.) LIFE BURDENSOME AND BRIEF.

"Is there not an appointed time to man upon earth? are not his days also like the days of an hireling?" &c.—CHAP. vii. 1-6.

GENERAL NOTE.—“This chapter rises quite naturally out of the final verses of the preceding. The two thoughts there were, that the friends ought to proceed to consider and judge Job's case on other grounds than their hypothesis of his sin, which was false: and that he surely knew himself best, and whether the Divine treatment of him was just or not, which it was not: nay, he proceeds, the Divine treatment of men altogether was harsh and cruel, and man's lot miserable and enslaved, and in antithesis to the seductive portrait drawn by Eliphaz, of the Divine Father of his children (chap. v.). Job paints another, of the Divine Taskmaster driving his worn-out and lacerated slaves.”—*Professor Davidson*.

EXEGETICAL REMARKS. *Ver. 1.*—“*Is there not an appointed time to man upon earth?*” In the margin “warfare;” some read “service.” “*Are not his days also like the days of an hireling?*” or “Truly as the days of an hireling are his days.” The idea is, as a hired servant continues only for a specified period with his employer, so the Great Master has given man an allotted time on earth.

Ver. 2.—“*As a servant earnestly desireth the shadow, and as an hireling looketh for the reward of his work.*” “As a slave who pants for the shadow, and as a hireling longs

for his wages.”—*Professor Davidson*. The idea is, that as the slave toiling in the heat of day pants for the cooling shade of evening, and eagerly anticipates the reward of his labours, so he anxiously desired the termination of his mortal life.

Ver. 3.—“*So am I made to possess months of vanity, and wearisome nights are appointed to me.*” Some read for “wearisome nights,” “nights of trouble.” The idea perhaps is, whatever may have been my longings, I have been doomed to a life that is not only worthless but full of trouble.

Ver. 4.—“*When I lie down, I say, When shall I arise, and the night be gone?*” The two clauses should be separated thus: “When I lie down, I say, When shall I arise? And the evening is lengthened out,” &c.—*Dr. S. Davidson*. All who know what affliction is understand this—the anxieties which suffering prompts for the first breaking of the dawn. “*I am full of tossings to and fro unto the dawning of the day.*” Some reckon it “until the morning breeze,” others, “until the morning twilight.”

Ver. 5.—“*My flesh is clothed with worms and clods of dust; my skin is broken, and become loathsome.*” “My skin heals up to fester again.”—*Delitzsch*. “My skin stiffens and runs again.”—*Professor Davidson*. He appears to allude to the state of his skin induced by his

disease, for it is well known that in *elephantiasis* (as occurring in hot countries) the skin becomes of a muddy hue, thickened and indurated (like that of the elephant), so as to have very much the appearance of the ground when dried up and cracked by the heat. With regard to the worms, it is said that, after ulceration has occurred in the progress of the disease, worms are

bred in great numbers in the ulcers. Job's body then being covered with such ulcers, would swarm with worms.

Ver. 6.—“*My days are swifter than a weaver's shuttle, and are spent without hope.*” “My days are filled up more speedily than the web, and are closed without hope.” —*Dr. Lee.* The idea is the fleetness of life.

HOMILETICS.—In these verses Job enters into detail concerning his great sufferings. He does so in all probability in order that his friends might make some allowance for his distraction, and might not be surprised at the vehement language which he was about to address to the Almighty God. He indicates in these verses that his life was burdensome and brief.

He felt his life to be—

I. BURDENSOME. He speaks of his life—First: As a *hard servitude*. “*Is there not an appointed time to man upon earth?*” A “hard service” upon earth. Whether he alludes to a military service, an agricultural service, or some other particular kind of service, matters not. Life is a servitude. The Great Task-master gets work of some kind out of every human life. “*As a servant earnestly desireth the shadow, and as an hireling looketh for the reward of his work.*” Eagerly he desired his day of life to close, that he might lay down the heavy implements of labour, and retire into the rest of the grave. In Oriental lands, where the sun's rays come down like fire on the burning sands, how refreshing and how delicious the shadow of a rock or a tree, especially to him who has been labouring under the hot sky! eagerly as such a labourer longed for such a shadow, so Job yearned for the grave. Never did soldier in the heat of battle long more for the warfare to be over, or the labourer under the burning sun for the day to close, than did Job long for death. He felt weary with waiting for the allotted period. He speaks of his life—

Secondly: As *spent worthlessly*. “*So am I made to possess*

months of vanity.” Deeply did he feel that he did not realize the true ideal of life, that his powers were wasted, his desires were unsatisfied. What thoughtful man does not feel that his earthly life here is but vanity! Man organized for wonderful achievements, but involved in trifles. Verily the human creature is made subject to vanity. He speaks of his life—

Thirdly: As *physically afflicted*. “*Wearisome nights are appointed to me.*” The weight of his sufferings pressed on him as an intolerable load. Life with many men in every age grows wearisome, and the desire to be freed from it often becomes strong and vehement. Job felt that the allotted period of his life was too long for endurance. “*When I lie down, I say, When shall I arise, and the night be gone? and I am full of tossings to and fro unto the dawning of the day.*” We retire to bed hoping to get that refreshing sleep which kind nature has provided for the wearied and the suffering, and when it comes not, our physical condition is injured, rather than improved. So great were the patriarch’s sufferings, that sleep never came with its soothing breath and balm to him: he rolled in agony during the night, looking earnestly for the first grey beams of the morning. One of the curses enumerated in the Book of Deuteronomy seemed to rest upon him. “*In the morning thou shalt say, Would God it were even; and at even thou shalt say, Would God it were morning.*” How could he rest with his body in the condition here described? “*My flesh is clothed with worms and clods of dust; my skin is broken, and become loathsome.*” He felt his life to be—

II. BRIEF.—“*My days are swifter than a weaver’s shuttle, and are spent without hope.*” “It was common,” says one, “to compare life with a web, which was filled up with the successive days. The ancient classic writers spoke of it as a web woven by the Fates. We can all feel the force of the comparison here used by Job, that the days which we live fly swiftly away. How rapidly is one after another added to the web of life! How soon will the whole web be filled up, and life be closed! A few more shoots of the shuttle and all will be over, and our life will be cut off, as

the weaver removes one web from the loom to make room for another. How important to improve the fleeting moments, and to live as if we were soon to see the rapid shuttle flying for the last time." How fleet is life! Jacob speaks of his days, at the age of 130, as "few and evil." Life is a chariot whose wheel never stops till it dashes over the precipice, and is destroyed. It is a vessel that never anchors. Nay, more fleeting, more unsubstantial than these; a flower, a vapour, a shadow, a watch in the night.

" Like the snow-fall in the river,
A moment white,—then melts for ever;
Or like the rainbow's lovely form,
Evanishing amid the storm."

HOMILY No. XVI.

JOB'S REPLY TO THE FIRST SPEECH OF ELIPHAZ.

(4.) A CRY TO HEAVEN. (a) INVOCATION.

"O remember that my life is wind: mine eye shall no more see good." &c.
—CHAP. vii. 7-10.

EXEGETICAL REMARKS.—*Ver. 7.* — "*O remember that my life is wind*" (a breath). "This verse and those that follow to the end of the chapter, are so evidently addressed to God that it was not thought necessary by the speaker to name Him."—*Dr. Bernard.* He speaks of his life here as "wind," to indicate his sense of its frailty and fleetness. "He remembered that they were but flesh," says the Psalmist, "a wind that passeth away, and cometh not again." "*Mine eye shall no more see good.*" "No more look on prosperity." — *Delitzsch.* In the margin, "not return to see good." His impression was he would never come back again to enjoy this life. The language is somewhat like that

of Hezekiah's: "I shall behold man no more with the inhabitants of the world."

Ver. 8.—"The eye of him that hath seen me shall see me no more." The idea is, "I shall be cut off for ever from all I know, my connection with my race will be ended." "*Thine eyes are upon me, and I am not.*" Some read, "Thine eyes shall look for me, but I shall not be;" others, "Thine eyes shall seek for me, and I shall be gone;" but our version seems on the whole to be correct. He seems to feel that under the blaze of the Divine glance he was melting away. "I am not," or, as in the margin, "I can live no longer." What can stand before the flash of the Divine

eye? The universe will melt away one day before it (Rev. xx. 11).

Ver. 9.—“*As the cloud is consumed and vanisheth away: so he that goeth down to the grave shall come up no more.*” To-day the sky teems with fleecy clouds, some larger and more dense than others. All have shapes endless, grotesque, and constantly shifting. To-morrow the sky is azure. Where are the clouds? They are gone, never to appear again. To Job these clouds

were like his life. When it ended, and he went to his grave, he would never return. “He that goeth down to the grave shall come up no more.”

Ver. 10.—“*He shall return no more to his house, neither shall his place know him any more.*” Some say this means, he shall come up no more in the present order of things; others, however, consider that they refer to an utter extinction of existence.

HOMILETICS.—These words are a part of Job’s cry to Heaven. The whole cry extends to the end of the chapter, and maybe arranged under three general heads:—*Invocation*, extending from verses 7-10; *Expostulation*, extending from verses 11-16; and *Interrogation*, extending from 17-21. In the verse before us we have the cry of *invocation*: “*O remember that my life is wind.*” In his anguish he turns away from his so-called friends—turns away from himself and all his soliloquizing, and looks to Heaven and cries: “*Oh, remember.*” The idea of the *disruption* which his death would effect was that which now so possessed his mind and distressed his heart as to prompt the prayer. He regarded this disruption as an evil—

I. VERY DISTRESSING. It seemed to sting him like a serpent, and to madden him into agony. And is not this one of the most painful, if not the most painful, ideas connected with death? Through nearly the whole of our lives here we are weaving ties that fasten things of this earth around our very hearts. We are constantly deepening old roots in the world, and striking new ones farther out. Death, with its ruthless axe, cuts these, and severs us from all. The farmer leaves his fields, the mechanic his shop, the merchant his counting-house, the artist his studio, the student his library, the preacher his pulpit, and the king his palace. All leave their homes, their avocations, and their friends. This certain disruption that awaits shows us two things:—First: *The folly of worldliness.* How unwise is he who spends his whole life in merely forging

links that must be broken, forming root-holds from which the whirlwinds of death will hurl his tree. It shows, Secondly: *The wisdom of spirituality.* How wise is the Christly soul, who is forming alliances with the invisible and eternal. Such alone are prepared to welcome the final hour. He regarded this disruption as an evil—

II. EASILY ACCOMPLISHED. “*Thine eyes are upon me, and I am not,*” or “*I can live no longer.*” What is easier than a look? There is no effort in the glance of an eye. There is effort even in the movement of the hand, in the shake of the head, in the utterance of a word, but no effort in a look. Job felt that God had only to look upon him and he was gone. His death did not require the employment of any force to accomplish it. The slightest thing could do it; a breath of air, a microscopic atom, would be enough; nay, a look. How easily God accomplishes His works. “*He looketh on the earth and it trembleth, He toucheth the hills and they smoke.*” Before one glance of His eye the whole fabric of nature will dissolve. Though easily accomplished, it is some consolation to know that it is not *fortuitously* produced. It is under the eye of God. Though insignificant, we are objects of His notice; and though we die as He looks at us, we die assured that He who observes us has the deepest interest in our destiny. “*He knoweth our frame, He remembereth that we are dust.*” He regarded this disruption as an evil—

III. NEVER REMEDIED. “*He shall return no more to his house.*” The earthly connections broken at death will never be renewed. Of all the millions who have gone during the past sixty centuries, not one has returned to renew his connections on earth. Kings return no more to their people, lawyers to their clients, merchants to their customers, ministers to their churches, congregations to their pews, parents to their children, masters to their servants. All over for ever and for ever.

There is an overwhelming sadness in this idea; to step down into the dark abysses of mystery, and never come back to the known. How overpowering the thought! What is

the moral of this? Let us do the work we have to do on earth while we are on it. What is that? First: Cultivate a character that shall meeten us for eternity. Secondly: Promote Christliness in the world.

“Beyond the flight of time,
Beyond this vale of death,
There surely is some blessed clime
Where life is not a breath,
Nor life's affections transient fire,
Whose sparks fly upward and expire.”

HOMILY No. XVII.

JOB'S REPLY TO THE FIRST SPEECH OF ELIPHAZ.

(4.) A CRY TO HEAVEN. (b) EXPOSTULATION.

“Therefore I will not refrain my mouth; I will speak in the anguish of my spirit; I will complain in the bitterness of my soul.” &c.—CHAP. vii. 11-16.

EXEGETICAL REMARKS. Ver. 11.—“Therefore I will not refrain my mouth.” Job's meaning seems to be this:—Since I am thus tormented in life, and when I die shall return no more to the earth, my condition is so wretched that I will not restrain my mouth, but will give full expression to my soul. “I will speak in the anguish of my spirit.” I will give full vent to my feelings.

Ver. 12.—“Am I a sea, or a whale, that Thou settest a watch over me?” “Am I a sea, or a sea monster, that Thou restrictest me?”—*Dr. Lee.* “A sea was regarded in Old Testament poetry as a violent rebel against God, the Lord of nature, Who therefore curbs its violence: ‘I have placed the sand for the bound of the sea by a perpetual decree, that it cannot pass it; and though the waves thereof toss

themselves, yet can they not prevail’ (Jer. v. 22). A whale, or some other sea monster, or dragon, that is in the sea, crocodile (Isa. xxvii. 1), that Thou needest to watch and curb me? The Egyptians watched the crocodile most carefully to prevent its doing mischief. Am I a poor frail man, so dangerous an object as to need, like the sea, to be kept within bounds by mighty barriers? or like a sea monster, needing to be beset with miseries as of watchers?”—*A. R. Fausset.*

Ver. 13, 14.—“When I say, My bed shall comfort me, my couch shall ease my complaint; then Thou scarest me with dreams, and terrifiest me through visions.” The sufferer longs for sleep, he seeks refuge in the bed, but the couch of repose becomes the scene of mental agony; visions of the night tortured and terrified him like the furies.

Ver. 15, 16.—“*So that my soul chooseth strangling, and death rather than my life. I loathe it; I would not live alway: let me alone; for my days are vanity.*” “My soul chooseth strangling, death, rather than these bones.”—*Dr. Samuel Davidson.*

HOMILETICS.—These words are a continuation of Job’s cry to Heaven. In these verses we have what may be called a cry of *expostulation*. His expostulation is grounded on two facts; on the fact—

I. That God should afflict him AT ALL. “*Am I a sea, or a whale, that Thou settest a watch over me?*” The language implies three things.

First: *The recognition of the law of restraint in the universe.* Job takes it for granted that God had set a “*watch*” over the “*sea*” and the “*whale*;” that the tumultuous waters and ravenous monsters of the deep were under His restraining hand. The existence of this restraining law is undoubted, and everywhere manifest in the material universe. All the elements and forces in the *inorganic* departments of nature—lightnings, winds, volcanoes, pestilences—are kept within their bounds: He has set a “*watch*” over them all. So are the *organic*. The tiniest insects and the largest monsters are alike kept in their proper sphere; God holds all the elements, forces, objects, existences of material nature in restraint. The language implies—

Secondly: *A consciousness of the restraining force upon his own individuality.* “*Am I a sea?*” All men are subject to this restraining law. This is obvious from the fact that they are prevented from the *full* gratification of their desires, and the *full* execution of their plans. God restrains man by (1) the force of public sentiment, (2) the power of conscience, and (3) the lack of capacity. Circumstances occur when men are made deeply to feel this restraint: losses, afflictions, bereavements, death, moral conviction. Lost spirits feel themselves “bound in chains of darkness.” The language implies—

Thirdly: *A perplexity of judgment in consequence of this felt restraint.* He seems to say, Why should I be thus watched? Am I as tumultuous as the ocean, or as dangerous

as the furious monsters of the deep? What am I, frail, worthless, dying creature, that God should thus notice me? There are good reasons, however, why man should be watched even more than aught in the material universe. (1) He sustains a nearer relationship, and possesses a higher nature. He is the offspring of God. Seas, skies, mountains, valleys, the beasts of the field, and the fowls of the air are His creatures, not His children. (2) He only has a capacity to break through the boundary of his being. The sea cannot roll up the mountain; however furious its rage, it must be for ever in its bed; sun, stars, and comets cannot break away from their old orbits, but man can. (3) He has not only the capacity, but the tendency to deviate from the true line of his being. Nothing in nature, but man, has a tendency to go out of its place. (4) The results that arise out of man's deviation from his orbit are far more calamitous than could spring from the supposed deviation of any other creature. Were the sun to fly from its sphere, it would undoubtedly be a terrible catastrophe to the material creation, but it would not ruin souls. A transgressing soul destroys souls. "One sinner destroyeth much good." (5) Man is the only being in this world that is capable of definite improvement under the superintendence of God. The sun does not shine brighter than it did on Adam: the ocean is not more grand now than when the old Phœnicians plied it with their oars. The birds do not sing more sweetly now than they did in the bowers of Eden. But how man progresses! Look at man *socially*: compare England now with what it was when Cæsar landed on our shores. Look at him *intellectually*: compare the boy Newton with Sir Isaac the astronomer. Look at him *morally*: compare Saul of Tarsus with Paul at Athens.* Job's expostulation is grounded on the fact—

II. That God should afflict him so GREATLY. His affliction was not confined to the body, but extended to the mind; not to his waking hours, but to his sleep. "*Thou scarest me with dreams, and terrifiest me through visions.*" These words lead us to consider four things

* For further remarks on this subject see *Homilist*, First Series, vol. iii., p. 246.

concerning that part of our nature which we call mind or spirit. They lead us to reflect—

First: On the mind's *independency of the body*. In sleep the body, as far as voluntary activity is concerned, is dead: the limbs are relaxed, the senses are sealed; yet in this state the mind acts. It creates visions, it forms plans, it draws conclusions. The dreams of Pharaoh, Jacob, Joseph, Nebuchadnezzar, Peter, Paul, reveal what the mind can do when the body is dormant. This independency of the mind of the body shows that it is the essence of our personality, and the pledge of a future life. The words lead us to reflect—

Secondly: On the mind's *sources of misery*. Man's greatest suffering is not physical. There are worse agonies than torturing limbs and writhing nerves—"a wounded spirit who can bear!" A guilty conscience does two things—(1) raises past sins from the grave of forgetfulness; and (2) makes the imagination create a coming hell. The words lead us to reflect—

Thirdly: On the mind's *accessibility to God*. "*Thou scarest me with dreams.*" He is ever present with the soul, and can act upon it how, when, and for what purpose He pleases—no bolts or bars can shut Him out. These words lead us to reflect—

Fourthly: Upon the mind's *supreme interest*. If God has this access to the soul, if He can scare at any moment with visions, our supreme interest is to cultivate His friendship.* Life without this becomes intolerable. Job says: "*I loathe it.*" If the mind is miserable, existence is an overwhelming curse.

* For further remarks on this subject see *Homilist*, Second Series, vol. i., p. 367.

HOMILY No. XVIII.

JOB'S REPLY TO THE FIRST SPEECH OF ELIPHAZ.

(4.) A CRY TO HEAVEN. (c) INTERROGATION.

"What is man, that thou shouldst magnify him? and that thou shouldst set thine heart upon him?" &c.—CHAP. vii. 17-21.

EXEGETICAL REMARKS. Ver. 17.—"What is man, that Thou shouldst magnify him?" The meaning is astonishment at God's notice of such a frail creature. "What is man, that Thou dost esteem him so highly, that Thou settest Thine heart upon him?" A bitter irony lies in these words.—*Dr. Samuel Davidson.*

Ver. 18.—"And that Thou shouldst visit him every morning, and try him every moment?" Visit undoubtedly refers to his sufferings.

Ver. 19.—"How long wilt Thou not depart from me, nor let me alone till I swallow down my spittle?" This means, Why wilt Thou not give me the intermission of an instant? Thou dost not leave me sufficient time to swallow down my spittle. "A proverbial expression," says Elzas, "among the Arabs, by which they understand, give me leave to rest a little after my fatigue." There is an instance which illustrates this passage in Hariri's *Narratives*, entitled "The Assembly." A person, who being eagerly pressed to give an account of his travels, answered with impa-

tience, "Let me swallow down my spittle, for my journey has fatigued me!"

Ver. 20.—"I have sinned; what shall I do unto Thee, O Thou Preserver of men? why hast Thou set me as a mark against Thee?" "Wherefore didst Thou make me a reproach to Thee, so that I am become a burden to myself?"—*Dr. S. Davidson.* "So that I am a burden to myself." His afflictions had made his life intolerable.

Ver. 21.—"And why dost Thou not pardon my transgression, and take away mine iniquity?" Since I have sinned against Thee, why not forgive me? Thou canst do this: it is a very small matter with Thee, why not do it? "For now shall I sleep in the dust; and Thou shalt seek me in the morning, but I shall not be." The idea is, if I am to be forgiven it must be done at once, for I shall soon be in the dust for ever. "Thou shalt seek me in the morning, but I shall not be." *Dr. Lee* renders this: "And though Thou seek me I shall be no more."

HOMILETICS.—This passage is the conclusion of Job's cry to Heaven. The first part of the cry (verses 7-10) was an invocation; the second part (11-16) was an expostulation; this part (17-21) is an interrogation. In the appeal contained in these verses Job expresses—

I. His astonishment that God SHOULD CONDESCEND TO VISIT WITH SUFFERING SUCH A FRAIL CREATURE AS MAN.

“*What is man, that thou shouldst magnify him?*” Who has not asked this question with profound wonder and awe? What is man to this planet?—what is this planet to the universe?—what is the universe to God? There are facts however connected with man that may tend to reduce the wonder. (1) Man is God’s *creature*. What He thought worthy of creating cannot be unworthy of His notice: and to Him great and small are alike. (2) Man is God’s *free subject*. He is endowed with the power of self-motion. He is not like inorganic nature, bound by force, nor like irrational life, bound by blind impulse; he is free, self-moving, self-directing. He can change his orbit, reverse his movements, and originate new things in the universe. (3) Man is God’s *loved offspring*. Is a child, however frail and feeble, beneath the notice of his parent, though the parent be the sovereign of a mighty empire? No. The parental instinct turns to the child. We are His children, more than His creatures, more than His subjects. He is our Father. “*What is man?*” Offspring of the Infinite, heir of immortality, capable of loving, serving, and obeying God for ever. The material universe cannot reflect upon itself; man can. The material universe has no power to modify its movements; man has. The material universe will not retain its identity; man will. It is not so wonderful, therefore, that God should bring man up, visit him in the morning, and never leave him for an instant. Again, the appeal expresses—

II. His astonishment that God DID NOT PARDON HIS SINS. “*I have sinned; what shall I do unto Thee, O Thou Preserver of men? why hast Thou set me as a mark against Thee, so that I am a burden to myself?*” His language implies three things:—

First: *His belief that God had especially afflicted him because of his sins.* “*I have sinned; why dost Thou set me as a mark against Thee?*” (1) He acknowledges that he had sinned. Sin implies (a) the existence of law, (b) the means of knowing law, (c) the capacity of obeying law, and (d) the actual infraction of law. (2) He expresses his belief that something ought to be done by him. “*What shall I do*

unto Thee?" Shall I deny the fact—shall I endeavour to forget it—shall I struggle after a new course of life? The language implies—

Secondly: *His impression that God would not pardon him.* "Why dost Thou not pardon my transgression?" These words imply two great truths: (1) That pardon is essential to the removal of suffering. A great truth this. (Psalm xxxii. 3-5.) Another truth is, (2) That there must be some cause why pardon is withheld. "Why dost Thou not pardon?" Is it for the want of disposition, or for the want of power? The true reason is ever with man and not with God. The words imply—

Thirdly: *His belief that if pardon did not come soon it would be too late.* "For now shall I sleep in the dust; and Thou shalt seek me in the morning, but I shall not be." The meaning is, I shall soon die; then though Thou wert to seek me in order to bestow pardon I should not be found. Though Job had some wrong conceptions of God, and not always correct feelings towards Him, yet what he expresses is a solemn truth of universal application, namely, that pardon must come to the sinner soon, or it will be too late for ever.

HOMILY No. XIX.

BILDAD'S FIRST ADDRESS TO JOB.

ITS EXCELLENCIES AND DEFECTS.

"Then answered Bildad the Shuhite, and said," &c.—CHAP. viii. 1-10.

GENERAL NOTE. Bildad restates the argument of Eliphaz; but he both gives it a new edge and clearness, and puts it on another basis. Like Eliphaz, he affirms the law of the Divine Providence to be that it renders good to the good, and evil to the evil,—*malis male, bonis bene*: but he enunciates this law with more force and in a harsher tone.

Eliphaz, whom we have conceived as a man of the prophetic order and spirit, in accordance with that conception of him, had based his conclusions on oracles and visions: but now Bildad, the sage, who leaned much on the ancient and proverbial wisdom of the East, in entire accordance with that conception of his character and bent, bases the

same conclusion on the traditions of the fathers.—*Mr. Cox.*

EXEGETICAL REMARKS. *Ver. 1.* —“*Then answered Bildad the Shuhite, and said.*” A sketch of this man has been given in our notes on the first chapter of this book.

Ver. 2. —“*How long wilt thou speak these things? and how long shall the words of thy mouth be like a strong wind?*” “Such things” would be better than “these things.” The things, of course, referred to what Bildad considered his murmuring words. The language means, how long wilt thou continue thus as little able to restrain thy words, as thou wouldest be to restrain a mighty tempest or a boisterous wind?

Ver. 3. —“*Doth God pervert judgment? or doth the Almighty pervert justice?*” “Will God reverse what is right, or the Almighty reverse what is just?”—*Delitzsch.* Some critics interpret this passage by the light of *Eccles. iii. 16.* “And, moreover, I saw under the sun the place of judgment, that wickedness was there; and the place of righteousness, that iniquity was there. I said in mine heart, God shall judge the righteous and the wicked.” And they call attention to the fact, that the requisite of evildoers is here called “Justice.” They think that this very passage shows that the whole chapter turns upon two distinct topics, the miserable end of the wicked and the final triumph of the just. Hence they conclude that the two figures employed in the chapter, viz., that of a short-lived weed and that of a vigorous and lasting tree, represent respectively the character of a wicked and that of a righteous person.

This, however, seems to me questionable. In any case the language undoubtedly expresses the speaker's belief in the rectitude of God.

Ver. 4. —“*If thy children have sinned against Him, and He have cast them away for their transgression.*” The note of *Dr. Bernard* is good on this verse. “If they sinned, His attribute of justice required that He should at once despatch them without giving them any respite, for so is He wont to deal with those who provoke Him greatly. (We may refer to the history of Pharaoh, Korah, his band, and others.) On the other hand, the very circumstance, that He hath not despatched thee as He did thy sons, proveth there is still great hope of thy conversion, and that He correcteth thee from love, just as a father doth the son he delighteth in.”

Ver. 5. —“*If thou wouldest seek unto God betimes, and make thy supplication to the Almighty.*” Though judgment has struck down thy children in consequence of their wickedness, thou art spared, and thou shouldst at once appeal for mercy to thy Maker.

Ver. 6. —“*If thou wert pure and upright; surely now He would awake for thee, and make the habitation of thy righteousness prosperous.*” I see no good reason for regarding these words, as *Barnes* does, as cutting irony. What it means it seems to me is, if thou art not hardened with sin as thy sons were, but wilt repent, and appeal to Heaven for mercy, the Almighty will appear for thee and make thee yet a prosperous man.

Ver. 7. —“*Though thy beginning was small, yet thy latter end should greatly increase.*” “And if thy beginning was small, thy end shall be exceedingly great.”—*Delitzsch.* As the children of Job had been

cut off his family now was small. Yet Bildad says that if he were to begin life again, even with so small a family, and in such depressed and trying circumstances, if he were a righteous man he might hope for returning prosperity. "*Yet thy latter end should greatly increase.*" From this it is evident that Job was not now regarded as an old man. He would still have the prospect of living many years. The meaning here is, that his former prosperity should appear small compared with that which he would hereafter enjoy if he were pure and righteous.

Ver. 8.—"*For enquire, I pray thee, of the former age, and prepare thyself to the search of their fathers.*" "For enquire now of the former race, and attend to the examination of their fathers."—*Dr. S. Davidson.* Do not content thyself with consulting one generation, but if thou really wishest to know how things

go on in this world, enquire of several, and investigate ancient history as far back as it goes. He is not, like Eliphaz, going to argue from his own observations or visions, but from the wisdom of ancient times.

Ver. 9.—"*For we are but of yesterday, and know nothing, because our days upon earth are a shadow.*" "Since we are of yesterday, and without knowledge, yea, our days upon the earth are a shadow."—*Dr. S. Davidson.* This verse is parenthetical, and introduced as a reason why antiquity should be consulted. The duration of our life is so very brief, that it would be presumptuous for us to judge what is going on in the world by our own experience—we must consult past ages.

Ver. 10.—"*Shall not they teach thee, and tell thee, and utter words out of their heart?*" "Will they not instruct thee, tell thee, and from their heart bring forth words?"

HOMILETICS.—This first address of Bildad, although he was undoubtedly a less tender, talented, and polished man than Eliphaz, contains, notwithstanding, many striking and suggestive subjects of truth. There are no less than eight points that call for notice, and will reward thoughtful attention—A reproof that is severe, a doctrine that is unquestionable, an implication that is unkind, a policy that is Divine, an authority not to be trusted, a consideration that is solemn, illustrations that are striking, a principle that is encouraging. The last two are contained in the last part of the chapter. This address contains—

I. A REPROOF THAT IS SEVERE. "*How long wilt thou speak these things?*" It is true that Job had poured forth language that seemed as wild and tumultuous as a tempest. But such language ought to have been considered in relation to his physical anguish and mental distress. Great suffering destroys the mental equilibrium, makes the brain burn, the thoughts tumultuous, and the words fiery and furious.

A man's language should always be measured by his mood and condition at the time when he speaks or writes. Do not judge poetry by prosaic canons, do not interpret the words of a man in flames as you would the paragraphs of a philosophic essay. Bildad should have thought of this, and either have addressed no rebuke at all; or if forced by conscience to speak, have tempered his reproof with tenderness and compassion. It has been said that "to reprove small faults with undue vehemence, is as absurd as if a man should take a great hammer because he saw a fly on his friend's forehead." "To reprehend well," says Feltham, "is the most necessary and the hardest part of friendship. Who is there that does not merit a check? And yet how few will endure one!" Bildad seems to me to have been one of those coarse-natured men who pride themselves on their blunt honesty. Such men are generally the most ready, though not the most fit, to give reproofs. Reproof should distil as the dew, not rush as the tornado. "Its nail," says an old writer, "must be well oiled with kindness, before it can be effectively driven home." This address contains—

II. A DOCTRINE THAT IS UNQUESTIONABLE. "*Doth God pervert judgment? or doth the Almighty pervert justice?*" The interrogatory is a strong way of putting the affirmative, viz.: that God is absolutely just, and that He never deviates from the right. Justice is that attribute of character which renders to every one his due. The following things should always be considered in connection with Divine justice. (1) It is always moderate in punishment, it never goes beyond the due, and seldom comes fully up to it. (2) It is never revengeful, it has no passion in it. "Fury is not in me." (3) It is always a modification of love, it is love inflicting suffering on wrong so that wrong may not spread, and the creature be not injured. It is love weeding God's Paradise of the hideous and the noxious; it is love launching tempests to cleanse the atmosphere when it becomes unwholesome. Hence there can be no perversion of Divine justice. (4) It is always slow in action. It is never impetuous, never in haste, its march is calm and slow, still it must move to chastise the wrong.

“The Sun of Justice may withdraw His beams
 Awhile from earthly ken, and sit concealed
 In dark recess, pairloined round with clouds :
 Yet let not guilt presumptuous rear her crest,
 Nor virtue droop despondent : soon these clouds,
 Seeming eclipse, will brighten into day ;
 And in majestic splendour He will rise,
 With healing and with terror on His wings.”—*Festus.*

This address contains—

III. AN IMPLICATION THAT IS UNKIND. “*If thy children have sinned against Him, and He have cast them away for their transgression.*” Supposing, what does not appear, that Bildad had evidence that Job’s children were so far “sinners above all the rest,” that Divine justice was roused to avenge itself by one tremendous stroke of destruction, it was excessively heartless on his part even to hint it to the broken-hearted father. We can scarcely imagine a more heartless piece of conduct than this. What makes it worse is that the man came as a friend with the avowed purpose of giving sympathy and yielding comfort, but in this character he proved himself an impostor. A love which shrinks from inflicting the slightest pain upon its object lies at the root of all true friendship ; but here is a man who, under the cover of friendship, shoots a poisoned arrow into the soul of his friend, there to rankle and to burn. It was overwhelming grief for Job to lose his children, but the ungenerous hint that justice had swept them from the earth because of the enormity of their sins, would tend greatly to intensify his distress. True friendship is faithful but never cruel. “Don’t flatter yourself,” says Holmes, “that friendship authorizes you to say disagreeable things to your intimates. On the contrary, the nearer you come into relation with a person the more necessary do tact and courtesy become. Except in cases of necessity, which are rare, leave your friend to learn unpleasant truths from his enemies ; they are ready enough to tell them. Good-breeding never forgets that *amour-propre* is universal.”

This address contains—

IV. A POLICY THAT IS DIVINE. “*If thou wouldest seek unto God betimes, and make thy supplication to the Almighty.*” The policy which Bildad here recommends, is that which

the Almighty through the whole of the Bible enforces on sinful men. Everywhere He tells sinners to "seek Him while He is to be found, to call upon Him while He is near."

First: He *recommends* that this policy should be attended to *at once*, and in a *proper spirit*. It must be done "*betimes*," *i. e.*, immediately. The sinner has no time to lose. Life is brief, far spent, and uncertain. "Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do." "Now is the accepted time," &c. It must be done not only at once, but in a proper spirit. "*If thou wert pure and upright.*" Even supposing, as some hold, that Bildad here meant to imply that Job was not "*pure and upright*," and therefore would not obtain the merciful interposition of his Maker, the idea still is that successful application to Heaven must not only be immediate, but with a genuine spirit. So it is, if we "regard iniquity in the heart the Lord will not hear us."

Secondly: He *affirms* that if this policy be thus attended to, the *Almighty would mercifully interpose*. "*He would awake for thee, and make the habitation of thy righteousness prosperous.*" Perhaps in this language there is another sting for Job. He seems to insinuate that if he would only do the right thing, his "*habitation*," which had hitherto been unrighteous and cursed, would become holy and prosperous. Whether he meant to give Job another sting or not, he states a truth, *viz.*, that God will answer timely and genuine prayers. He has pledged Himself to this: "Seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you."

This address contains—

V. AN AUTHORITY NOT TO BE TRUSTED. "*Enquire, I pray thee, of the former age, and prepare thyself to the search of their fathers.*" He appeals to *antiquity* to confirm what he has advanced, *viz.*, that though the wicked should for a time flourish, yet they would be cut off; and that the righteous, though for a time they should be afflicted, yet if they seek God they shall ultimately prosper. This sentiment is true, and must be admitted by all who accept the Bible as a revelation of God. There is no reason to believe that Job either questioned or denied this; but Bildad, like many

others, wished to gratify his vanity by exhibiting his intelligence and power of speech. Instead of appealing to nature, and to common sense, he points to antiquity. It was common to make appeals to men of ancient times. "The results of observation were embodied in proverbs, parables, fables, and fragments of poems; and he was regarded as amongst the wisest of men who had the fruits of these observations most at command." Two facts should always be considered in regarding antiquity as an authority. First: There is nothing in past times infallible but the Divinely inspired. Secondly: There is always more of the inspired in the present than in the past. The opinions of the uninspired men of past times, even the best of them, are not of a higher order than those of the men of modern times. Whilst it behoves us, therefore, to listen to the voice of the past, we must not accept its utterances as oracles to settle our moral disputes.

This address contains—

VI. A CONSIDERATION THAT IS SOLEMN. "*We are but of yesterday, and know nothing.*" This fact, which is introduced parenthetically, is of solemn moment to us all. The words express the transitoriness and consequent intellectual poverty of life. So brief is our existence that we "*know nothing,*" nothing compared with what *is* to be known, nothing compared with what we *might* have known, nothing compared with what we *shall* know in the future. From this fact we urge, (1) Do not presume to criticize the ways of God. (2) Do not be surprised at difficulties in connection with Divine revelation. (3) Do not be uncharitable in the maintenance of your theological views. (4) Do not regard your perfection as consisting in intellectual attainments. (5) Do not consider this life as the end of your existence. (6) Do not accept reason as your guide to immortality.*

* For further illustrations on these points see *Homilist*, Second Series, vol. iii., p. 169.

HOMILY No. XX.

BILDAD'S FIRST ADDRESS TO JOB.

ITS EXCELLENCIES AND DEFECTS. (*Continued.*)

"Can the rush grow up without mire? can the flag grow without water?"
 &c.—CHAP. viii. 11-19.

EXEGETICAL REMARKS. *Ver. 11.*—*"Can the rush grow up without mire? can the flag grow without water?"* "Doth the paper-reed shoot up without mire? Doth the bulrush grow without water?"—*Dr. S. Davidson.* From this verse to *ver. 18* is supposed by some to be a fragment of some grand old poem, perhaps the most ancient poem in the world. Bildad (*in ver. 8*) had pointed Job to antiquity, and here he quotes the poetic utterance of some illustrious men of the distant past, touching the character and destiny of worldly men. The "rush" is a well-known plant. The papyrus and bulrush abounded on the oozy banks of the Nile.

Ver. 12.—"Whilst it is yet in his greenness, and not cut down, it withereth before any other herb." "It is still in luxuriant verdure when it is not cut off, then before all other grass it withereth."—*Delitzsch.* However well watered its roots might be, it cannot long stand the scorching sun.

Ver. 13.—"So are the paths of all that forget God." Practical forgetfulness of God, is itself the great fontal sin. All iniquity and impiety stream from it. "*The hypocrite's hope shall perish.*" "So the hope of the ungodly perisheth."—*Dr. S. Davidson.* Some read profligate instead of "hypocrite" here; the word ungodly, however, comprehends both. The hope of bad men shall perish; all their ex-

pectations shall be blasted; all their plans utterly destroyed.

Ver. 14.—"Whose hope shall be cut off, and whose trust shall be a spider's web." "Because his hope is cut off, and his trust is a spider's house."—*Delitzsch.*

Ver. 15.—"He shall lean upon his house, but it shall not stand: he shall hold it fast, but it shall not endure." "He leaneth upon his house, yet it doth not stand; he holdeth fast by it, yet it doth not endure."—*Dr. S. Davidson.*

Ver. 16, 17.—"He is green before the sun, and his branch shooteth forth in his garden. His roots are wrapped about the heap, and he seeth the place of stones." "He is full of sap before the sun, and his branches shoot forth over his garden: his roots are entwined about the hill: he looketh to the house of stones."—*Dr. S. Davidson.* Here is a change in the figure; the speaker here compares the profligate, or hypocritical man, to a shrub of no long continuance, which spreads itself abroad, and soon withers and disappears. "The reference is here to a plant whose roots are struck down amidst a heap of stones or ruins, and thus brings out the sense, that the prosperous wicked man, or the hypocrite, is like a plant which stands in the midst of rocks, rubbish, or old ruins, and not like one standing in a fertile soil, where it may strike its roots deep. The reference is, therefore,

to the fact that a tree or plant which springs up among ruins, or upon rocks, or in the midst of rocks, will send its roots afar for nourishment, or will wrap them around the projecting points of the rocks or ruins in order to obtain support. Travellers have noticed signal instances of this among the ruins of Greece, as in the instance of a plane-tree growing upon the high wall of a ruin, which sent its roots down along the wall to the ground. Some examples of the same kind, although less remarkable, have been seen in our own country, as in the old walls of Silchester."—*Kitto*.

Ver. 18.—"If he destroy him from his place, then it shall deny him, saying, I have not seen thee." The Orientals were highly poetic, and transferred their own thoughts

and emotions to the inanimate objects around them. Hence Job, in the previous chapter, speaks of his place knowing him no more, and here Bildad speaks of the worldly man's place "denying" him. He means to say, the earth will be *ashamed* of him. The earth, the common mother of us all, who brought us forth and sustained us, may well be ashamed of us if we set ourselves in hostility to its holy Maker.

Ver. 19.—"Behold, this is the joy of his way, and out of the earth shall others grow." This is sarcasm: this miserable end is your joy. It means: You are not only ruined, but others spring up and take your place. The earth on which you flourished will not miss you. Your place will soon be occupied by others.

HOMILETICS.—I have already noticed several things in this first address of Bildad. Here there are illustrations that are striking. The verses before us are supposed to refer to some ancient poem. If so, who was its author? Was it the effusion of some great bard who lived soon after the flood? This we know not, but we know the intention with which Bildad here employs it. It illustrates—

I. The CHARACTER of a prosperous religious worldling. Bildad knew that Job had been one of the most prosperous and affluent men in the neighbourhood in which he lived. He knew too that he had made great profession of religion, acknowledged his love and loyalty to the God of Heaven, and had discoursed largely on theological questions. Notwithstanding this, he regarded him as being utterly destitute of religious goodness, as being a thoroughly worldly man, and a hypocrite as far as religion is concerned. How does he describe his real character here? As one who travelled in the "*paths of all that forget God.*" This is in truth a description of wicked men of every type, age, and land. They "*forget God.*" They practically ignore Him in all their plans and procedure. This is what we have called the

fontal sin of humanity. From it streams all the errors and crimes that disgrace and damn the race. Three facts show the enormity of this sin.

First: It is contrary to our *spiritual constitution*. In all souls there are three things; (1) a tendency to look to God; (2) a faculty to remember what we discover in Him; (3) a susceptibility to be influenced by Him. The soul is made for conscious communion with the Great One. Apart from Him what is it but an eye without light, an ear without harmony, a world without a sun?

Secondly: It is contrary to our *felt obligations*. Deep and ineradicable within us is a tendency to reverence the great, to adore the perfect, to praise the benevolent. The voice of conscience, until sin has muffled it into muteness, is constantly crying out, "Remember now thy Creator."

Thirdly: It is contrary to our *environment*. The whole sphere of our being is crowded with remembrances of God. Every object that meets the eye is a reminder of Him. How monstrous then is it to "*forget God*;" and yet men do. The common path, alas! of humanity is the path of those who forget their Creator. It is practically atheistic. The words illustrate—

II. The DOOM of the prosperous religious worldling. There are three figures here, employed to represent the destiny of all who forget God, whatever may be their profession of religion, or prosperity in the world.

First: *A fragile "rush."* This is a mere marsh weed, spongy and unsubstantial. The worldly man's character in its texture is like a weed, not an oak; like the reed, not the cedar. It cannot last. Rushes cannot "*grow up without water*;" souls cannot flourish and grow without goodness. The rush would do very well on the banks of the Nile when the river nourishes its roots, but as the noble current decreases, it withers; ungodly men may do very well when all is prosperous without, but with the change of circumstances they are ruined.*

Another figure employed to represent such, is—

Secondly: *A "spider's web."* "*The hypocrite's (ungodly)*

* See this thought more fully illustrated in *Homilist*, First Series, vol. ii., p. 17.

hope shall perish:" "and whose trust shall be a spider's web. He shall lean upon his house: but it shall not stand: he shall hold it fast, but it shall not endure." (1) Bad men have their hopes. Hope is an instinct of the soul. Hope gives most men elysiums and paradises in the future. The hopes of bad men must perish. What a catastrophe! It is said somewhere in this book that the loss of hope is as the "giving up of the ghost;" the death of hope in man is one of the most awful deaths. (2) Bad men have their *reliances*. "He shall lean upon his house." Who is not leaning upon something? But that on which he leans shall be destroyed: "It shall not stand; he shall hold it fast, but it shall not endure." As the spider holds tenaciously to some fragment in its web when the wind has riven its fabric, wicked men clutch that on which they trust to the last. I know not of a more awful picture than this: a frail soul bereft of all its support struggling alone in the universe, with all the objects of its trust utterly swept away. Another figure is—

Thirdly: *A shallow rooted tree.* "He is green before the sun, and his branch shooteth forth in his garden. His roots are wrapped about the heap, and seeth the place of stones." This is a more hardy and solid plant than the rush. It has more vital energy and fibre in it, and is less dependent upon water. Still its rootings are bad; they are amongst stones and rubbish, and consequently cannot live long. "This comparison," says an author, "of the transitory nature of human hope and prosperity to the hidden blight which overthrows the glory of the forest, and of the garden, is at once so beautiful and so natural as to have been employed by poets of every age." One such comparison of exquisite finish occurs in Shakespeare:—

"This is the state of man! To-day he puts forth
The tender leaves of hope; to-morrow blossoms,
And bears his blushing honours thick upon him;
The third day comes a frost, a killing frost,
And when he thinks, good easy man, full surely
His greatness is a ripening, nips his root,
And then he falls, as I do."

Here we are told that the earth will *deny* any knowledge of such a man as this. It "*shall deny him, saying, I have not seen thee.*" What millions in every age play their parts

and pass away, that the earth is *ashamed* of, and it covers them up, and mantles them in the robe of oblivion. When they are gone others appear on it. "*Out of the earth shall others grow.*" Who can tell the number of generations that have yet to come out of this earth, flourish on it, and then pass away? How solemnly insignificant is individual man! The earth will not miss the greatest magnates.

HOMILY No. XXI.

BILDAD'S FIRST ADDRESS TO JOB.

ITS EXCELLENCIES AND DEFECTS. (*Continued.*)

"Behold, God will not cast away a perfect man, neither will He help the evil doers:" &c.—CHAP. viii. 20-22.

EXEGETICAL REMARKS. Ver. 20.—"*Behold, God will not cast away a perfect man.*" "Despiset not the perfect man."—*Delitzsch*. Some read "spurn." The perfect man is a complete man, one in all respects what a man ought to be. He realizes the Divine ideal of manhood. The Eternal will never "cast away," never spurn such; they are to Him as the apple of the eye. "*Neither will He help the evil doers.*" The margin has it, He will not "take the ungodly by the hand." He will leave them alone to struggle and stumble on. The idea of the whole verse is, that the Righteous Governor of the world will befriend the good, but leave the wicked to themselves.

Ver. 21.—"*Till He fill thy mouth*

with laughing." "Till" is rendered by some "even yet." "While He shall fill."—*Delitzsch*. Others render it, "When He fills." The A. V. is good enough. Bildad probably expressed the idea, that if Job turned to God he would yet be a prosperous and a happy man. "*And thy lips with rejoicing;*" margin, "shouting for joy." Some read, "And thy lips with merriment."

Ver. 22.—"*They that hate thee shall be clothed with shame.*" At the sight of thy prosperity thy shall be confounded. "*And the dwelling-place of the wicked shall come to nought.*" "And the tent of the ungodly is no more."—*Delitzsch*. His belief was that utter destruction awaited the unrighteous.

HOMILETICS.—We have now to notice one more point in the address of Bildad to Job—a *principle that is eternal*. What is that? That moral character determines a man's destiny. This is Bildad's conclusion, as contained in the verses before us. Two points are to be noticed—

I. The real condition of the GOOD. By the *real* condition

we mean the relation of the soul, not to the circumstantial and temporalities of existence, but to the principle of immutable law and the procedure of the Absolute Governor of the universe. Bildad here teaches two things concerning the real condition of the good.

First: It is a condition in which *they will never be deserted of the Eternal*. “*God will not cast away (or spurn) a perfect man.*” Whatever may be the alternations in the life of the good, whoever may shun and reject them, the GREAT ONE will never forsake them. “All men,” said Paul, forsook me; “notwithstanding, the Lord stood with me.” He has pledged Himself over and over again never to leave or forsake His people. He will be their Friend everywhere, under all circumstances, and for ever. “I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee.”

Another thing which Bildad here teaches, concerning the condition of the good, is—

Secondly: It is a condition in which *God will inspire them with happiness*. “*Till He fill thy mouth with laughing, and thy lips with rejoicing.*” He not only never deserts them, but He always blesses them. He “fills them with joy and peace, in believing.” He causeth them to rejoice in hope of the glory of God.

Although Bildad did not regard Job as a good man, but on the contrary considered him to be a great sinner and a great hypocrite, he here assures him that if he were good, his Maker would never desert him, but always be with him to inspire him with joy. In this he speaks a truth everywhere taught by inspired men, and confirmed by the experience of the godly in all ages. Goodness is blessedness.

The other point we have in these verses, illustrating the principle that moral character determines a man's destiny, is—

II. The real condition of the WICKED. What is the true moral state of the ungodly? It is here given negatively and positively. Notice—

First: *The negative form*. “*Neither will He help the evil doers.*” They need help, they are involved in difficulties, and exposed to dangers. But He will not help them.

Deeper and deeper they shall sink, and no Divine hand will be outstretched to deliver. "Ephraim is joined to idols, let him alone." If God let us alone, we are damned. Notice—

Secondly: *The positive form.* "They that hate thee shall be clothed with shame, and the dwelling place of the wicked shall come to nought." The wicked here ever hateth the godly, but the time comes when they shall be abashed and confounded on account of their enmity; yes, and when their habitations shall be utterly destroyed. They have frequently here grand "*dwelling-places,*" mansions, and palaces as their homes, but all are temporary. They "*shall come to nought.*"

This Bildad, though he was not inspired, and mistook Job's character, got hold of an eternal principle here: the principle that moral character determines man's destiny. As a man "thinketh in his heart, so is he." "Whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap."

"Whate'er man's destiny may be,
His mind is charged accordingly;
With it his heart in union blends,
And thus come God's appointed ends."

HOMILY No. XXII.

JOB'S REPLY TO BILDAD.

(1.) HIS LANGUAGE ABOUT THE ETERNAL. (a) WHAT HE IS IN HIMSELF.

"Then Job answered and said," &c.—CHAP. ix. 1-4.

EXEGETICAL REMARKS. — This chapter, and the succeeding one, constitute Job's answer to the address of Bildad; who charged him with being a hypocrite, and assumed that he was, on the whole, a wicked man. Though the patriarch in his reply protests against the uncommon sinfulness with which he was charged, he is far

enough from claiming for himself absolute perfection; whilst he is conscious that he is not absolutely holy, he is also conscious that he is not the sinner that his friends made him out to be.

Ver. 1, 2.—"*Then Job answered and said, I know it is so of a truth.*" "Yea, indeed, I know it is thus." To what does he here refer? To

the last speech of Bildad, but especially to the former one of Eliphaz. (See chapter iv. 17, &c.) "*But how should man be just with God?*" "*With*" in the margin is rendered "before." How can I appear just in the presence of One so absolutely pure and good? Innocent as he was of the charges they brought against him, he felt that in the presence of absolute holiness he could not stand, and would be condemned.

Ver. 3.—"If he will contend with Him, he cannot answer Him one of a thousand." The language here is taken from a court of justice, and means that if a trial were instituted where God should submit charges, and the matter were left to adju-

dication, man would not be able to answer the charges. A thousand stands for the largest multitude. No sinner in the universe can offer a defence for one of the most venial of his offences.

Ver. 4.—"He is wise in heart, and mighty in strength: who hath hardened himself against Him, and hath prospered?" Who can doubt this utterance? What the patriarch probably means is, that the God against whom sin has been committed, is so intelligent that He cannot be deceived by any sophistry in attempting either to disprove or extenuate offences; and so strong also that He cannot be resisted in carrying out retribution.

HOMILETICS.—The whole reply of Job we shall divide into two great sections:—Firstly, His language *about* the Eternal; and, Secondly, His language *to* the Eternal. In relation to the first, three things are to be noticed. (1) His idea of what God is in Himself. (2) His idea of what God does in nature. (3) His idea of what God appears to man.

The subject of the verses before us is, *the patriarch's idea of what God is in Himself.*

I. He regarded Him as JUST. "*I know it is so of a truth: but how should man be just with God?*" His language implies the belief that God was so just, that He required man to be just in His sight. The Eternal is essentially and absolutely just. *Reason* asserts this. He can have no motive to injustice, no outward circumstance to tempt Him to wrong. *Conscience* affirms this. Deep in the centre of our moral being, is the conviction that the Creator is just. Did we feel He was unjust in Himself, or in His demands, there would be no remorse for sins. The *Bible* declares this. It says, "just and right is He,"—"the righteous Lord loveth righteousness,"—"Thy righteousness is like a great mountain,"—"Justice and judgment are the habitation of Thy throne,"—"There is no unright-

eousness in Him,"—"Thy righteousness is an everlasting righteousness."

Job might well ask, How can man be just before Him? He says, not by setting up a defence, and pleading with Him; "*If he will contend with Him, he cannot answer Him one of a thousand.*" What can a sinner plead before Him? (1) Can he deny the *fact* of his sinfulness? (2) Can he prove that he sinned from a *necessity* of his nature? (3) Can he satisfactorily make out that, although he has sinned, sin has been an *exception* in his life, and that the whole term of his existence has been good, and of service to the universe? Nothing in this way can he do; no pleading will answer. He must become just before he can appear just before God. No man before Him can appear to be what he is not. There is only one way that we know of, by which an unjust man can become just, and that is by faith in the Son of God.

II. He regarded Him as WISE. "*He is wise in heart.*" Who doubts the wisdom of God? The whole system of nature, the arrangements of Providence, and the mediation of Christ, all reveal His "manifold wisdom." He knows all things: "He looketh to the ends of the earth, and seeth under the whole heaven." "Hell is naked before Him, and destruction hath no covering." "Known unto God are all His works, from the beginning of the world." He is wise so that (1) You cannot deceive Him by your falsehoods. He knows all about you, sees the inmost depths of your being. (2) You cannot thwart Him by your stratagems. His purposes must stand. "Talk no more so exceedingly proudly, let not arrogancy come out of your mouth, for the Lord is a God of knowledge, and by His actions are weighed."

III. He regarded Him as STRONG. "*Mighty in strength.*" He is the Almighty God. "Thou hast a mighty arm; strong is Thy hand, and high is Thy right-hand." His power is seen in the *creation*, the *sustenance*, and the *government* of the universe. He is strong, the force of all forces, material and mental. The strength of God is (1) *absolute*,

(2) *independent*, (3) *illimitable*, (4) *undecayable*, (5) *always on the side of right and happiness*.

IV. He regarded Him as RETRIBUTIVE. “*Who hath hardened himself against Him, and hath prospered?*” There is a retributive element in the Divine nature, an instinct of justice. Retribution in human governors is policy; it often springs from selfishness, a desire to punish the wrong-doer in order to prevent injury to self, society, or the state. The Eternal fears no injury; no one can harm Him or His universe. He retributes wrong because of His instinctive repugnance to wrong. Hence the wrong-doer cannot succeed. “*Who hath hardened himself against Him, and hath prospered?*” “It is only,” to use the language of another, “by falling in with His arrangements and following His designs, that prosperity is found.” A prosperous voyage is made by falling in with winds and currents, and not in opposing them: prosperous agriculture is carried on by coinciding with the favourable seasons of the year, and taking advantage of the dews, rain, and sunbeams that God sends, and not in opposing them. And the sinner in his course has no more chance of success and prosperity than a man would have who should make it a point or principle of life always to sail against tides, and currents, and head winds; or he who should set at defiance all the laws of husbandry, and plant on a rock or in the dead of winter; or he who should feed himself on poison rather than on nutritious food, and cultivate the nightshade rather than wheat. The great principle is, that if a man desires prosperity, he must fall in with the arrangements of God in His providence and grace: and wisdom is seen in studying these arrangements, and in yielding to them.

Such is the patriarch’s idea of what God is in Himself. And his idea accords with our reason, and the Holy Word. Would that this idea possessed us, fired our hearts, directed our thoughts, and fashioned our lives.

HOMILY No. XXIII.

JOB'S REPLY TO BILDAD.¹

(1.) HIS LANGUAGE ABOUT THE ETERNAL. (b) WHAT HE DOES IN NATURE.

"Which removeth the mountains, and they know not : which overturneth them in His anger." &c.—CHAP. ix. 5-9.

EXEGETICAL REMARKS. *Ver. 5.*—*"Which removeth the mountains."* The allusion here is to some violent convulsions in nature, such as earthquakes and volcanic eruptions. Indeed, in a quiet way, the Eternal is constantly removing the mountains; they wear away. *"And they know not."* A Hebraism, meaning suddenly and unexpectedly. They are hurled from their foundations before any one is aware of it. *"Which overturneth them in his anger."* "Fury is not in me, saith the Lord." He does nothing in wrath, but in great natural convulsions the Almighty appears to man as if he were in the hottest rage.

Ver. 6.—*"Which shaketh the earth out of her place, and the pillars thereof tremble."* This is a poetic, not a scientific, utterance, and it must be taken as representing not the author's cosmological belief, but his poetic imagination. He did not regard the earth as standing on pillars: for elsewhere he says, He "hath set the earth upon nothing" (Job xxvi. 7). This view agrees with modern astronomy.

Ver. 7.—*"Which (who) commandeth the sun, and it riseth not."* Some suppose that this is a reference to the Deluge; when the mountains

were removed, the fountains of the great deep were broken up, and the sun was darkened in the heavens. Others suppose it refers to solar eclipses, whilst others again, with greater probability, regard Job as expressing the idea, that the rising and sinking of the sun are absolutely at God's disposal. *"And sealeth up the stars."* He hides them from our view by dark, intercepting clouds. He folds them at times in black thunder clouds.

Ver. 8.—*"Which (who) alone spreadeth out the heavens."* Isaiah says, "He stretcheth out the heavens as a curtain, and spreadeth them out as a tent to dwell in." *"And treadeth upon the waves of the sea."* For "waves," the margin has "heights." "He treadeth upon the high ways of the sea."—*Dr. Bernard.* "Thy way is in the sea, and Thy path in great waters."

Ver. 9.—*"Which maketh Arcturus."* This is that splendid constellation in the northern hemisphere, which we call the "Great Bear." It is so conspicuous that it has been an object of interest in all ages, and has been one of the group of stars most attentively observed by navigators as a guide in sailing. "Orion" is a constellation which the ancients were accustomed to

identify with storms. The reason of this was, that its rising usually occurred at those seasons of the year when storms arose. It is situated on the equator, midway between the two poles, and rises about the 23rd of January. By aid of the telescope, about 2000 stars have been seen in this constellation. "*Pleiades*." This is a small cluster of stars in the neck of the constellation

Taurus, in which seven are visible. The Romans called these stars *Ver-giliv*, because they arose in the spring of the year. "*And the chambers of the south*." The exact meaning of this is not known; the reference is probably to those southern regions of the heavens, which are hidden from the inhabitants of the northern hemisphere.

HOMILETICS.—In these verses Job's language about the Eternal leads us to consider his idea of what God is in nature. Here we have the Almighty represented in grand metaphorical language as operating on the earth, on the ocean, and in the heavens, and the words lead us to make two remarks on God's agency in material nature.

I. Its Almightyness is OVERWHELMINGLY GRAND in its manifestations. "*Removeth the mountains*," &c. The whole passage impresses one with the unbounded energy of God. The largest mountain is but an atom in His hand. "He taketh up the isles as a very little thing." He "*shaketh the earth*;" the solid globe quivers at His breath. He "*commandeth the sun, and it riseth not*." The solar orb, a million times larger than the earth, He moves at His pleasure. He "*sealeth up the stars*." He folds them up in His clouds. He "*spreadeth out the heavens*." How wide are the heavens! Wider than an angel's imagination can reach. His arm stretched them out. He "*treadeth upon the waves of the sea*." The mountain billows are under Him as dust beneath the foot of a giant. How Almighty is God in nature! "He looketh on the earth and it trembleth; He toucheth the hills and they smoke." The mountains quake at Him, the hills melt, and the earth is burned at His presence. He "*maketh Arcturus, Orion, and Pleiades*." Those untold million orbs He rounded with His hand, brightened with His glory, made and manages with His Almightyness.

First: His Almightyness should impress *all with a sense of their utter insignificance*. What is the microscopical insect to us? Infinitely greater than we are to God. We

talk of great kingdoms, mighty navies, and invincible armies. "Behold, the nations are as a drop of a bucket, and are counted as the small dust of the balance." Humble yourselves to the mighty hand of God.

Secondly: His Almightyness should impress the *sinner with his impious hardihood*. What is sin but opposition to the Almighty? Every sinner every day is battling with Omnipotence. How monstrous the folly! How alarming the wickedness! It is infinite mercy that prevents an irremediable destruction. "The Lord is not slack concerning His promise, as some men count slackness," &c.

Thirdly: His Almightyness should impress *the good with their privileges*. Almightyness is with the good. It is their shield and support. "He giveth power to the faint, and to them that have no might, He increaseth strength." "The Lord of Hosts is with us, the God of Jacob is our Refuge." Another remark the passage leads us to make concerning God's agency in material nature is—

II. ITS ALMIGHTINESS IS CO-EXTENSIVE WITH THE UNIVERSE. Job here touches every part of material nature,—the earth, the sea, the heavens,—and sees God working in all.

First: His universal agency explains all *material phenomena*. Nothing appears more unphilosophic to me than the science of those men who ascribe all the phenomena of nature to certain things they call laws. They talk of electricity, attraction, repulsion, and such things, as the causative forces of nature. True philosophy requires that you should trace effects to *adequate* causes, and the only adequate cause that I can see for all the operations of nature is Omnipotence. This is the philosophy of the Bible. Whence comes the wind? "He commandeth, and raiseth the stormy wind, which lifteth up the waves thereof." Whence comes the calm? "He maketh the storm a calm, so that the waves thereof are still." Whence comes the earthquake? "He looketh on the earth, and it trembleth; He toucheth the hills, and they smoke." Whence come the changes in the heavenly bodies? "He appointed the moon for seasons, the sun knoweth his going down." Who controls the mighty world of waters? "At Thy rebuke

they fled, at the voice of Thy thunder they hasted away. They go up by the mountains, they go down by the valleys unto the place which Thou hast founded for them. Thou hast set a bound that they may not pass over; that they turn not again to cover the earth." Whence comes vegetation? "He causeth the grass to grow for the cattle, and herb for the service of man." Whence cometh spring? "Thou renewest the face of the earth."

Secondly: His universal agency *binds men practically to recognize Him in every part of nature.* The world is full of God. He is in all and through all. He is the Force of all forces, the Pulse of all life, the Spirit of all forms. Let us tread the earth reverentially as the sacred dwelling-place of the Holy One, and see and worship Him in all.

"The Lord our God is clothed with might,
The winds obey His will;
He speaks, and in his heavenly height
The rolling sun stands still.

Rebel, ye waves, and o'er the land
With threatening aspect roar;
The Lord uplifts His awful hand,
And chains you to the shore.

Ye winds of night, your force combine;
Without His high behest,
Ye shall not in the mountain pine
Disturb the sparrow's nest.

His voice sublime is heard afar,
In distant peals it dies,
He yokes the whirlwind to His car,
And sweeps the howling skies.

Ye nations, bend—in reverence bend;
Ye monarchs, wait His nod,
And bid the choral song ascend
To celebrate your God."—*H. K. White.*

HOMILY No. XXIV.

JOB'S REPLY TO BILDAD.

(1.) HIS LANGUAGE ABOUT THE ETERNAL. (c) HIS APPEARANCE TO MAN.

"Which doeth great things past finding out; yea, and wonders without number." &c.—CHAP. ix. 10-24.

EXEGETICAL REMARKS. *Ver. 10.*—*"Which doeth great things past finding out; yea, and wonders without number."* "Surpassing search."—*Lee.* A similar sentiment to this had been expressed by Eliphaz; the idea embodied had, perhaps, become a well-known proverb in the East.

Ver. 11.—"Lo, He goeth by me, and I see Him not: He passeth on also, but I perceive Him not." The meaning is, He is near me in all the operations of nature and the events of life, but I fail to catch a glimpse of His being. I see the works, but not the Worker: the effects, but not the Cause.

Ver. 12.—"Behold, He taketh away, who can hinder Him? who will say unto Him, What doest Thou?" "When He taketh away, who shall turn Him back?"—*Lee.* A similar expression to the last clause, "What doest thou?" is found in Dan. iv. 35.

Ver. 13.—"If God will not withdraw His anger, the proud helpers ("helpers of pride," margin) do stoop under Him." "God does not withdraw His anger. The helpers of Rahab bowed under Him." Rahab, a sea-monster, referring to a constellation in the heavens. In the mythological legend God is represented as subduing a

rebellious sea-monster, and fastening it on the sky."—*Dr. S. Davidson.*

Ver. 14.—"How much less shall I answer Him, and choose out my words to reason with Him?" "How then should I reply to Him, choose out my words to argue with Him?"—*Professor Davidson.* If God is so great as this, having all the objects and forces of the material universe under His control, how shall so frail a creature as I select words suitable for addressing Him?

Ver. 15.—"Whom, though I were righteous, yet would I not answer, but I would make supplication to my Judge." "The meaning is, that God is a much better Judge of our character than we can possibly be, and that He regarding us as sinners, is the highest proof that we are such, whatever may be our view to the contrary."—*Barnes.*

Ver. 16.—"If I had called, and He had answered me; yet would I not believe that He had hearkened unto my voice." *Dr. Bernard* supposes Job here regards the Almighty as a capricious tyrant, inflicting sufferings upon His creatures without a cause, and that consequently if he prayed and relief came, he could not suppose his voice had been hearkened to. We cannot accept this idea. "The

meaning is, I could not believe, through fear, that he really responds to my cry, and is ready to come."—*Dr. S. Davidson.*

Ver. 17, 18.—"For He breaketh me with a tempest, and multiplieth my wounds without cause. He will not suffer me to take my breath, but filleth me with bitterness." The idea of the patriarch here seems to be, that the Almighty does not act towards him as a judge, determining his case by the settled rules of law, but rather as an arbitrary sovereign, acting entirely by the promptings of His own nature.

Ver. 19, 20.—"If I speak of strength, lo, He is strong: and if of judgment, who shall set me a time to plead? If I justify myself, mine own mouth shall condemn me: if I say, I am perfect, it shall also prove me perverse." "If it is a question of the strength of the strong, 'Behold here;' and if of right, 'Who will challenge me?' Were I in the right, my mouth must condemn me: were I innocent, He would declare me guilty."—*Delitzsch.* The meaning is, there is no equality between us. Should I appeal to strength, lo, He is mighty; to justice, I should condemn myself. The very assertion of my perfection would be a proof of my perverseness. The language shows clearly that, although Job could not acknowledge that he was so bad as his friends implied, he was far enough from regarding himself as perfect before his Maker. In truth, his language in the original seems to express a strong indignation at the idea of his asserting his own perfection before God.

Ver. 21, 22.—"Though I were perfect, yet would I not know my soul: I would despise my life. This is one thing, therefore I said it, He destroyeth the perfect and the

wicked." "I am innocent! I am indifferent about myself, despise my own life"—*i. e.* I declare this truth boldly, even to the despising of myself, and the renunciation of my life. *Ver. 22.*—It is much the same, all one whether I live or not, therefore I say," &c.—*Dr. S. Davidson.*

Ver. 23.—"If the scourge slay suddenly, He will laugh at the trial of the innocent." "This is a poetic expression, and cannot mean that God derides the trials of the innocent or mocks their suffering. It means that He seems to be inattentive to them. He suffers the righteous and the wicked to be swept away together, as if He were regardless of character."—*Burnes.*

Ver. 24.—"The earth is given into the hand of the wicked." These words are uttered as an illustration of the sentiment that there is no equal distribution of rewards and punishments in this life; that the Eternal does not treat men on the ground of their character and conduct here. "The earth is given into the hand of the wicked." "Of the truth of this," says a modern expositor, "there can be no doubt. Rulers have been in general eminent for wickedness, and the affairs of nations have thus far been almost always under the control of those who are strangers to God. At the present time there is scarcely a pious man on any throne in the world, and the rulers of Christian nations are in general eminent for anything rather than personal religion." "He covereth the faces of the judges thereof." This may mean that God so blinds the eyes of those who rule the world that they know not what justice is, or it may mean that men of real justice are kept in the background concealed. "If not, where, and who is He?" If this is not a just view of God, what is?

HOMILETICS.—The subject of the verses before us is the patriarch's idea of what God appears to mankind, and here he seems to regard Him as inscrutable, resistless, and inexorable. He regarded the Eternal—

I. AS INSCRUTABLE.

First: He is inscrutable in His *works*. “*Which doeth great things past finding out.*” How great are His works!—great in their *nature, minuteness, magnitude, variety, and number*. Ask the chemist, the astronomer, the entomologist, the physiologist, and the anatomist; and the more accurate and comprehensive their knowledge of the Divine workmanship is, the more ready will they be to acknowledge that His works are “*past finding out,*” and without number. Every blade of grass, every insect life, contain inscrutable mysteries.

Secondly: He is inscrutable in His *essence*. “*He goeth by me, and I see Him not: He passeth on also, but I perceive Him not.*” I know that He is moving about me in the majestic revolutions of the heavenly bodies, in the processes of vegetable and animal life, and in the events of human history: but I cannot catch a glance at *Him*. I see His works, but I cannot detect the essence of the Worker. I hear the rustlings of His movements, and the sounds of His voice, but Himself I cannot see. The Eternal is essentially invisible. “*Whom no man hath seen, nor can see.*” Albeit, He is very near to every person, and every thing, and very active all about. He regarded the Eternal—

II. AS IRRESPONSIBLE.

“*Behold, He taketh away, who can hinder Him? who will say unto Him, What doest Thou?*” All the inhabitants of the earth are reputed as nothing, and He doeth according to His will in the “*army of heaven,*” and among the inhabitants of the earth, and none can stay His hand, and say unto Him, “*What doest Thou?*” He is the only irresponsible Being in the universe. All other intelligent beings are accountable for their deeds, accountable to those in rightful authority over them, and all of them are accountable to Him. But He is not; there is no authority

above Him, nor equal to Him. His will is the absolute law. He could destroy worlds, and there is no one to call Him to account. He could damn the innocent, and there is no one who has a right to find fault. He could set fire to the universe and burn it to ashes, and who could hinder Him or dare protest? Looking upon His absolute irresponsibility in connection with the universe as it is, how infinitely striking does His goodness appear! Men who are responsible to others are often bound to do that which is contrary to their inclinations; contrary to their natures; but where there is utter irresponsibility the doings of a Being are evermore the faithful representations of Himself.

He regarded the Eternal—

III. AS RESISTLESS. “*If God will not withdraw His anger, the proud helpers do stoop under Him.*” (1) God is an *offendable* Being. He is not an impassive existent, sitting at the head of the universe, utterly indifferent to the moral character of His creatures. He can be pleased, and He can be angered.

(2) The proud have *helpers* and abettors. The corrupt millions are ever ready to stand by and support men in power, however haughty and arrogant; but when God determines their destruction, where are they? “*The proud helpers do stoop under Him.*” Who knows the power of God’s anger? Those who think they have strength enough to help others will not be able to help themselves when the Almighty appears in judgment. Were the whole universe to arm itself against Him, its opposition would be infinitely less than the opposition of the smallest insect to the eagle or the lion.

He regarded the Eternal—

IV. AS INEXORABLE. The patriarch represents the Almighty—

First: *As uninfluenced by man.*

(1) Uninfluenced by his *appeals*. (a) The appeal of vindication has no power with Him. “*How much less shall I answer Him, and choose out my words to reason with Him? whom, though I were righteous, yet would I not answer.*” Let

the most virtuous and the most useful being in the universe plead all his merits before his Maker, and what influence would all his pleadings have? (b) The appeal of prayer has no power with Him. “*But I would make supplication to my Judge. If I had called, and He had answered me; yet would I not believe that He had hearkened unto my voice.*” From this it seems the patriarch had lost all faith in the power of prayer; so unbelieving had he become on this subject that he declares that if an answer had come to his petitions he would not believe that they came because the Almighty had “*hearkened*” to his “*voice.*” A most melancholy mental mood is this! The patriarch represents the Almighty—

(2) As uninfluenced by his *sufferings*. “*For He breaketh me with a tempest, and multiplieth my wounds without cause. He will not suffer me to take my breath, but filleth me with bitterness.*” Not only does He see my anguish without compassion, but He is the Author of it. He brings it upon me like a “*tempest,*” and that too “*without cause.*” When one sees the enormous sufferings of mankind brought on them by famine, pestilence, bloody war, there often starts in the mind an idea that Job here expresses, viz., that God is utterly regardless of human suffering.

The Almighty is here represented—

Secondly: As *unapproached by human argument*. “*If I speak of strength, lo, He is strong: and if of judgment, who shall set me a time to plead?*” “He has no capacity,” says an old expositor, “to make his part good with God.” (1) Not by force of arms. “I dare not enter the lists with the Almighty, for if I speak of strength, and think to come off by that, lo, He is strong, stronger than I, and will certainly overpower me.” “There is no disputing” said one once to Cæsar, “with him that commands legions:” much less is there any with Him that has legions of angels at command. “Can thy heart endure (thy courage or presence of mind), or can thy hands be strong to defend thyself in the days that I shall deal with thee?” (Ezekiel xxii. 14). (2) Not by force of arguments. “I dare not try the merits of the cause. If I speak of judgment, and insist upon my right, who will set me a time to plead? There is no higher power to which

I may appeal, no superior court to appoint a hearing of the cause, for He is supreme, and from Him proceeds every man's judgment which he must abide by." The Almighty is here represented—

Thirdly:—As *too holy to encourage any one to have confidence in his own virtues.* "If I justify myself, mine own mouth shall condemn me: if I say, I am perfect, it shall also prove me perverse. Though I were perfect, yet would I not know my soul: I would despise my life." Were the patriarch even a "perfect" man, he feels that to plead his virtues before a God so holy would not only be utterly useless, but impious and pernicious. (1) It would involve self-condemnation. "*Mine own mouth shall condemn me: it shall also prove me perverse.*" No condemnation is so terrible as the condemnation of a man's moral self. (2) It would prove self-ignorance. "*Yet would I not know my soul.*" Truly, a man who would dare to prove his merits before God, would demonstrate thereby an utter ignorance of his own insignificance and moral character. Self-ignorance is the worst and the most criminal of all ignorances. (3) It would secure self-contempt. "*I would despise my life.*" This would be the issue of such conduct. Self-contempt is self-torture. The Almighty is here represented—

Fourthly: As *utterly regardless of the moral distinctions of society.* "*This is one thing, therefore I said it, He destroyeth the perfect and the wicked,*" &c. (vers. 22-24). Here Job hits the main point now in discussion between him and his friends. Their position was, that God dealt with men here according to their moral characters, and that Job suffered because he was wicked. The patriarch again refutes it, and asserts the broad fact that the perfect and wicked are treated alike. "*This is one thing, therefore I said it.*" The one point we have been discussing before: the one thing I have said before—God destroys the perfect and the wicked. "*If the scourge slay suddenly, He will laugh at the trial of the innocent. The earth is given into the hand of the wicked: He covereth the faces of the judges thereof; if not, where, and who is He?*" Great sufferings here do not prove great guilt, nor does great prosperity prove great virtue. This is not the scene of retribution. It is the domain of discipline.

“Shrink not from suffering. Each dear blow,
 From which the smitten spirit bleeds,
 Is but a messenger to show
 The renovation which it needs.
 The earthly sculptor smites the rock,
 Loud the relentless hammer rings,
 And from the rude unshapen block
 At length imprison'd beauty brings.”

HOMILY No. XXV.

JOB'S REPLY TO BILDAD.

(2.) HIS LANGUAGE TO THE ETERNAL.

(a) CONCERNING THE FLEETNESS OF LIFE.

“*Now my days are swifter than a post: they flee away, they see no good.*” &c.—CHAP. ix. 25, 26.

EXEGETICAL REMARKS. *Ver.* 25. —From this verse to the end of the chapter, Job's language seems to be addressed to the Eternal. He had spoken *about* Him before. “*Now my days are swifter than a post.*” A courier or a runner. In Persia couriers were employed, sometimes on foot, sometimes on dromedaries, to carry the royal mandates to distant provinces. Dromedaries are more fleet than the fleetest horses; it is said they have been known to run 150 miles in twenty-four hours. It is also said that an Arab on foot can keep up with a horse in full gallop. “*They flee away, they see no good.*” I have no happiness, my life is misery.

Ver. 26. — “*They are passed*

away as the swift ships.” Margin, “ships of desire” or “ships of Ebeh.” Literally, “skiffs of reed,” made of the papyrus of the Nile.—*Dr. S. Davidson.* “The supposition of an allusion to any boat or vessel under full sail, will be in accordance with the language here, though the probability is that the reference is to the light vessels, made of reeds, that might be propelled with so much fleetness. Sails were frequently used also for such vessels.” Ships longing for their destined port, and crowding all their sail to reach it. “*As the eagle that hasteth to the prey*” (*dasheth*). Whilst this bird is always swift in flight, it is never so fleet as when it pursues its prey.

HOMILETICS.—The subject of these words is a very trite one, often referred to in every man's life, frequently preached upon by every preacher of every age and land. It wails through all history, it beats out its dolorous notes through every part of Divine revelation. Amongst the many figures

which inspired penmen have selected to express the idea of life's fleetness, there are few more significant and telling than those here used by the patriarch of Uz. A "*post*"—not a caravan on the road, travelling two miles an hour—but a dromedary on the gallop, or the fleet-footed Arab on a breathless stretch. "*Swift ships*,"—light vessels, well canvassed, running down the stream before the strong gale. "*The eagle*,"—not merely sailing through the air with its usual velocity, but with quickened speed swooping down upon its victim.

But these figures, strong as they are, fail fully to express the fact. The courier might pause on the road, the swift ship might drop anchor on the way, the rapid eagle in his voracious speed might be turned aside and hover over its prey, but there is no pause in our mortal life; the progress to the grave is unbroken as well as swift. At home, abroad; asleep, awake; in scenes of business and of pleasure, life pursues its course, sails down the stream, and never anchors till it strikes the deep, dark, desolate, silent shore. Somewhere I have read of an engine of torture which a heartless despotism, in a certain age and land, invented and employed. It was of the following description:—It was a cell which, at the prisoner's first entrance, presented an air of comfort and ease, but which was so formed that it gradually and slowly contracted its dimensions; it grew smaller and darker every day. When the prisoner first observed it he grew alarmed, and his alarm was intensified as he observed the sides getting closer and closer together. At length it touched him on all hands, proceeded on until it crushed him to death. Not an unsuitable emblem of human life is this. At the outset our sphere spreads out, and presents many charms; light streams upon us from all quarters, and many beauties fascinate and thrill; but gradually the sphere darkens and contracts, narrower and more shadowy it becomes, until we feel pressed down into the deep, dark grave.

Let us look for a moment at the fleetness of life—

I. As a PROPHETIC fact. Can it be that this short life is the end of our existence? that there is nothing for us

beyond? No. The goodness of God, the analogy of nature, the indestructible cravings of the soul for a hereafter, assure us that this life is a mere stage in the career of our being.

First:—We quit this life with *uncrought powers*. The tree as a rule grows on until it exhausts its latent powers, and animals die not (unless they are destroyed) until they are worn out. But man has to quit this life just as some of his powers are beginning to bud, and others without measure undeveloped and unquickened. Wherefore were these powers given? Did our Maker intend this inexhaustible tree to be crushed in the germ? Did he intend that His mental cedars should be cut down and destroyed, while as yet they are mere saplings?

Secondly:—We quit this life with *unfulfilled plans*. We form plans, all of us; some larger than others: still, in them we live. The real life of the man is in his grand purpose; but who fulfils his purposes in this life? None. Every man leaves his work unfinished. Truly, the fleetness of life is a prophecy of a hereafter. Let us again look at the fleetness of life—

II. As a TERRIFIC fact. To whom is it terrible? To all whose hearts are centred in this world. Men who live *in* this world and *for* it may well stand aghast as they think of the speed with which they are being borne away into the vast and boundless. All they hold most precious and love most ardently they are going from every moment. They cannot continue in their mansions, they cannot stay in their divans of pleasure, they cannot maintain their grasp on their wealth, from it they are going more swiftly than courier, “*ship*,” or “*eagle*.” They should remember two things:—

First:—That their *wealth* relatively becomes *less valuable* to them every day. What if a man could say at the end of a year, I have £10,000 more than I had last year, he would still be, even in a worldly sense, a poorer man. His interest in it is considerably diminished, and his time for enjoying it is shorter; he is leaving it every hour, and as he leaves it the sovereigns become shillings, the shillings pence, and the pence in the last stage become worthless mites.

Secondly :—That *eternity* becomes relatively *more awful* to them every day. The longer they live in the world a life of worldliness and sin, the more guilt they contract ; and the greater their guilt, the more tumultuous and torturing their eternity. Oh, ye worldlings, bethink yourselves ! Let the speed with which you are hurrying down to the sunless, shoreless gulf startle you into spiritual thoughtfulness. Let us again look at the fleetness of life—

III. As a CHEERING fact.. To whom is it cheering ? To those who, though they are *in* the world are not *of* the world, those who are born into the Divine Kingdom of Christly virtues and imperishable hopes. Such, as they move on, leave the cloudy for the sunny, the stormy for the calm, the discordant for the harmonious, the hideous for the beautiful, the revolting for the lovely and attractive.

CONCLUSION. — Whither are we hastening ? As to the body, we know, all to the grave, “the house appointed for all living,”—but whither as to the *soul* ? Fifty winters hence, and where shall we be ? We shall be somewhere, consciously and actively, but where ?

“Eternity’s vast ocean lies before thee
 Give thy mind sea-room ; keep it wide of earth,
 That rock of souls immortal ; cut thy cord ;
 Weigh anchor ; spread thy sails ; call every wind ;
 Eye the great Pole-star ; make the land of life.”—*Young*.

HOMILY No. XXVI.

JOB'S REPLY TO BILDAD.

(2.) HIS LANGUAGE TO THE ETERNAL. (b) CONCERNING HIS SUFFERINGS.

"If I say, I will forget my complaint, I will leave off my heaviness, and comfort myself:" &c.—CHAP. ix. 27-35.

EXEGETICAL REMARKS. Ver. 27.—*"If I say, I will forget my complaint, I will leave off my heaviness, and comfort myself."* In this verse Job expresses the idea that so great were his sufferings that any effort of his mind to assuage them would be utterly futile. He could not reason them away. He could not in any revelry forget them. He could not get into any circle of thought that would make him cheerful under them, so bitter and crushing were they.

Ver. 28.—*"I am afraid of all my sorrows, I know that Thou wilt not hold me innocent."* The idea here seems to be—I so dread the continuation of my sufferings because they furnish my friends with the evidence they want in order to prove that I am a guilty man.

Ver. 29.—*"If I be wicked, why then labour I in vain?"* The word *if*, perhaps, has no right here—it obscures the sense. He means to say, I am wicked, and therefore I should labour in vain to deny it.

Ver. 30.—*"If I wash myself with snow water."* The pure whiteness of snow would at first suggest that its water was the most pure, and would therefore be best for cleansing. *"And make my hands never so clean."* "Make my hands clean with lye."—*Delitzsch*. Washing the hands was an old symbol of

moral cleansing. Pilate, in open court, did so. What the patriarch means, perhaps, by the expression is, that whatever effort he made towards cleansing himself, he would be still regarded by his friends as corrupt.

Ver. 31.—*"Yet shalt Thou plunge me in the ditch, and mine own clothes shall abhor me."* The idea evidently is, Whatever I may do to cleanse my spirit, and to improve my character, God is so infinitely holy that He would so overwhelm me with a consciousness of my guilt, that my very clothes would make me an abhorrence.

Ver. 32.—*"For He is not a man, as I am, that I should answer Him, and we should come together in judgment."* "For He is not a man, as I, that I should answer Him, that we should go together to judgment."—*Delitzsch*. An extension of the idea in the preceding verse, which is, that the infinite superiority of God rendered all attempts at vindication utterly vain.

Ver. 33.—*"Neither is there any daysman betwixt us."* "There is no umpire between us who would lay his hand upon us both."—*Bernard*. He had no idea of a third person who would act as arbitrator between him and his Maker. God was absolute, and there was no appeal beyond Him. *"That might lay his*

hand upon us both." It is not improbable that this may refer to some ancient ceremony in courts where, for some cause, the umpire, or arbitrator, laid his hands on both the parties; to show that it was his office to restrain them within proper limits, to check any improper expressions, and to see that the argument was fairly conducted on both sides. The meaning of the whole here is, that if there were such an umpire, Job would be willing to argue the cause. As it was, it was a hopeless thing, and he could do nothing more than to be silent.

Ver. 34.—*"Let Him take His rod away from me, and let not His fear terrify me."* "Oh, that he would take away His rod from me, and

the dread of Him no more affright me."—*Lee.*

Ver. 35.—*"Then would I speak, and not fear Him."* Were I freed from this terrible affliction I should lose this awful dread of my God, and speak to Him with filial confidence. *"But it is not so with me."* Marg.: "I am not so with myself." There are various interpretations of this short utterance. Some say it means, I am not so as you suppose me to be; you take me to be a guilty man, but I am innocent. Albeit, I am held to be guilty by the Most High, and treated accordingly, but I am not so. "For it is not thus I am with myself," *i. e.* "there is no reason in myself why I should fear Him."—*Dr. S. Davidson.*

HOMILETICS.—In Job's address to the Eternal there are two subjects of thought: the fleetness of life, and the greatness of his sufferings. The former subject was discussed in the last article.

His *sufferings* are now the subject. As he speaks in various parts of the book very frequently and largely on his sufferings, and often utters the same ideas in almost the same phraseology, it is expedient to pass over this statement in a brief and sketchy way. In these verses he seemed to regard his sufferings in two aspects:—

I. AS TOO GREAT TO RENDER ANY EFFORTS OF SELF-CONSOLATION EFFECTIVE. *"If I say, I will forget my complaint, I will leave off my heaviness, and comfort myself: I am afraid of all my sorrows, I know that Thou wilt not hold me innocent."* There are three things suggested by these words—

First: *A valuable power of mind.* What is the power? The power to alleviate sufferings. *"If I say, I will forget my complaint."* Herein is the implied power. Job knew he had it. All have it. It is a remedial force that kind Heaven has put within us. The suffering man, by the

power of his mind, can mitigate his anguish, if not remove it. If he cannot quench the flame, he can cool it; if he cannot roll off the load, he by his own thoughts can make it comparatively light. He can go into a circle of ideas so engrossing and delectable as to experience transports of rapture in the dungeon or in the flames. What is pain but a mental sensation? And wherever that mental sensation may burn, its fires can be quenched in the river of noble thoughts and lofty aspirations.

Secondly: *A natural tendency of mind.* What is it? The exertion of this mitigating power within us under suffering; an effort to “forget” the “complaint,” to “leave off” the “heaviness,” to “comfort.” Who under suffering does not assay this? Though most men make wrong mental efforts to alleviate their sufferings, most make some kind of effort. They have recourse to novels, and social gaieties, if not to Bibles, temples, and holy fellowships. Everywhere the sufferers are endeavouring to bury their afflictions in mental forgetfulness.

Thirdly: *A sad defect in mind.* “I am afraid of all my sorrows, I know that Thou wilt not hold me innocent.” Why did his mental efforts at self-consolation fail? Simply because he had not the inner sense of innocence. He was too conscious that all his anguish was deserved. Though he always maintained that he was innocent of the sin of *hypocrisy* with which his friends charged him, he felt that before the Holy he was guilty, and herein was the failure of his mind to mitigate his pain. “The spirit of a man will sustain his infirmity, but a wounded spirit who can bear?” Though a man’s thought, if he is conscious of innocence, can take the prisoner abroad in the open universe, the pauper into the paradise of God, the martyr in agony into the felicity of heaven—yet if he is conscious of guilt his very thoughts will become fiends to torment him.

“Severe decrees may keep our tongues in awe,
But to our thoughts what edict can give law?
Even you yourself to your own breast shall tell
Your crimes, and your own conscience be your hell.”—*Dryden.*

He regarded his sufferings—

II. AS TOO DESERVED TO JUSTIFY ANY HOPE OF RELIEF.

First: He felt that *no self-cleansing would serve him before God*. “*If I be wicked (or, as some render it, I am wicked,) why then labour I in vain? If I wash myself with snow water, and make my hands never so clean; yet shalt Thou plunge me in the ditch, and mine own clothes shall abhor me.*” Do what we will, in the sight of Infinite Purity we are filthy. He charged His angels “with folly.” The holiest man on earth feels guilty in the presence of Him Who is Light and in Whom there is no “darkness at all.”

Secondly: He felt that *there was no one to act as umpire between him and his Maker*. If he went directly to Him, his spirit would be scorched with the rays of His purity. Yet there is no help, no third person, no one to arbitrate. “*Neither is there any daysman betwixt us, that might lay his hand upon us both.*” There is no authority beyond Him, no authority equal to Him, His judgment is final. Thank God we have a Mediator Who answers the purpose—One Whose work is not to reconcile God to us, but us to God. He lays His hand upon us both, grasps the eternal, the immutable Rock with one hand and drowning souls with the other, and brings them into the clefts of His loving heart.

Thirdly: He felt that *his afflictions were directly from God, and until they were removed there was no hope for him*. “*Let Him take His rod away from me, and let not His fear terrify me: then would I speak, and not fear Him; but it is not so with me.*” We are prone to ascribe our afflictions to a variety of secondary causes, but the patriarch felt that all his calamities came directly from his Maker—they were His “rod.”

CONCLUSION.—What are our trials compared with those that Job endured? And yet do we deserve them less? Nay, can we claim the high moral character which he sustained on the whole? He “feared God” and “eschewed evil,” and was an “upright” man. Let us not murmur or complain. Though our afflictions are light compared with his, and perhaps far more deserved than his, we have a clearer knowledge of a Mediator, a “Daysman,” than he had. Clearly made known to us is One—High as the most

High, and yet bone of our bone and flesh of our flesh—Who sympathizes with us in all our afflictions, succours us in all our sorrows, and makes even our greatest trials subserve our spiritual good. “Afflictions,” says Bacon, “only level the mole-hills of pride, plough the heart, and make it fit for wisdom to sow her seed, and for grace to bring forth her increase.”

“The good are better made by ill,
As odours crushed are sweeter still.”—*Rogers.*

HOMILY No. XXVII.

JOB'S REPLY TO BILDAD.

(2.) HIS LANGUAGE TO THE ETERNAL. (b) CONCERNING HIS SUFFERINGS. (*Continued.*)

“*My soul is weary of my life; I will leave my complaint upon myself; I will speak in the bitterness of my soul.*” &c.—CHAP. X. 1-17.

EXEGETICAL REMARKS. “In the preceding chapter Job had said (vers. 34, 35) that, if God would but remove His wrath from him, he would fearlessly speak out his mind: now he goes further still, and says that, even while still labouring under his afflictions, he will give free course to his words, seeing that if the worst comes to the worst, he can only lose a life which has become a burden to him.”—*Bernard.*

Ver. 1.—“*My soul is weary of my life,*” &c. The idea of the three verses is,—I cannot any longer repress the feeling that my anguish produces within me. I will give myself up to complaint.

Ver. 2.—“*I will say unto God, Do not condemn me; show me wherefore Thou contendest with me.*”

“I will say to Eloah, condemn me not: let me know wherefore Thou contendest with me!”—*Delitzsch.* Do not in the exercise of Thy uncontrollable power deal arbitrarily with me; give me Thy reason for thus afflicting me.

Ver. 3.—“*Is it good unto Thee that Thou shouldst oppress?*” Is it agreeable to Thy nature? Does it gratify Thee to afflict me in this way?

Ver. 4-6.—“*Hast Thou eyes of flesh?*” &c. &c. The idea here is,—Dost Thou look upon man with the same desire to detect faults, and punish him, as characterizes man? Art Thou as unkind as the men who torture me with their reasonings?

Ver. 7.—“*Thou knowest that I*

am not wicked; and there is none that can deliver out of Thine hand." By being "not wicked," he does not mean that he was not a sinner before his Maker, but that he was not a hypocrite, as his friends had imagined him to be. "Thou knowest." Marg.: "It is upon Thy knowledge that I am not wicked."

Ver. 8, 9.—"*Thine hands have made me* (Marg.: "took pains about me") *and fashioned me together round about,*" &c. Here is a description of the formation of the human body agreeing well with modern science.

Ver. 10. — "*Hast Thou not poured me out as milk, and curdled me like cheese?*" The whole passage, including the two following verses, is usually considered to furnish an account, no less just than beautiful, of the origin and growth of the human creature. Dr. Goode, who translates, "Didst Thou not mingle me as milk, and consolidate me as cheese?" considers that it refers to milk as the sustaining principle of man's existence. He says, "The whole of the simile is highly correct and beautiful, and has not been neglected by the best poets of Greece and Rome. From the well-tempered or mingled milk of the chyle, every individual atom of every individual organ in the animal frame, the most compact and consolidated as well as the soft and pliable, is perpetually supplied and renewed, through the medium of a system of lacteals or milk-vessels, as they are usually called in anatomy, from the nature of this common chyle or milk which they circulate. Into the delicate stomach of the infant it is usually introduced in the form of milk; but even in the adult it must be reduced to some such form, whatever be the substance he feeds on, by the con-

joint action of the stomach and other chylofactive organs, before it can become the basis of animal nutriment. It then circulates through the system, and either continues fluid, as milk in its simple state, or is rendered solid, as milk in its caseous or cheese state, according to the nature of the organ which it supplies with its vital current."

Ver. 13. — "*And these things hast Thou hid in Thine heart: I know that this is with Thee.*" "This, *i. e.* what follows immediately in the 14th and following verses."—Dr. S. Davidson.

Ver. 14, 15.—"*If I sin, then Thou markest me,*" &c. "The object of these verses is evidently to say that he was wholly perplexed. He did not know how to act. He could not understand the reason of the Divine dealings, and he was wholly unable to explain them, and hence he did not know how to act in a proper manner. It is expressive of a state of mind where the individual wishes to think and feel right, but where he finds so much to perplex him that he does not know what to do."—Burnes.

Ver. 16.—"*For it increaseth. Thou huntest me as a fierce lion,*" &c. "When a lion hunts its prey, the victim, however great its terror, at least sees by whom it is hunted; but when it flies, conscious of being pursued, yet unable to discern its pursuer, then there must be something supernatural at work; in other words, God must be the Huntsman. So reasons our unfortunate victim, Job: I am being hunted, he says, yet I cannot see the huntsman: I know then it must be God Who hunts me: a very marvellous and wonderful feat no doubt, but is it also glorious? Is it befitting His majesty to display

His wonderful power in such a manner?"—*Bernard*.

Ver. 17.—“*Thou renewest Thy witnesses against me, and increasest Thine indignation upon me.*” His multiplying trials he regarded as a succession of witnesses to prove his

guilt. “*Changes and war are against me.*” His idea seems to be that his affliction came upon him in a succession, like soldiers in a battle, when one is worn out and crushed, another battalion appears.

HOMILETICS.—The subject of Job’s appeal to God in these verses is the same as that we noticed in our previous sketch, viz., the greatness of his sufferings. Here he indicates that his sufferings were too overwhelming to check the expression of his complaint. “*My soul is weary of my life; I will leave my complaint upon myself.*” So intolerable had his anguish become, that repression was no longer possible; and in his distress he appeals to the Almighty, and says, “*Show me wherefore Thou contendest with me.*” Why, oh why is it that I am so tortured by the God that made me? In his appeal, extending from the second to the seventeenth verses, he regards his sufferings in four aspects:—

I. AS INCONSISTENT WITH ALL HIS IDEAS OF HIS MAKER.

First: As inconsistent with His *goodness*. “*Is it good unto Thee that Thou shouldest oppress, that Thou shouldest despise the work of Thine hands?*” I thought Thee benevolent and merciful, but in my suffering I feel Thee to be malign. Where is Thy goodness in thus afflicting Thy creatures? There is a strong tendency in all men under suffering to regard the Almighty as anything but good. None but those who feel their afflictions to be most deserved and most disciplinary, can see the hand of a loving Father in their chastisements. To all heaven-born souls afflictions are blessings in disguise.

Secondly: As inconsistent with His *justice*. “*And shine upon the counsel of the wicked.*” Job saw wicked men around him, strong and hale in body, buoyant in animal spirits, and prosperous in worldly affairs, whilst he who was, in his deepest heart, in sympathy with right and the God of right, was reduced to the utmost distress. He failed to see justice in this. What suffering saint in any age or land has not felt the same? It is that enigma in the Divine

government of mankind which awaits eternity to settle. "Wherefore doth the wicked prosper?" Yes, wherefore? This is the problem that stands unsolved through the ages.

Thirdly: As inconsistent with His *greatness*. "*Hast Thou eyes of flesh? or seest Thou as man seeth? Are Thy days as the days of man? are Thy years as man's days?*" Art Thou, like ill-natured and suspicious men, ever anxious to descry defects in others, and pursue them with punishment? And art Thou, like them, in haste to do so because their days are short, and their lives are brief? I cannot reconcile the sufferings with which Thou afflictest an insignificant creature like me with Thine omniscience and eternity. "What is man, that Thou shouldest magnify him, and that Thou shouldest set Thine heart upon him, and that Thou shouldest visit him?" Verily, wonderful it is that He to Whom the universe is as nothing should deign to notice, either in the way of cursing or blessing, a creature so insignificant.

He regards his sufferings—

II. AS AN UNRIGHTEOUS DISPLAY OF ARBITRARY POWER.

"*Thou knowest that I am not wicked; and there is none that can deliver out of Thine hand.*" Job does not mean to imply that he felt himself to be absolutely holy; what he means is, that Omniscience knew he was not guilty of that hypocrisy with which his friends had charged him. He knew he was an "upright man," that "feared God" and "eschewed evil," and his Maker knew it, for He Himself had pronounced him such. Where, then, is the righteousness of his afflictions? He seems to say,—The hand that afflicts me is the ruthless, arbitrary hand of a tyrant, a hand from which "*there is none that can deliver*" me. His idea of God just now was a very terrible one, one that seemed driven into him by his sufferings, and one that must have greatly intensified his anguish. Unhappy man! For a moment he seemed to feel in the hand of God as a dove under the paw of a lion. Blessed be Heaven, this idea is as false as it is terrible. He does not exert His Almighty energy either without reason or with reasons that are malevolent, but evermore does He act from reasons transcendent in wisdom and love.

He regards his sufferings—

III. AS CONTRARY TO WHAT THE DIVINE ORGANIZATION AND PRESERVATION OF HIS EXISTENCE LED HIM TO EXPECT. He ascribes the *formation* of his body to God. "*Thine hands have made me and fashioned me,*" &c. The description, as we have seen, that he here gives of the process by which he was organized accords even with modern physiology. "*Hast Thou not poured me out as milk?*" The physiology of our genesis, nourishment, growth, development, is one of the most interesting and profound of studies. We are "fearfully and wonderfully made." God's hand is seen in all. But not only does Job ascribe the origin and formation of his existence to God, but his *sustentation* as well. "*Thou hast granted me life and favour, and Thy visitation hath preserved my spirit.*" He seemed astonished that the God Who thus produced and supported him should thus mar his beauty, destroy his health, and overwhelm him with misery. Does the sculptor mould the marble into the forms and graces of life in order to break it to pieces? Does the gardener cultivate his flowers that he may trample them in the dust as soon as they unfold their loveliness and emit their fragrance? Does the architect pile up his cathedral in order to pull it to pieces? No. Why, then, does the Almighty, the Maker of our frame, shatter us into ruin by His afflicting dispensations? This is what Job seems to have felt. This is, in truth, a perplexity to us as well as to Job. One might have supposed that He Who formed a creature so exquisite as man, would have guarded its beauty and preserved its existence for ever. Will God reduce His Madonnas to corruption? Antecedently we should have said, no; and we are shocked when we see them prostrated with loathsome diseases, and cold and ghastly in the clutch of death.

He regards his sufferings—

IV. AS BAFFLING ALL HIS ATTEMPTS TO UNDERSTAND. "*And these things hast Thou hid in Thine heart.*" If there is a reason, it is in Thy heart shut up and hid from me, and I cannot reach it. "*If I sin, then Thou markest me,*

and Thou wilt not acquit me from mine iniquity. If I be wicked, woe unto me; and if I be righteous, yet will I not lift up my head. I am full of confusion; therefore see Thou mine affliction." Yes, "full of confusion." The more he thought the more was he embarrassed with the mysteries of his being. This confusion, he intimates, instead of lessening, augmented. "For it increaseth. Thou huntest me as a fierce lion: and again Thou showest Thyself marvellous upon me. Thou renewest Thy witnesses against me, and increasest Thine indignation upon me; changes and war are against me." As his sufferings came upon him as a "fierce lion," destroying not its victim at the first attack, but retreating in order to give another spring, God's conduct became more "marvellous" to him. Every new affliction seemed so many "witnesses" against him, and evidences of Divine "indignation." Thus, he was indeed "full of confusion," baffled at all points, at his wits' end.

CONCLUSION. Learn from this—First: The *greatness of man's capability for sufferings*. To what inexpressible wretchedness and agony was Job now reduced, both in soul and in body. That organization, fitted by Almighty Love to sustain an "eternal weight of glory," is capable of enduring immeasurable anguish. The greatness of man's nature may be read in the greatness of his sufferings as well as in the greatness of his enjoyments. The ocean torn by a tempest shows its grandeur as much as when it smiles serenely in the face of the sun. Learn, Secondly: *The absoluteness of God's power over us*. We are in His hands as "clay in the hands of the potter," and He can do for us whatever seems good in His sight. He can make every nerve and faculty quiver in agony, or thrill with ineffable delight. We are in His hands, all of us. From His grasp none can extricate himself; His will determines the destiny of all. How great is God! Learn, Thirdly: *The value of Christianity as an interpreter of suffering*. Job's great "confusion" in his suffering seemed to arise from the idea that unless a man was a great sinner there was no reason for great suffering. The Gospel doctrine had not beamed on his soul—that afflictions to good men are

disciplinary, not punitive. As vines bear the better for bleeding, and flowers emit a more delicious aroma after having been pelted with the rain, so will the true soul improve by afflictions. A blind man once said to Rev. C. Simeon, "I never saw till I was blind;" by which he meant that his affliction opened the eyes of his soul. An old writer has said, there is "as much difference between the sufferings of the saints and those of the ungodly, as between the cords with which an executioner pinions a condemned malefactor and the bandage with which a surgeon binds up his patient's wounds." As the frosty winds of winter kill pernicious vermin and grubs, so afflictions to the good tend to destroy the depravities of the heart.

"Suffering curbs our wayward passions,
 Childlike tempers in us fashions,
 And our will to His subdues:
 Thus His hand, so soft and healing,
 Each disordered power and feeling
 By a blessed change renews.

"Suffering keeps the thoughts compacted,
 That the soul be not distracted
 By the world's beguiling art;
 'Tis like some angelic warder,
 Ever keeping sacred order
 In the chambers of the heart.

"Suffering tunes the heart's emotion
 To eternity's devotion,
 And awakes a fond desire
 For the land where psalms are ringing,
 And with psalms the martyrs singing
 Sweetly to the harper's choir."—*J. Hartmann.*

HOMILY No. XXVIII.

JOB'S REPLY TO BILDAD.

(2.) HIS LANGUAGE TO THE ETERNAL. (b) CONCERNING HIS SUFFERINGS. (*Continued.*)

"Wherefore then hast Thou brought me forth out of the womb? Oh that I had given up the ghost, and no eye had seen me!" &c.—CHAP. x. 18-22.

EXEGETICAL REMARKS. *Ver. 18.* — *"Wherefore then hast Thou brought me forth out of the womb? Oh that I had given up the ghost, and no eye had seen me!"* Language very similar to this, and identical in spirit, we found in chapter iii. 11, 12.

Ver. 19.—*"I should have been as though I had not been; I should have been carried from the womb to the grave."* How strongly does the patriarch here deplore the fact of his existence!

Ver. 20.—*"Are not my days few? cease then, and let me alone, that I may take comfort a little."* The idea here seems to be, as my life is so short, let not the whole of the brief space be spent in

suffering, let there be a little comfort.

Vers. 21, 22.—*"Before I go whence I shall not return, even to the land of darkness and the shadow of death,"* &c. I have seen no translation that is more true to the original or more forceful than this version. The patriarch struggles after the strongest language to express his impression of the deep darkness prevailing in the underworld. Milton's language is strong, but scarcely so strong as this, "No light, but rather darkness visible." *"Without any order."* Having no arrangements, no distinction of inhabitants, poor and rich, master and slave, king and beggar, all are there equal.

HOMILETICS.—The patriarch had already in the previous verses expressed to the Almighty that his sufferings were too great to render any efforts at self-consolation effective, too deserved to justify any hope of relief, too overwhelming to check the expression of his complaint, and now as too crushing to give to existence anything but an intolerable curse. His sufferings, judging from his language here, had destroyed within him for a time three of the *primary* instincts of the soul—a sense of duty, love of life, and hope of a hereafter.

I. A SENSE OF DUTY. Sense of obligation to the Supreme

is an instinct as universal as man, as deep as life itself; but Job, in wishing that he had never been, or that his first breath had been extinguished, for the moment lost all feeling in relation to the wonderful mercies which his Creator had conferred upon him during the past years of his existence. What were those mercies? (1) *Great material wealth.* So far as wealth was concerned, for years he had been "the greatest of all the men of the East." No doubt this affluent man drew from his worldly possessions many and varied enjoyments. (2) *Great domestic enjoyment.* He had seven sons and three daughters. As in the case of most children, their conduct might at times grieve his heart, and awaken anxieties. But what would such be, compared with the sweet pleasures he would experience from mingling in their little sports, watching the unfoldment of their faculties, receiving their filial devotions, and anticipating for them a bright and prosperous future? (3) *Immense social influence.* He not only obtained vast power over his contemporaries, but a power that awakened within them the deepest sympathies of grateful love and high devotion. When he walked through the city, the young men hid themselves, "the aged arose and stood up; the princes refrained talking, and laid their hand on their mouth; the nobles held their peace, and their tongue cleaved to the roof of their mouth." What high enjoyment must he have derived from breathing in a social atmosphere balmy and sunny with the love of all around him.

Now, in saying to the Almighty, "*Wherefore hast thou brought me forth out of the womb?*" he seems utterly oblivious of all these mercies which heaven had so abundantly showered on his path for so many years. No sense of gratitude stirred within him. It is often thus with man. He forgets a long life of enjoyment in a few days or weeks of suffering, and the song of gratitude is drowned in the roar of discontent. As the old retired mariner thinks and talks more of one shipwreck than of all the propitious years of his happy journeyings on the sea, so man in one brief week of sorrow and suffering ignores all his former years of health and joy. Another instinct which Job's sufferings seemed for a time to have overborne is—

II. A LOVE OF LIFE. "Skin for skin; yea, all that a man hath will he give for his life." Seldom do we find, even amongst the most miserable of men, one who struggles not to perpetuate his existence. "What thinkest thou," said Socrates to Aristodemus, "of this continual love of life, this dread of dissolution which takes possession of us the moment we are conscious of existence?" "I think of it," was the reply, "as the means employed by the same great and wise Artist, deliberately determined to preserve what He has made." But this instinct Job now seems to have lost: if not its entire existence, its power. He desires extinction. Existence has become so intolerable that he wishes he had never had it, and yearns for annihilation. Two thoughts are here suggested. First: *There may be something worse for man than annihilation.* Death is felt the world over to be the king of terrors; the heart of humanity recoils with horror at his presence, and quivers with agony under his dark shadow; still there may be something worse. Man is capable of sinking into a condition of existence here, where he shall hail death as a welcome guest. Secondly: This annihilation *is beyond the reach of creatures.* None but God can absolutely destroy. Has He ever destroyed a man? will He ever do it? Another instinct which Job's sufferings seems to have subdued for a time is—

III. HOPE OF A HEREAFTER. Hope is an instinct of the soul. "Thou didst make me hope when I was upon my mother's breasts." This is an instinct which keeps the soul of the world ever toward a future; nay, which bears it into a hereafter, and gives it a beatified life. Indeed it is one of those powers within us that, like a mainspring, keeps every wheel in action." Man never is, but always to be, blest. We bathe our weary natures in the balmy seas which hope has created. Job seems to have lost this now. Hence his description of the future. "*Before I go whence I shall not return, even to the land of darkness and the shadow of death; a land of darkness, as darkness itself; and of the shadow of death, without any order, and where the light is as darkness.*" He saw a future, but what was it? (1) *Darkness.* A

starless, moonless midnight, a vast immeasurable abyss—
 “*the land of darkness.*” His hereafter was black, not a ray
 of light streamed from the firmament. (2) *Confusion.*
 “*Without any order.*” Small and great, young and old, all
 together in black chaos. From this state of dark confusion
 into which he was going, he felt he should “*not return.*”
 There is no return from the great under-world.

CONCLUSION.—Learn, First: *That great suffering in this world, in the case of individuals, does not mean great sin.* Job’s sufferings were inexpressibly great, yet on the whole he was a “just” man and “upright,” one that “feared God” and “eschewed evil.” Learn, Secondly: *The power of the devil over man.* Whence came all these sufferings? “And the Lord said unto Satan, Behold, he is in thine hand, but save his life.” The devil plays sad havoc with human nature when the Eternal permits him. Behold the “*works of the devil*” in Job, for the moment crushing the strongest instincts of the soul, the sense of duty, the love of life, and the hope of a hereafter! Learn, Thirdly: *The value of the Gospel.* This man had no clear revelation of a blessed future. Hence one scarcely wonders at his frequent and impassioned complaints. How different our life to his! The grave does not bound our horizon, the brighter and the wider regions of life loom beyond.

“A change from woe to joy, from earth to heaven!

Death gives me this: it leads me calmly where

The souls that long ago from mine were riven

May meet again! Death answers many a prayer.

Bright day, shine on, be glad! days brighter far

Are stretched before mine eyes than those of mortals are.”—

Robert Nicoll.

HOMILY No. XXIX.

ZOPHAR'S FIRST SPEECH TO JOB.

(1.) QUESTIONABLE REPROVING AND NECESSARY TEACHING.

"Then answered Zophar the Naamathite, and said," &c.—CHAP. xi. 1-6.

EXEGETICAL REMARKS. *Ver. 1.* — "*Then answered Zophar the Naamathite.*" Zophar now enters the field. He is the last and the least in the controversy. Eliphaz was a man of splendid genius, as well as culture. Bildad was somewhat sage-like and patriotic in spirit, quoting the Ancients. Zophar was a man of a meaner mould, both intellectually and morally meaner. He is the mere retailer of the current thought. He is insolent withal, like all low natures. Even in this chapter he virtually calls Job a wind-bag, "empty pate," a "wild ass's colt."

Ver. 2.—"Should not the multitude of words be answered? and should a man full of talk be justified?" "Shall the torrent of words remain unanswered, and shall the prater be in the right?"—*Delitzsch*. The discourse of Job in the preceding chapters was certainly longer than any of the other speakers, and Zophar here sarcastically refers to its wordiness. Did this man seem to think that silence was golden, and that much talk was worse than worthless, or was it mere insolence?

Ver. 3.—"Should thy lies make men hold their peace? and when thou mockest, shall no man make thee ashamed?" "Shall thy boastings put men to silence, so that thou mockest, none putting thee to shame?"—*Professor Davidson*. The idea seems to be this, Shalt thou be permitted to use all this vaunting

and complaining language, and no one call thee to an account, and so show thee the impropriety of the whole as to make thee ashamed?

Ver. 4.—"For thou hast said, My doctrine is pure, and I am clean in Thine eyes." For "doctrine" some read "conduct," but, as I think, without good authority. When, or where, did Job say that either his doctrines or deeds were pure? This seems, on Zophar's part, a false and groundless charge.

Vers. 5, 6.—"But oh that God would speak, and open His lips against thee; and that He would shew thee the secrets of wisdom, that they are double to that which is! Know therefore that God exacteth of thee less than thine iniquity deserveth." "Oh that Eloah would speak, and open His lips against thee, and make known to thee the secrets of wisdom, that she is twofold in her nature—know then that Eloah forgetteth much of thy guilt."—*Delitzsch*. "That He would show thee the secrets of wisdom; for they far exceed the most perfect knowledge. Thou wouldest then know that God overlooketh many of thy sins."—*Elzas*. "And would proclaim to thee the secrets of wisdom, for wisdom is twofold (human and divine); then wouldest thou know that God remitteth thee part of thy punishment."—*Dr. Bernard*. Zophar here seems to wish that God would show to Job at least two things: (1) The manifoldness of

His wisdom. He speaks of the secrets of wisdom as "double that which is;" that is, manifolded wisdom. (2) The charitableness of God. He exacteth less than we deserve.

HOMILETICS.—Though Zophar was not an inspired man, and though there was a rudeness and an insolence in some of his expressions, yet he stated many things that are true and even sublime, and things too of useful contemplation for men in all ages. Truth is a Divine and highly serviceable element however it may come to us, through stones or stars, through sentient or insentient life, through fiends or seraphs. Let us, therefore, take the truth that this old Arabian presents to us, although we may not have much faith in the accuracy of his judgment or the beauty of his spirit. In the verses heading this article we have two subjects for thought.

I. QUESTIONABLE REPROOF. Reproof is often an urgent duty. It is the hardest act of friendship; for whilst there are but few men who do not at times merit reprehension, there are fewer still who will graciously receive, or even patiently endure, a reproving word. "Considering," as John Foster has it, "how many difficulties a friend has to surmount before he can bring himself to reprove me, I ought to be much obliged to him for his chiding words." The reproof which Zophar addressed to Job suggests two remarks:

First: The charges he brings against Job, if true, *justly deserve reproof*. What does he charge him with? (1) Loquacity. "*Should not the multitude of words be answered? and should a man full of talk be justified?*" Great garrulousness is generally a serious evil; even if the "*multitude of words*" are not vehicles of errors and impurities, but of truth and virtue, they are, more or less, an offence and an injury. They weary the hearer and deaden impressions which the subjects communicated would make if briefly and suggestively told. But, as a rule, where there are multitudes of words there are multitudes of inanities, falsehoods, and foul sentiments. As the tree with the most luxuriant leafage is generally least fruitful, so the man "*full of talk*" is, as a rule, most empty. It is ever true that in the

“multitude of words there wanteth not sin,” and “every man should be swift to hear and slow to speak.” He charges him with (2) Falsehood. “*Should thy lies make men hold their peace?*” For “*lies*,” in the margin we have “*devices*.” Zophar means to say that much of what Job said was not according to truth; not fact, but the ungrounded inventions or fancies of his own mind. Lies are evermore bad things. They are the base progeny, either of ignorance, greed, vanity, or servile fear, and their influence, both upon their author and society, are in every way pernicious. The lying lip is one of hell’s mightiest and most effective organs upon this earth of ours. He charges him with (3) Irreverence. “*And when thou mockest, shall no man make thee ashamed?*” In all probability the speaker means that Job in his words was mocking God, that they breathed irreverence, and even profanity. When a man loses reverence for the Supreme he loses the soil in which alone the seeds of virtue and truth can grow within him. He loses the ear by which alone he can catch the Divine harmonies of nature, the interpreting faculty by which alone he can reach and feel the moral meaning of life. Sad to say, our age is becoming irreverent, our very pulpits are often the mere stage for the exhibition of buffoneries. He charges him with (4) Hypocrisy. “*For thou hast said, My doctrine is pure, and I am clean in Thine eyes.*” He means to say that Job was anything but what he professed to be; he arrogated to himself great purity in doctrine and in life, but he was nevertheless vile, and therefore he was a mere religious pretender.

Now, I am far enough from admitting that any of these charges which Zophar here brings against Job were grounded in truth. Where is the proof that he was a *garrulous* man? His speeches up to this point had not been very lengthy, and they were certainly brimful of thought, sentiment, and passion. Where is the proof that he was a *false* man? We detect no falsehood in any of his utterances, and the agonies he endured were scarcely such as to admit of exaggeration. Where is the proof that he was an *irreverent* man? It is true that some of his utterances in relation to God were somewhat extravagant, but these were extracted from him,

not only by the intensity of his sufferings, but by the fallacious reasonings of those who called themselves his friends. Where is the proof of his *hypocrisy* here? Had not the Almighty Himself declared that he was a man who "*feared God,*" "*eschewed evil,*" "*perfect*" and "*upright*"? I pronounce therefore this man's charges against Job as utterly untrue to the facts of his life. Another remark which this man's reproof suggests is—

Secondly: That the charges, if true, *could not justify the spirit and style of his reproof.* Considering the high character and the trying circumstances of Job, and the professions of Zophar as his friend, there is a heartlessness and an insolence in his reproof most reprehensible and revolting. There have been insolent men in all ages, who have taken upon themselves the mission of addressing their fellow-men on behalf of virtue and God. Coarse, rude, insolent men are often found to be the most popular in the religious ministries of the age. There is no real religion in rudeness; there is no Divine inspiration in insolence. Reproof, to be of any worth, should not merely be deserved, but should be given in a right spirit, a spirit of meekness, tenderness, and love. "Reprehension is not an act of butchery, but an act of surgery," says Secker. There are those who confound bluntness with honesty, insolence with straightforwardness. They pride themselves on a coarse outspokenness. The true reprover is of a different metal, and his words fall, not like the rushing hailstorm, but like the gentle dew. They do not wound like stones, but insinuate and heal like oil. "The nail of reproof," says an old writer, "must be well oiled in kindness before it is driven home." The other subject for thought contained in these verses is—

II. NECESSARY TEACHING. These words suggest that kind of teaching which is essential to the well-being of every man. What is it?

First: It is *intercourse with the mind of God.* "*Oh that God would speak, and open His lips against thee.*" The great need of the soul is direct communication with God. All teachers are utterly worthless unless they bring God in contact with the soul of the student. If this globe is to be

warmed into life the sun must do it. He must visit it, penetrate its soil with his living beams. No number of stars can do it. So if the soul is to be quickened into true life, beauty, and fruitfulness, God Himself must "*speak*" to it. He must "*open His lips.*" No number of creature teachers, however exalted or inspired, can do it. Secular education is a solecism, a contradiction in terms. There is no education without God. What is it?

Secondly: It is *instruction in the wisdom of God.* "*And that He would show thee the secrets of wisdom, that they are double to that which is!*" God's wisdom is profound; it has its "*secrets.*" God's wisdom is "double," it is many, folded; fold within fold, without end. It is a volume that will take eternity to read. Now it is necessary that we should be instructed in God's wisdom—that we should be instructed in God's principles, ways, procedure, operations. What man calls philosophy is often little else than foolosophy. It is God's wisdom we want to study. What is it?

Thirdly: It is *faith in the forbearing love of God.* "*Know therefore that God exacteth of thee less than thine iniquity deserveth.*" Here is love, forbearing love. Truly, "He hath not dealt with us after our sins, nor rewarded us according to our iniquities." "It is of the Lord's mercies that we are not consumed, because His compassions fail not."

CONCLUSION: This is the necessary teaching. I do not say that Zophar meant this, but this is what his words suggest. The indispensable teaching is intercourse with the mind of God, instruction in the wisdom of God, and faith in the forbearing love of God. Give us this, we want no more. The Divinity speaking to us, revealing Himself in us, giving us impressions of His love: what need we more? He who has this may well sing:—

"To me remains nor place, nor time ;
 My country is in every clime ;
 I can be calm, and free from care
 On any shore, since God is there.
 While place we seek, or place we shun,
 The soul finds happiness in none ;
 But with a God to guide our way,
 'Tis equal joy to go or stay.
 Could I be cast where Thou art not,
 That were indeed a dreadful lot ;

But regions none remote I call,
 Secure of finding God in all.
 My country, Lord, art Thou alone ;
 No other can I claim to own ;
 The point where all my wishes meet,
 My law, my love ; life's only sweet."—*Madame Guyon.*

 HOMILY No. XXX.

ZOPHAR'S FIRST SPEECH TO JOB.

(2.) THE GREATNESS OF GOD AND THE WORTHLESSNESS OF MAN.

"Canst thou by searching find out God? canst thou find out the Almighty unto perfection?" &c.—CHAP. xi. 7-12.

EXEGETICAL REMARKS. *Vers. 7, 8, 9.*—"Canst thou by searching find out God? canst thou find out the Almighty unto perfection? It is as high as heaven; what canst thou do? deeper than hell; what canst thou know? The measure thereof is longer than the earth, and broader than the sea." Wilt thou attain unto the searching of God? Wouldst thou compare thy powers of scrutiny to those of Him? Wilt thou attain even the perfection of the Almighty? Dost thou presume to imagine thou canst know everything as fully and as perfectly as He doth? To aim at this perfection of His is the heights of heaven, how canst thou effect it? Deeper than Sheol, how canst thou know it? The measure thereof is longer than the earth, and wider than the sea. How then canst thou presume to declare thyself free from all sin when it requireth such perfection as there described to be able to determine this point?

Vers. 10, 11.—"If He cut off,

and shut up, or gather together, then who can hinder him? For He knoweth vain men: He seeth wickedness also; will He not then consider it?" The translation of *Barnes* makes clear, I think, the meaning of the speaker: "If He arrest, and imprison, and bring to trial, who can prevent Him? for He knoweth men of falsehood, and He seeth iniquity, though He does not seem to notice it." The rendering of *Elzas* is identical with this.

Ver. 12.—"For vain man would be wise, though man be born like a wild ass's colt." "This verse is closely connected with 10 and 11. 'A senseless man would then become intelligent, and a wild ass be born anew as a man;' *i. e.* when God suddenly summons one before His judgment-seat as He did with Job, the blindest must then open their eyes; the most stubborn man lay aside his stubbornness, and humbly subject himself to a higher power."—*Dr. Samuel Davidson.*

HOMILETICS. — In the preceding portion of Zophar's speech we discovered questionable reproof and necessary

teaching. He brought charges against Job which, if true, deserved reproof—they were the charges of garrulousness, falsehood, irreverence, and hypocrisy; but these charges were to a great extent, if not entirely, false and ungrounded. But even had they been true, the spirit and style of Zophar's reproof could not be justified: the reproof seems heartless, coarse, and insolent. But whilst in his words we found a questionable reproof, we discovered also a kind of teaching which is necessary to all mankind—a teaching that involves intercourse with the mind of God, instruction in the wisdom of God, and faith in the forbearing love of God. In the portion of his speech now under our attention he refers to—

I. THE GREATNESS OF GOD. “*Canst thou by searching find out God?*” His words imply—

First: That God *transcends all thoughts*. He cannot be found out. There is no harm in *searching*—the searching is (1) *A righteous* occupation. It agrees with the profoundest instincts of the soul—it is stimulated by the manifestations of nature, it is encouraged by the declarations of the Bible, it is aided by the revelations of Christ. It is (2) *A useful* occupation. There is no occupation so quickening, humbling, and ennobling to the soul. It is (3) *An endless* occupation. All holy intelligences will be pursuing this work for ever. The endlessness of the pursuit agrees with the inexhaustible powers of our nature and the strong instinct of mystery within us. Yes, the occupation is endless; He will never be found out, the finite can never comprehend the Infinite.* How high is heaven? How deep is hell? Who knows? Yet were the intellect to tower to the highest heights of the one, or penetrate the deepest abyss of the other, it would be as far from comprehending the Infinite as ever. “*It is as high as heaven; what canst thou do?*”

Secondly: That God *defies all resistance*. “*If He cut off, and shut up, or gather together, then who can hinder Him?*” (1) All attempts to oppose Him in *argument* are futile. Corrupt men in all ages have and still do set up their own judgments against the revelations of heaven. They try to clear themselves

* See *Homilist*, Editor's Series, vol. ii., p. 110.

of the charges that His justice has brought against them, to reason away the revelation that His goodness has made to them. But how utterly vain? Human reason opposing God is but a rushlight, endeavouring to show the darkness of that sun in whose floods of light its own little radiance is lost. "Oh man, who art thou, that repliest against God?" (2) All attempts to oppose Him in *conduct* are futile. It is characteristic of unrenewed men the world over, and the ages through, that they set themselves against the Almighty. They pursue a course of conduct in direct antagonism to His will; the language of their life is, "Who is the Lord, that I should obey Him?" But how utterly futile their antagonism! He moves on in His majestic career against all creature oppositions. All the hells of the universe are incapable of retarding His progress for a moment. "He doeth according to His will in the army of heaven, and amongst the inhabitants of the earth." "*Who can hinder Him?*" Can a pebble on the beach hinder the mighty ocean in its advancing flow? No more can any combination of creatures hinder Him in the development of His purposes. The words imply—

Thirdly: That God *knows all men*. "*For He knoweth vain men: He seeth wickedness also.*" Some imagine that He is too great to take notice of such a creature as man—that the supposition is derogatory to His glory. Not at all. What has not been beneath Him to create is not beneath Him to notice. To Him great and small are alike, and His Omniscience is as cognizant of an atom as a globe, of an insect as a seraph.

"He sees with equal eye, as God of all,
The hero perish or a sparrow fall."

He "*knoweth vain men,*" He knows each one thoroughly, He knows all that he *has been*, all that he *is*, all that he *will ever be*. "*He seeth wickedness also.*" Where some see virtue, and others see innocence, He sees wickedness. "Thou understandest my thought afar off." Whoever may be ignorant of us, God is not.

So far these verses indicate the greatness of God. Zophar represents the Almighty as transcending all thought, defying all resistance, and knowing all men. Here we have—

II. THE WORTHLESSNESS OF MAN. "For vain man would be wise," &c. However varied the different interpretations of this verse may be, most of them imply the vanity and convertibility of man. Observe—

First: Man's *vanity*. "*Vain man.*" What is vanity? Emptiness. Such, indeed, is the marginal reading. Morally, unregenerate men are hollow-hearted; they lack reality; their thoughts are not in accord with the real, their hearts are not centred on the real, their lives are not in conformity with the real. They are living lies; "they walk in a vain show." "Every man," says David, "at his best estate, is altogether vanity." The transitoriness of his life, the unsatisfactoriness of his enjoyments, the undivinity of his character, are salient features and mighty proofs of his vanity.

Secondly: Man's *convertibility*. "*Like a wild ass's colt.*" The idea is (as we have seen in the *Exegetical Remarks*) that man as a sinner when summoned into the presence of God may be changed from a wild ass's colt into a true man. Schooled by providential chastisements, Zophar says, hollow, empty, vain man comes into possession of a new heart, a new nature. He who was as untamable as the "wild ass" in the desert, by such discipline, becomes humanized; in fact, is converted. The sinner is capable of such conversion; this is a glorious fact, he can become as tractable as a child: the lion can be turned into a lamb.

CONCLUSION.—Let us learn to appreciate true and noble thoughts from whatever source they come, whether from inspired or uninspired men, from men of the distant past or of the living present. Zophar was not of the chosen people, nor was he a man inspired with infallibility, or naturally of refined and noble temper; yet here he utters truths deserving well the attention of all men. Rays of light stream from heathen as well as Christian lands, the *logos* lighteth every man that cometh into the world. Nor let us over-estimate the mental superiority of this age to those that have gone before. How many, out of the millions of modern England, have loftier conceptions of God, or truer judgments concerning humanity at large,

than this old Arabian? The civilization we boast of is, morally considered, a civilization of little worth. We crave for something higher.

“Bring us the higher example; release us
 Into a larger coming time:
 And into Christ's broad garment piece us
 Rags of virtue as poor as crime,
 National selfishness, civic vaunting,
 No more Jew or Greek then taunting
 Nor taunted; no more England nor France;
 But one confederate brotherhood, planting
 One flag only to mark the advance,
 Onward and upward, of all humanity.
 For fully developed Christianity
 Is civilization perfected.
 ‘Measure the frontier,’ shall be said,
 ‘Count the ships,’ in national vanity?
 —Count the nation's heart-beats sooner.”

Elizabeth Barrett Browning.

HOMILY No. XXXI.

ZOPHAR'S FIRST SPEECH TO JOB.

(3.) THE LIFE OF THE GODLY AND THE DOOM OF THE WICKED.

“*If thou prepare thine heart, and stretch out thine hands toward Him;*”
 &c.—CHAP. xi. 13-20.

EXEGETICAL REMARKS. *Ver. 13.*
 —“*If thou prepare thine heart, and stretch out thine hands toward Him.*”
 “If thou commune with thyself, tune thine heart to repentance, and then stretch out thine hand in prayer.” To “stretch out the hands” denotes the act of supplication. (See I Tim. ii. 9.)

Ver. 14. — “*If iniquity be in thine hand, put it far away, and let not wickedness dwell in thy tabernacles.*” The general idea is, —abandon every sin, if it be in the hand throw it away, if it be in the dwelling clear every vestige out.

Ver. 15.—“*For then shalt thou*

lift up thy face without spot; yea, thou shalt be steadfast, and shalt not fear.” “Then surely thou shalt lift up thy countenance without spot, and shalt be steadfast without fear.”—*Dr. Bernard.* No longer shalt thou appear like a culprit with a saddened countenance and a drooping head, but thou shalt lift up thy face with a cheerful expression and a courageous port. The reference is here to the patriarch's appearance, dejected, sad, and wan. Great sorrow reveals itself in the body.

Ver. 16.—“*Because thou shalt forget thy misery, and remember it*

as waters that pass away." "In the preceding verse, Zophar had assured his unfortunate friend he would lose all fear of fresh calamities; in the present one, he explains why he is so confident that this will be the case; it is because his friend will utterly forget his former miseries. As long as men continue to bear in mind sufferings they have had to undergo, they are apt to give way to a groundless dread of an impending renewal of them; but when they can once bring themselves to banish them altogether from their thoughts, they are freed from such ominous forebodings, and this Job is told will be his case. If a recollection of thy former sufferings should at any time rise up in thy mind, thou wilt be in no apprehension, but feel assured they can as little return as waters which have once passed by."

Ver. 17.—"And thine age shall be clearer than the noonday; thou shalt shine forth, thou shalt be as the morning." The idea is that the remainder of his life would be as bright as the sun if he would only return to God. He would break forth as the sun which had been wrapped in clouds through many a day.

Ver. 18.—"And thou shalt be secure, because there is hope; yea,

thou shalt dig about thee, and thou shalt take thy rest in safety." The last clause has been variously rendered. "Now thou art in darkness, but thou shalt be as the morning."—*Burnes*. "Now thou art ashamed, but then thou shalt lie down in quiet."—*Gesenius*. "And when thou hast looked about thee thou wilt lie down in security."—*Bernard*. "Wherever thou lookest about thee, in safety shalt thou lie down."—*Elzovs*. The idea is, that he would feel himself secure in every direction.

Ver. 19.—"Also thou shalt lie down, and none shall make thee afraid; yea, many shall make suit unto thee." "And thou liest down without any one making thee afraid: and many shall caress thy cheeks."—*Delitzsch*.

Ver. 20.—"But the eyes of the wicked shall fail, and they shall not escape, and their hope shall be as the giving up of the ghost." The eyes of the wicked shall be wearied out in the search for relief from the miseries of life. They shall not escape, or, as the margin has it, "flight shall perish from them." Their deliverance is out of the question; their hope shall be as the giving up of the ghost, or, as the margin has it, as "a puff of breath"—a mere exhalation.

HOMILETICS.—Here we have two subjects of thought,—the life of the godly and the doom of the wicked.

I. THE LIFE OF THE GODLY. These words of Zophar suggest to us the nature and blessedness of a godly life.

First: The nature of a godly life. Here are two leading facts essentially connected with a godly life:—(1) The seeking for God. "If thou prepare thine heart, and stretch out thine hands towards Him." (a) There must be the preparation of the heart. The heart in Scripture stands for

the whole man, including the rational and moral parts. Man's great work is with his *heart*. It is a soil crusted by sin, covered with weeds, thorns, and thistles; its fallow ground must be broken up, its noxious productions uprooted, the incorruptible seed must be sown. It is a temple, but it is defiled by depravity and infested with demons. The fiends must be exorcised, and its precincts must be cleansed. It is a harp whose every string was made to vibrate with the praise of Jehovah, but it is unstrung and incapable of true moral music. "*Prepare thine heart.*" Here is work for man! (b) There must be application to Heaven. "*And stretch out thine hands toward Him.*" "Let my prayer be set forth before Thee as incense, and the lifting up of my hands as the evening sacrifice." The attitude expresses the very essence of religion, conscious dependence upon the eternal Father. The life of godliness is a life of prayer. (2) The *abandonment of evil*. "*If iniquity be in thine hand, put it far away.*" The grand work of the godly man is the work that Christ came to accomplish, to "put away sin." The words of Zophar suggest here—

Secondly: The *blessedness* of a godly life. What follows this godly life? (1) Cheerfulness of aspect. "*Then shalt thou lift up thy face without spot.*" The face is the soul's dial-plate: it notifies all the revolutions of the heart. Thoughts chisel their likeness on the brow, passions paint their hue upon the cheek. True godliness gives man a sunny face. (2) Steadfastness of mind. "*Yea, thou shalt be stedfast.*" Instability is not only weakness but misery; mental distraction is feebleness and woe. Godliness brings firmness, it gives the soul a strong rooting in truth, and makes it as calm amidst the billows of life as the rock that breaks in pieces its surging assailants. (3) Fearlessness of soul. "*And shalt not fear.*" Godliness is love, and "perfect love casteth out fear." Moses on the margin of the Red Sea, the three Hebrew youths entering the fiery furnace, Peter addressing the Sanhedrim, Paul standing before Agrippa, are a few of the sublimest instances of moral heroism on record. (4) Deliverance from all suffering. "*Thou shalt forget thy misery, and remember it as waters that pass away.*"

The godly man's suffering will be one day only a thing of memory. Have you ever seen a river rolling backward, and retracing its march? Never! And never will the sorrows of a good man return; they are gone for ever. Flow on, then, thou stream of life, and bear away our trials! Thou wilt get clearer, deeper, and calmer, as thou nearest the blue, broad, boundless sea of eternity. It will be pleasant to remember them when they are gone; it will inspire us with the grateful and the devout. (5) Sunniness of being. "*Thine age shall be clearer than the noon-day.*" Unto the upright there ariseth light in darkness. The righteous shall "shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father." Here we have—

II. THE DOOM OF THE WICKED. "*But the eyes of the wicked shall fail, and they shall not escape, and their hope shall be as the giving up of the ghost.*" (1) Here is the loss of energy. "*The eyes of the wicked shall fail.*" The soul's eyes gone, and the spiritual universe is midnight. (2) Here is the loss of safety. "*They shall not escape.*" All efforts directed to safety utterly fruitless. (3) Here is the loss of hope. "*Their hope shall be as the giving up of the ghost.*" The idea is that the loss of hope is like death, the separation of the soul from the body. What the soul is to the body, the dominant hope is to the soul, the inspirer of its energies and the spring of its being. The loss of the dominant hope is like death in two respects. (a) In respect to its painfulness. How painful is death! it is the disruption of the mystic ties that connect the soul with the body, and the body with the loves, the pleasures, the beauties of the universe around it. Human nature recoils from it. But the pain of losing the dominant hope is in some respects greater than this. The loss of the dominant hope is like death, (b) In respect to its ruinousness. As the exit of the soul from the body ruins the body, the exit of hope from the soul ruins the soul. When hope takes her exit from the soul all beauty departs, all pleasures end, all usefulness is gone. A mind under despair is *hideous, wretched, worthless.**

* For additional thoughts on this passage see *Homilist*, Second Series, vol. iii., p. 574. Also Third Series, vol x., p. 159.

HOMILY No. XXXII.

JOB'S ARGUMENT WITH HIS THREE FRIENDS.

(1.) INDEPENDENCY OF THOUGHT IN RELIGION.

“*And Job answered and said,*” &c.—CHAP. xii. 1-5.

EXEGETICAL REMARKS. *Ver. 1.*
—“*And Job answered and said.*”

This chapter begins Job's reply, not to any one of his friends, but to the three, and it extends to the close of the fourteenth chapter. It comprises two sections—his argument with men, and his appeal to Heaven. The first extends from chap. xii. 1 to xiii. 20; and the second from that verse to the end of chap. xiv. Zophar, who had spoken last, had commenced his speech by charging Job with the design of overwhelming his opponents with a multitude of words. Job now retorts, and says that it is they who seek to overwhelm him with their number and the display of their unanimity—for they are three to one, and all of the same opinion; that, namely, he must have been a great sinner: as if, forsooth, three men could not agree in their conclusions and yet err. In this and the two following chapters, Job sums up the result of the day's colloquy.

Ver. 2.—“*No doubt but ye are the people, and wisdom shall die with you.*” The reference is not to the one but to the three. Here is a strong irony, a withering sarcasm. He felt that his previous arguments had gone for nothing, and now in the bitter anguish of his soul he speaks in scathing sarcasm. His whole manhood seems to rise up against the twaddling sophistries of the dogmatists who came to comfort him. You monopolize wisdom;

when you are gone all wisdom will be extinct.

Ver. 3.—“*But I have understanding as well as you; I am not inferior to you.*” “I also have a heart as well as you: I do not stand behind you.”—*Delitzsch.* I have reason and conscience as well as you, and know as well as you the things of which you speak. “*Who knoweth not such things as these?*” As if he had said, You consider your sentiments very original, but they are mere platitudes.

Ver. 4.—“*I am as one mocked of his neighbour.*” “A derision to his friend am I.”—*Elzas.* I am as a laughing-stock. Mockery is not argument; to laugh a man down is a very easy matter, but it proves nothing. Even a perfectly righteous man may be made a laughing-stock. “*Who calleth upon God, and He answereth him: the just upright man is laughed to scorn.*” “A scorn to mine must I be, a man who calleth upon God, and He heareth him: and scorn I the just and the upright.”—*Canon Cook.*

Ver. 5.—“*He that is ready to slip with his feet is as a lamp despised in the thought of him that is at ease.*” The mind of one who is at ease hath contempt for calamity; it hath it quite ready for those who totter with their feet. It is not at all unusual to see people, whom success has rendered arrogant, laugh at those who are labourers under calamity, and are on the

point of falling from their greatness. This sentiment is expressed also by the Psalmist (Ps. cxliii. 4): "Our soul is exceedingly filled with the scorning of those that are at ease, and with the contempt of the proud." Critics have laboured much on this verse, and reached conflicting inter-

pretations. "Contempt for misfortune is the thought of him who is secure; it is ready for the stumbling foot," *i. e.* "the first indication of one who is insecure, the first sign of his falling, brings the contempt of the fortunate man upon him."—*Dr. S. Davidson.*

HOMILETICS.—Now in these verses Job asserts his moral manhood, he rises from the pressure of his sufferings and the loads of sophistry and implied calumny which his friends had laid upon his spirit, speaks out with the heart of a true man. In the sarcastic way in which he treats their arrogance, and in the reproof which he administers to them on account of their heartless insolence towards him, we have an illustration of *independency of thought in religion*, and this shall be our subject. A man though crushed in every respect, like Job, should not surrender this. That this is man's prerogative, which he is bound to vindicate and develop, appears from the following considerations:—

I. FROM THE CAPACITY OF THE SOUL. First: Man has a capacity to form *conceptions of the cardinal principles of religion*. He can think of God, the soul, duty, moral obligation, Christ, immortality, &c. This belongs to man not as a philosopher, a theologian, a religionist, but to him as man. Secondly: Man has a capacity to *realize the practical force* of these conceptions. He can turn them into emotions to fire his soul; he can embody them as principles in his life. He can incarnate his religious ideas, make the religious word flesh. That independency of thought in religion is man's prerogative appears—

II. FROM THE DESPOTISM OF CORRUPT RELIGION. Corrupt religion, whether Pagan or Christian, Papal or Protestant, always seeks to crush this independency in the *individual* soul. It seeks to make men blind devotees, thoughtless limbs of its little sect. Dogmatists want to make a religion for you, as the builder your houses, the tailor your clothes; therefore, be on your guard, and say to these presumptuous mortals, as Job said, "*I have understanding as well as you.*"

Say this to the Convocations, the Synods, the Conferences, the Unions. That independency of thought in religion is man's prerogative appears—

III. FROM THE NECESSARY MEANS OF PERSONAL RELIGION. Religion in the soul begins in *individual* thinking. "I thought of my ways," &c. Faith, hope, charity; neither of these cardinal graces can enter the soul, or grow there, without individual thinking. No Church, priest, or preacher can impart them; they are generated, fostered, and perfected by personal thinking. That independency of thought in religion is man's prerogative appears—

IV. FROM THE CONDITIONS OF MORAL USEFULNESS. Every man is bound to be spiritually useful, but he cannot be so without knowledge, and knowledge implies independent study and conviction. Force of thought, force of conviction, force of purpose, are the essentials of spiritual usefulness. That independency of thought in religion is man's prerogative appears—

V. FROM THE TEACHINGS OF THE BIBLE. Men are commanded to use their reason. "Come, now, and let us reason together." "Search the Scriptures." "Prove all things." Indeed, the very existence of the Bible implies our power and obligation in this matter. That independency of thought in religion is man's prerogative appears—

VI. FROM THE TRANSACTIONS OF THE JUDGMENT. In the great day of God men will have to give an account of their thoughts and words as well as deeds. Let us, therefore, have the spirit of Job, and when amongst bigots, who seek to impose their views on us and override our judgment, let us say, "*No doubt but ye are the people, and wisdom shall die with you; but I have understanding as well as you.*"

HOMILY No. XXXIII.

JOB'S ARGUMENT WITH HIS THREE FRIENDS.

(2.) GOD DOES NOT TREAT MEN HERE ACCORDING TO CHARACTER.

"The tabernacles of robbers prosper, and they that provoke God are secure; into whose hand God bringeth abundantly." &c.—CHAP. xii. 6-12.

EXEGETICAL REMARKS. Ver. 6.—*"The tabernacles of robbers prosper, and they that provoke God are secure."* The Arabs in ancient and even in modern times were predatory tribes and dwelt in tents. They were marauders, they lived on plunder, and the most daring and reckless of them would be likely to gain the greatest wealth. They would prosper according to their wickedness. Job states this perhaps in direct opposition to what Zophar had said in chap. xi. 14-16, viz., that wickedness caused insecurity in men's tabernacles. *"Into whose hand God bringeth abundantly."* This is confessedly a difficult clause. Some read it, "Who carry their God in their hand;" others, "Who regard their fist as their God." Literally, "who carry God in their hand," *i. e.* "whose God is their hand."—*Dr. Samuel Davidson.*

Ver. 7.—*"But ask now the beasts, and they shall teach thee; and the fowls of the air, and they shall tell thee."* Job directs his three friends to study irrational life, not for scientific reasons, not even to learn the general character of God, but in order to show that God does not interfere to protect the weak against the strong, and that therefore His conduct with man in not treating him according to his character has its analogy in His treatment of the lower forms of life.

Ver. 8.—*"Or speak to the earth, and it shall teach thee; and the fishes of the sea shall declare unto thee."* His reference is here to vegetable and piscatorial life, and for the same purpose. He means to say that as God does not interfere in the material world to prevent the lion from destroying the lamb; the vulture the little songster; the noxious weed the useful plant; the monster of the deep the more helpless tribes; no more does He interfere in human affairs to treat men according to their character.

Ver. 9.—*"Who knoweth not in all these that the hand of the Lord hath wrought this?"* "Of Jehovah." What the speaker means to say is that every one may see an illustration of his position through all the lower realms of life. "The Moabish stone lately discovered proves that the name Jehovah was known to aliens from Israel at the time when most modern critics hold that the Book of Job was written. It was probably known, though seldom used, at a much earlier age."

Ver. 10.—*"In whose hand is the soul of every living thing, and the breath of all mankind."* The word "soul" means "life" (as the margin has it). And "all mankind" "flesh of man" (as also in the margin). The idea is that man is subject to the same general laws as the rest of creation.

Ver. 11.—“*Doth not the ear try words? and the mouth taste his meat?*” “Doth not the ear try words as the palate tasteth its food?” —*Elzas*. So also *Dr. Lee*. “As the mouth by tasting meats selects what pleases it, so the ear tries the words of others, and retains in the mind and memory what is convincing and pleasing. Each chooses according to his taste. The connection with verse 12 is in reference to Bildad’s appeal to the ancients (chap. viii. 8). You are right in appealing to them, since ‘with them was wisdom,’ &c. But you select such

proverbs of theirs as suit your views, so I may borrow from the same such as suit mine. “‘*Taste his meat,*’ tastes to find its own suitable food, the food which pleases it.”

Ver. 12.—“*With the ancient is wisdom; and in length of days understanding.*” This expression may be taken as almost proverbial in Job’s age and land. As knowledge in those remote ages in Eastern lands came by tradition rather than by literature, the oldest man, who had obtained the widest observation and the longest experience, would be the oracle.

HOMILETICS.—The grand point of contention between Job and his friends was that God treats men here according to their moral character. This they maintained, some of them with a great deal of genius and strong argument, all of them with great earnestness and determination. Because they maintained this they concluded that as Job was a great sufferer he must be a great sinner, especially offensive to the eye of Heaven. Job denies this proposition, and he does so with all his might, and by a vast variety of argument and illustration. In refutation of their views, and in support of his own, he here points to three things: to the experience of human life, the history of inferior life, the maxims of philosophic life. He points to—

I. The EXPERIENCE OF HUMAN life. “*The tabernacles of robbers prosper, and they that provoke God are secure; into whose hand God bringeth abundantly.*” He means to say, your proposition touching God’s dealing with man is contradicted by facts lying about you in all directions. Who of the nomadic people around you are the most prosperous? Those who have the most practical respect for the rights of their fellow-men, who are the most peaceful and chaste in their social relations, the most upright, reverent, and devout in spirit; or the men of heartless hardihood, sensual indulgences, reckless injustice, and unabashed profanity? You know right well that the “*tabernacles of robbers prosper.*”

Hence your position is false. He does not treat men according to their character. The fact that Job here refers to, viz., the prosperity of wicked men, may be regarded as—

First: One of the *most common* facts in human experience. All men in all lands and ages have observed it. It is capable of easy explanation; the conditions of worldly prosperity are such that sometimes the wicked man can attend to them in a more efficient way than the righteous. As a rule, the more greed, cunning, tact, activity, and the less conscience and modesty, a man has, the more likely he is to succeed in the scramble for wealth. The characters of the great fortune-makers of the world will not bear testing by the immutable laws of morality and religion. The prosperity of the wicked is—

Secondly: One of the most *perplexing* facts in human experience. Though explicable on certain principles, it still rises before one in dark shadows of mystery that perplex the heart. What thoughtful man in passing through life has not asked a hundred times, "Wherefore do the wicked prosper?" and has not felt, with Asaph, stumbling into infidelity as he saw the prosperity of the wicked? Their prosperity is—

Thirdly: One of the most *predictive* facts in human experience. This fact points to retribution. If there be a God of justice in the universe there must come an end to this state of things, there must be a day of reckoning when a righteous balance will be struck. Job points to—

II. The HISTORY of INFERIOR life. "*But ask now the beasts, and they shall teach thee; and the fowls of the air, and they shall tell thee: or speak to the earth, and it shall teach thee: and the fishes of the sea shall declare unto thee.*" How often the Bible sends us to the study of nature. Solomon sends us to the ant; Agur to the coney, the locust, the spider; Isaiah to the ox and the ass; Jeremiah to the stork, the turtle-dove, the crane, the swallow; and the Heavenly Teacher Himself to the fowls of the air. These creatures of God may be studied in two aspects. First: As a revelation of *God*. His wisdom, goodness, superin-

tending care. Secondly: As a revelation of *duty*. They teach us by their conduct how we should act. (1) They act in harmony with the laws of their nature; so should we. (2) They seek their pleasure from the true sources; so should we. (3) They answer the end of their existence; so should we.

Job's argument is, that the same lack of interference on God's part in the free operations of men in this life, in punishing the wicked and rewarding the good, you see around you in all the lower stages of life. Look to the beasts of the field. Does the Governor of the world interfere to crush the lion, the tiger, the panther, or the wolf from devouring the feebler creation of His hands? Does He come to the rescue of the shrieking, suffering victims? Behold the "*fowls of the air*." See the eagle, the vulture, the hawk pouncing down on the dove, the thrush, the blackbird, or the robin. Does He interfere to arrest their flight, or curb their savage instincts? "*Speak to the earth*." See the noxious weeds choking the flowers, stealing away life from the fruit trees, does He send a blast to wither the pernicious herb? Not He. Turn to the "*fishes of the sea*." Does He prevent the whale, the shark, and other monsters from devouring the smaller tenants of the deep? No; He allows all these creatures to develop their instincts and their propensities. It is even so with man. He allows man full scope here to work out what is in him, to get what he can. He does not crush the tyrant, nor break the fetters of the slave; He does not keep the avaricious man in poverty, or lift the spiritual man into affluence. He allows things to take their course. "All things come alike to all." And He is in all. "*Who knoweth not in all these that the hand of the Lord hath wrought this? In whose hand is the soul of every living thing, and the breath of all mankind*." Job points to—

III. The MAXIMS of PHILOSOPHIC life. "*Doth not the ear try words? and the mouth taste his meat? With the ancient is wisdom; and in length of days understanding*." There is something like a syllogism in this verse. First: That the more the mind exercises itself upon moral questions the

more capable it is to pronounce a correct judgment. Just as the epicure gets a nicer appreciation of the qualities of wines and viands as he exercises his palate, so the mind gets a clearer conception of things the more it makes them the subject of reflection. Secondly: That the ancients did greatly exercise their minds on these subjects, and therefore their judgment is to be taken. "*With the ancient is wisdom; and in length of days understanding.*" And then what he intimates is that their judgment confirmed his conclusions. Perhaps the words that follow to the end of the chapter are their conclusions, and they certainly are favourable to his convictions touching God's treatment of men. So that Job here points to the opinions of the most philosophic men of the past, and claims their authority. Truly all ancient philosophers are of his opinion on this subject.

HOMILY No. XXXIV.

JOB'S ARGUMENT WITH HIS THREE FRIENDS.

(2.) GOD DOES NOT TREAT MEN HERE ACCORDING TO CHARACTER.

(Continued.)

"*With Him is wisdom and strength, He hath counsel and understanding.*" &c.—CHAP. XII. 13-25.

EXEGETICAL REMARKS. Ver. 13. — "*With Him is wisdom and strength, He hath counsel and understanding.*" For "Him" read "God," as in the margin. Whatever may be the wisdom of the ancients, it is but a spark to His. Some suppose that from this passage to the end of the chapter is a quotation from some old Idumean poem, containing maxims that had been handed down from the wise men of the past. Anyhow, whether they are original or quotations, Job's aim is manifest—viz., to bring his so-called friends to study God in His works, and to

impress them, perhaps, at the same time, that he was not ignorant of the sublimity of that God of Whom they had talked with so much grandeur and assurance.

Ver. 14.—"*Behold, He breaketh down, and it cannot be built again.*" Who can repair what He pulls down? God has broken down Sodom, Babylon, Petra, Herculaneum, and Pompeii. "*He shutteth up a man, and there can be no opening.*" "He shutteth up, and it cannot be opened."—*Delitzsch*. Who can doubt this? He has often involved men in embarrassments from which

they could not extricate themselves. He shuts up all in the grave.

Ver. 15.—“Behold, He withholdeth the waters, and they dry up: also He sendeth them out, and they overturn the earth.” “It is remarkable,” says a modern expositor, “that in the argument here there is no allusion to any historical fact: not to the flood, not to the destruction of Sodom, nor the passage through the Red Sea, though these occurrences would have furnished appropriate illustrations to the point under discussion, a strong proof of the antiquity of the book. The waters inundate the earth. Such inundations may have occurred in the swollen torrents of Arabia.”

Ver. 16.—“With Him is strength and wisdom: the deceived and the deceiver are His.” The first clause is a repetition of the thirteenth verse. The meaning of the last clause is that all minds are under his control—the impostor and his dupe.

Ver. 17.—“He leadeth counselors away spoiled, and maketh the judges fools.” He confounds the wisest men, and often ruins the greatest by means of their folly. *Quem Deus vult perdere prius dementat.* “The meaning seems to be that God overthrows a nation, and by the ruin which falls on the leaders and judges, convicts them of folly.”—*Canon Cook.*

Vers. 18, 19.—“He looseth the bond of kings, and girdeth their loins with a girdle,” &c. The meaning of this is, He strips kings of their authority, and binds them as prisoners to the car of the conqueror.

Ver. 20.—“He removeth away the speech of the trusty, and taketh away the understanding of the aged.” “He depriveth orators of their eloquence, and the discretion of the aged He taketh away.”—

Elzas. For “speech of the trusty” the margin has “lip of the faithful.”

Ver. 21.—“He poureth contempt upon princes, and weakeneth the strength of the mighty.” Margin, “looseth the girdle of the strong.” “The Orientals wore loose flowing robes, which were secured by a girdle round the loins. When they laboured, ran, or travelled, their robes were girded up. But this is common everywhere. Wrestlers, leapers, and runners put a girdle around them, and thus are able to accomplish much more than they otherwise could. To loosen, that is to weaken them. So Job says that God had power to loosen the strength of the mighty.”

Ver. 22.—“He discovereth deep things out of darkness, and bringeth out to light the shadow of death.” The idea here is that God brings to light things that are hidden in the profoundest regions of impenetrable darkness.

Ver. 23.—“He increaseth the nations, and destroyeth them: he enlargeth the nations, and straiteneth them again.” “Carrieth them away.”—*Delitzsch.* The rise, growth, and ruin of nations are with Him.

Ver. 24.—“He taketh away the heart of the chief of the people of the earth, and causeth them to wander in a wilderness where there is no way.” The word “heart” here means intelligence, and the idea is that He deprives the rulers of the people of their wisdom, so that they wander as in an inextricable wilderness of perplexity.

Ver. 25.—“They grope in the dark without light, and he maketh them to stagger like a drunken man.” Stripped of their wisdom they wander in gloom, and stagger like drunken men.

HOMILETICS.—Perhaps Job uses this lofty language concerning God for two reasons. First: To show that he could speak as grandly of the Eternal as his friends had spoken. They had often given to him sublime descriptions of the nature and operations of their Maker; and peradventure they did this to impress the patriarch with their mental superiority. Job here shows that he can match them in this respect; his strains are as lofty as theirs, and his ideas as philosophic and grand. Secondly: To show that he had as correct and extensive a view of God's agency as they had. He gives them to understand that he sees God working everywhere. He gives them here at least six different ideas of God's agency.

I. That it is ACTIVE BOTH IN THE MENTAL AND THE MORAL WORLD. He speaks of the Almighty not only as withholding "*the waters*," drying them, and sending them out that they would "*overturn the earth*," but as acting in the mental domain with the "*deceived and the deceiver*," taking away "*the heart of the chief of the people*," so that they are confounded. Sublime thought! God acts in matter and in mind: He is in the floating atom and the passing thought. Another idea of God's agency here is—

II. That it is DESTRUCTIVE AS WELL AS RESTORATIVE. "*Behold, he breaketh down, and it cannot be built again.*" By storms, pestilences, volcanoes, He works destruction in the *material* world, and by other influences He builds up. So in the *mental* world: He is working destruction, breaking down all antagonism to virtue and truth, and building up spirits in true love and faith. Another idea of God's agency he gives is—

III. That it EXTENDS TO INDIVIDUALS AS WELL AS TO COMMUNITIES. "*He shutteth up a man, and there can be no opening.*" Although some omit the word "man," the language applies to him. He acts with the individual man; He does not overlook the parts in the whole, the unit in the million. He acts in and by and for the individual. But with vast communities, too; their "*counsellors*," their "*kings*,"

their “*princes*,” and their “*nations*.” Another idea of God’s agency he gives is—

IV. That it is ABSOLUTELY SOVEREIGN AND RESISTLESS. In all He is free, uncontrolled, and irresistible. No one can build up what He has broken down, no one can open the place which He hath “*shut up*.” No one can prevent Him from bereaving counsellors of their wisdom, confounding monarchs, and breaking up kingdoms. He is Sovereign Lord of all, doing “*what seemeth good in His sight*.” Another idea of God’s agency here is—

V. That it OPERATES IN THE UNSEEN AS WELL AS IN THE VISIBLE. “*He discovereth deep things out of darkness, and bringeth out to light the shadow of death*.” He works in depths into which no eye can penetrate, and brings out to the light of the universe things that have never entered into the heart of man to conceive. His agency is the great developing force of the universe. The other idea of God’s agency here is—

VI. That it IN NO CASE APPEARS TO RECOGNIZE MORAL DISTINCTIONS AMONGST MEN. Not a word does Job say here about the righteous and the wicked in relation to God’s agency. His grand object was to show that God did not treat man on the ground of moral character.

CONCLUSION.—This language of Job may well be commended to the study of those modern scientists who ascribe all the phenomena, both of the material and moral universe, to certain fixed and immutable laws. Job traces all to a *personal* agency. This, I confess, is far more satisfactory to my intellect, and more uplifting to my soul. The language may also be commended to the study of those who are everlastingly cauting about the intellectual progress of the race, and who are disposed to look back on past ages as periods of mental dulness and gloom. Who of your poets, sages, or preachers can give utterance to sublimer things than those contained in this passage of Job?

HOMILY No. XXXV.

JOB'S ARGUMENT WITH HIS THREE FRIENDS.

(2.) GOD DOES NOT TREAT MEN HERE ACCORDING TO CHARACTER.

(Continued.)

“Lo, mine eye hath seen all this, mine ear hath heard and understood it.”
 &c.—CHAP. xiii. 1-19.

EXEGETICAL REMARKS. *Vers. 1, 2.*—“*Lo, mine eye hath seen all this, mine ear hath heard and understood it,*” &c. There is no pause between this and the preceding chapter. In these first two verses, Job winds up his argument with the words he used at the beginning of his speech.

Ver. 3.—“*Surely I would speak to the Almighty, and I desire to reason with God.*” The idea seems to be,—I would turn from you who are so censorious and severe, and do injustice to my motives, to the Omniscient One Who knows the heart. I will lay my cause before Him. “This desire to plead with God must be attributed to real inward faith: the plagues which had fallen on Job confound him. He cannot reconcile them, or other events in the world’s history, with what he believes of God, but they do not drive him from God: far from denouncing God, he turns away from all other things, comes to Him, and is quite sure that his honesty will be recognized and approved.”—*Canon Cook.*

Ver. 4.—“*But ye are forgers of lies.*” You are sophists in religious questions; your positions are all false; there is no real foundation for the sentiments you have advanced. “*Ye are all physicians of no value.*” The remedies you apply

to me are utterly unsuited: instead of soothing and healing, you only aggravate my pain.

Ver. 5.—“*Oh that ye would altogether hold your peace! and it should be your wisdom.*” In Prov. xvii. 28 we read, “Even a fool when he holdeth his peace is counted wise.” This proverb may possibly have been current in the days of Job, and if so, the verse before us must have been intended as a delicate *repartee* to Eliphaz, who (chap. v. 2), had in plain language stigmatized his unfortunate friend as a fool and a simpleton, and now in return must hear the following delicately-expressed but deeply-cutting words. Would that you were altogether silent, and it would be accounted to you for wisdom. It would be much wiser in you not to speak at all, than to oppose my arguments and just complaints with a deluge of empty and unmeaning words.—*Bernard.*

Ver. 7.—“*Will ye speak wickedly for God? and talk deceitfully for Him?*” The idea seems to be, Will you advocate false positions in the cause of God, and talk deceitfully, urge fallacious arguments to justify His ways with man? This is often done.

Ver. 8.—“*Will ye accept His person?*” Will you, in order to curry favour with Him, speak

against your own conscience? Will you, from partiality to God, maintain unrighteous views? "*Will ye contend for God?*" Do you presume to be His authorized and lawful advocates, and act as special pleaders?

Ver. 9.—"*Is it good that He should search you out? or as one man mocketh another, do ye so mock Him?*" Can you expect that He will brook your saying things which in your hearts you know to be untrue? Will you mock Him as one mocketh frail man? You may impose upon man with your arguments, but Omniscience sees through your fallacies.

Ver. 10.—"*He will surely reprove you, if ye do secretly accept persons.*" Will God justify your falsehoods because they are uttered in His defence? Man would do so, but He will not.

Ver. 11.—"*Shall not His excellency make you afraid?*" "Shall not His majesty affright you?"—*Dr. Lee.* "*And His dread fall upon you?*" "The general proposition," says *Barnes*, "is, The sense of the majesty and glory of God should at all times fill the mind with solemn awe, and produce the deepest veneration."

Ver. 12.—"*Your remembrances are like unto ashes.*" "Nearly all commentators vary. *Heath*: 'Are not your lessons empty proverbs?'—*Goode*: 'Dust are your stored-up sayings.'—*Sept.*: 'Your boasting shall pass away like ashes.'—*Noyes*: 'Your maxims are words of dust.' 'Your bodies to bodies of clay.'—*Goode* translates, 'Your collections, collections of mire.'—*Buxtoff*, *Crinsoz*, and others: 'Your high-flown speeches.' The idea is that the arguments behind which they entrenched themselves were like clay, and could not resist an attack made

upon them."—*Elzas.* He probably refers here specially to Bildad's speech, chap. viii. 8.

Ver. 13.—"*Hold your peace, let me alone, that I may speak, and let come on me what will.*" One cannot but be forcibly reminded by this verse of the Greek philosopher who said, "Strike, but hear me." The meaning is, "Be silent, hear me."

Ver. 14.—"*Wherefore do I take my flesh in my teeth, and put my life in mine hand?*" Amongst the different interpretations of this verse the idea I gather from it is this, Wherefore should I risk my life in speaking out my convictions? It is as if he had said, Because I feel them to be well-founded I will speak them out, though it cost me my life.

Ver. 15.—"*Though He slay me, yet will I trust in Him: but I will maintain mine own ways before Him.*" "Behold, He will slay me; I have no hope." "The received version is wrong."—*Dr. Samuel Davidson.* *Delitzsch*, however, gives this rendering, "Behold, He slayeth me—I wait for Him." *Canon Cook*: "Though He slay me, yet will I wait for Him." This seems to express his feeling as shown in the next verse.

Ver. 16.—"*He also shall be my salvation.*" The language implies an assurance that deliverance would come to him, though he knew not how or when. "*An hypocrite shall not come before Him.*" This implies a deep consciousness of his own sincerity.

Ver. 17.—"*Hear diligently my speech, and my declaration with your ears.*" Hear ye, then, diligently my conclusion, and receive my reproof with your ears. Attend to my declaration of confidence in God, and to the conviction I have uttered.

Ver. 18.—“Behold now, I have ordered my cause; I know that I shall be justified.” “That I shall be proved righteous.” The meaning of this is, I have made my statement, delivered my sentiment, and I know that God will acquit me.

Ver. 19.—“Who is he that will plead with me?” As if he had said, After this who will say a word, who will dare controvert my statements? I am certain that my positions are incontrovertibly true. “If

I hold my tongue, I shall give up the ghost.” “I shall be silent and die.” I think Dr. Bernard has struck the meaning of the whole verse in the following words: “But who is he that will plead with me? I am quite prepared with my defence, but I do not see my accuser. Who is he? Where is he? If I am to be tried, no time should be lost, for presently I shall be silent and give up the ghost, when of course all chance of clearing myself will be gone for ever.”

HOMILETICS.—All these verses may be taken as Job’s remonstrance with his friends against the doctrine that *God deals here with man according to his character*; and in this remonstrance there emerges into prominence several useful subjects of thought, such as—

I. MENTAL INDEPENDENCY IN RELIGION. “Lo, mine eye hath seen all this, mine ear hath heard and understood it. What ye know, the same do I know also: I am not inferior unto you.” As the subject of mental independency in religion has already been discussed (chap. xii. 1-5) I need not enlarge upon it here. Though all men are not equal in the measure of mental power or mental attainment, yet in relation to God all stand on the same footing, “the rich and the poor meet together.” All have the same right to form their convictions of religion, to express them, and to work them out. The poorest and most illiterate man in the world in this respect may say to the greatest hierarch, even to the supreme pontiff himself, “I am not inferior unto you,” I am as near to God as you are, and stand in the same relations. Another subject here is—

II. GODWARDNESS OF SOUL IN RELIGION. “Surely I would speak to the Almighty, and I desire to reason with God.” Religion has a human aspect, which is philanthropy, sympathizing with men and working for their good, but here we have its Divine aspect, *speaking to God*.” “I would speak to the Almighty.” Speaking to God—First: *Implies*

the highest practical recognition of the Divine existence. Ay, and in His existence as *personal*, as *proximate*, as *accessible*. Speaking to God—Secondly: *Involves the truest relief of our social natures.* We have social natures, and the highest, and indeed the only perfect, satisfaction of those natures is to be found in fellowship with the Infinite. Before a man will fully unbosom his soul to another he must be certified of three things—(1) That the other feels the deepest interest in him. (2) Will make the fullest allowance for his infirmities. (3) Will assist him in his trials. The Almighty gives us this assurance. Speaking to God is—Thirdly: *The most effective method of spiritual discipline.* The effort of speaking to God is most quickening, humbling, and spiritualizing to the soul. Speaking to God—Fourthly: *Reveals the highest honour of created spirits.* It implies a great capacity. The sublimest distinction of a man is the power to speak to the Almighty.* Another subject of thought in Job's words here is—

III. WICKED SOPHISTRY IN RELIGION. "*Ye are forgers of lies.*" Job regarded his friends as uttering that which was false in relation to God. Perhaps more lies are forged in connection with religion than in connection with any other department of life. Passing by the religions of heathendom, what lies are found in nearly all the creeds of Christendom! The creed-makers of all sects have in all ages, unintentionally it may be in most cases, been forging lies. What "*lies*" every Sunday are proclaimed in relation to the great questions of atonement, the Divine character, the responsibilities of man, &c. Beware of the "*lies*" of religion. Two thoughts are here suggested in connection with religious "*lies*"—

First: *They cannot heal the soul.* "*Ye are all physicians of no value.*" They may act, and often do, as stimulants or anodynes, but they cannot heal the broken heart, they cannot strengthen the infirm moral nature. They can no more refresh the soul than the mirage the thirsty traveller.

Secondly: *They are an offence to a true man.* "*O that*

* For a further development of these remarks see *Homilist*, First Series, vol. v. p. 408.

ye would altogether hold your peace!" From God's own testimony we are assured that Job was a true-hearted man, with healthy moral intuitions. As a rule, nothing is more offensive to a great intuitional nature than logical processes; the man of intuition sees the truth at once, and feels an error as the tender flower a blast of cold air. He is impatient with logic; and when that logic is the vehicle for religious fallacies he cries out from the depths of his soul, "*O that ye would altogether hold your peace!*" Many true-hearted men are driven from our churches by the logic of empty dogmas. Another subject of thought here is—

IV. GOD-DISHONOURING ZEAL IN RELIGION. "*Hear now my reasoning, and hearken to the pleadings of my lips. Will ye speak wickedly for God? and talk deceitfully for Him? Will ye accept His Person? will ye contend for God?*" Job here calls their attention to the fact that the views they were setting forth so zealously in honour of the Almighty were really wicked. Three thoughts are suggested—

First: *Men sometimes set forth false views in order to honour God. "Talk deceitfully for Him?"* The idea is, Will you, in order to defend the proceedings of your Maker, declare fallacies and propound erroneous doctrines? Will you, by showing partiality to Him, propound untruths? Will you by fallacies "*contend*" for Him? Does He want such defence? Men often do this. Doctrines are frequently preached and propagated, with the view of honouring God, which are most derogatory to His character. It would be easy to specify those doctrines, but as I have no space here for their exposure I must pass them by.

Secondly: *Those views are an insult to the Almighty, and expose to His displeasure. "Is it good that He should search you out? or as one man mocketh another, do ye so mock Him?"* The Almighty does not require His conduct to be defended by sophistries; nay, such sophistries are an insult to Him, they "*mock*" Him. You cannot defend God by your theological systems, "*He will surely reprove you.*" He will one day chastise you for this conduct.

Thirdly: *Those views are irreverent and rotten. (1) Irreverent. "Shall not His excellency make you afraid?"*

Who are you, ignorant child of an hour, that you should stand up in the defence of the Almighty? His "*excellency*" should "*make you afraid.*" Holy and reverend is His name. (2) Rotten. "*Your remembrances are like unto ashes, your bodies to bodies of clay.*" "The passage here means that the arguments behind which they entrenched themselves were like clay. They could not resist an attack made upon them, but would easily be thrown down like mud walls. Grotius renders it, 'Your towers are tumuli of clay.' Rosenmuller remarks on the verse that the ancients were accustomed to inscribe sentences of valuable historical facts on pillars. If these were engraved on stone they would be permanent, if on pillars covered with clay, they would soon be obliterated. On a pillar or column at Alexandria the architect cut his own name at the base deep in the stone; on the plaster or stucco with which the pillar was covered he inscribed the name of the person to whose honour it was reared. The consequence was that that name became soon obliterated, his own then appeared, and was permanent. But the meaning here is rather that the apothegms and maxims behind which they entrenched themselves were like mud walls, and could not withstand an attack." Another subject of thought here is--

V. IRREPRESSIBILITY OF CONVICTION IN RELIGION. "*Hold your peace, let me alone, that I may speak, and let come on me what will. Wherefore do I take my flesh in my teeth, and put my life in mine hand?*" The idea is, as we have seen, I will speak out, whatever happens to me. No amount of suffering, not death itself, shall prevent me from giving utterance to my convictions, my ideas have become irrepresible forces. Strong religious convictions are always irrepresible. Jeremiah felt them as fire in his bones, and he could not keep silent. The Apostle before his judges said, "*We cannot but speak the things which we have seen and heard.*" Paul said, "*Necessity is laid upon me, yea, woe is unto me if I preach not the Gospel.*" Bigotry in all ages has tried to suppress the moral convictions of good men: the attempt is more mad than the attempt to prevent the volcanic fires from riving the mountains by covering

them with cement. A man may suppress his convictions on other subjects, such as literature, science, art, but so vital are religious convictions to him that they fill his nature with fires that must break out. Another subject of thought here is—

VI. UNCONQUERABLENESS OF TRUST IN RELIGION.

“Though He slay me, yet will I trust in Him.” Though, in deference to *Dr. Samuel Davidson*—whose scholarship is universally admitted as unrivalled—I might surrender this version, yet association has made the words as they stand very sacred, and they express an undoubted truth, viz. that a genuine religious trust is unconquerable; and they suggest—

First: *A manifest possibility.* The Creator has the power to blot His creature out of existence. Secondly: *A lamentable calamity.* To be slain, to be quenched out of being, to think, feel, act no more. What a calamity! Nature revolts with inconceivable horror at the idea. Thirdly: *A triumphant piety.* Though the worst of all possible calamities happen, *“yet will I trust in Him.”* This is sublime: and it is right and wise. Another subject of thought here is—

VII. CONSCIOUSNESS OF SINCERITY IN RELIGION.

“He also shall be my salvation: for an hypocrite shall not come before Him.” Job felt he was no *“hypocrite,”* and because he believed this—First: *He knew he should be saved.* *“He also shall be my salvation.”* Because he was conscious of sincerity—Secondly: *He was not afraid to speak.* *“Hear diligently my speech, and my declaration with your ears.”* A man with a clear conscience can stand fearlessly before the world. He is not afraid to speak out in thunder what he believes. Because he was conscious of sincerity—Thirdly: *He knew he should be acquitted of falsehood.* *“I know that I shall be justified.”* All Job wanted was his case honestly gone into, in order to prove him right. Because he was conscious of sincerity—Fourthly: *He was content to leave his cause with justice.* *“Who is he that will plead with me? for now, if I hold my tongue, I shall give up the ghost.”* That is, I will be silent and die. What he means is, I will maintain my cause, but will speak no more. If there is any

one who can successfully contend with me, and can prove that my course cannot be vindicated, then I have no more to say, I will be silent and die. I will submit to my fate without further argument, and without a murmur. I have said all that needs to be said, and nothing could remain but to submit and die.

HOMILY No. XXXVI.

JOB'S ARGUMENT WITH HIS THREE FRIENDS.

(3.) HIS APPEAL TO HEAVEN.

"Only do not two things unto me: then will I not hide myself from Thee."
&c.—CHAP. xiii. 20-28.

EXEGETICAL REMARKS.—Up to the present point in this reply of Job he had been contending with his three friends, and in his contention with them—(1) He had maintained the independency of thought in religion (chap. xii. 1-5). (2) He had argued against the doctrine that God treats men here according to character (chap. xii. 6-12). (3) He quoted ancient maxims in proof of this doctrine (chap. xii. 13-25). (4) He employed remonstrances in support of the same proposition (chap. xiii. 1-19). He now turns from them, and addresses himself to the Creator, and his appeal extends from chap. xiii. 20, to chap. xiv. 22.

Ver. 20. — "*Only do not two things unto me: then will I not hide myself from Thee.*" The two things are specified in the following verses, and he asks for their removal in order that he might be able to lay his case before his Great Judge.

Ver. 21. — "*Withdraw Thine hand*

far from me: and let not Thy dread make me afraid." The hand of God here denotes his physical affliction, and the "*dread*" the awful terror which agitated his mind. The two things, therefore, that he implored to have removed were the afflictions of his body and the terror of his soul.

Ver. 22. — "*Then call Thou, and I will answer: or let me speak, and answer Thou me.*" When these are removed I shall feel prepared to reason even with Thee on the question of my character. If Thou art the plaintiff I will answer Thee; or let me be the plaintiff, and I will await Thy answer.

Ver. 23. — "*How many are mine iniquities and sins? make me to know my transgression and my sin.*" It has been observed that Job here checked himself, and paused a little, until at length hearing no voice he concluded that it was for him to speak, and then said, "*How many are mine iniquities,*" &c. He

desired to know from God Himself the number and magnitude of the offences for which he was thus suffering.

Ver. 24.—“*Wherefore hidest Thou Thy face, and holdest me for Thine enemy?*” To hide the face or to turn it away is expressive of disapprobation, and Job regarded his affliction as an expression of Divine displeasure; but he sought the cause.

Ver. 25.—“*Wilt Thou break a leaf driven to and fro? and wilt Thou pursue the dry stubble?*” Wilt Thou crush a driven leaf, or wilt Thou pursue dry stubble? The idea is, Wilt Thou pursue one so utterly unable to stand against Thy overwhelming power?

Ver. 26.—“*For Thou writest bitter things against me, and makest me to possess the iniquities of my youth.*” “Thou decreest bitter punishments against me, and entailest upon me the punishments incurred in my boyhood. I do not remember ever to have done anything deserving punishment. I may indeed have done so when a boy, without even knowing that I was doing wrong, but wilt Thou visit upon me now all that I sinned in then?”—Bernard.

Ver. 27.—“*Thou puttest my feet also in the stocks, and lookest narrowly unto all my paths; Thou settest a print upon the heels of my feet.*” “The passage seems to describe the feet as so confined in a clog or clogs, as not to preclude the power of motion. It may refer to the ancient custom of attaching a sort of clog to the feet of runaway slaves, when found, with the owner's name thereon, so that their flight might be retarded, and their course the more easily tracked, if they again attempted to escape. Dr. Goode conceives that the figure may have

been taken from the mode of treating the wild ass, an animal difficult to tame, and which it was necessary to clog in order to keep in subjection. In that case the last clause of the verse (‘a print upon the heels of my feet’) may imply that some particular mark of ownership or other quality was usually branded upon the hoof, or perhaps indented on the shoes. Stocks or clogs for the feet of men were, however, certainly used in Scripture times. The feet of Jeremiah were put in the stocks. What kind of stocks were used it is difficult to conjecture—whether they were encumbering clogs, or fetters that did not absolutely prevent, but only embarrassed motion, or were fixed frames that kept the prisoner stationary. Both kinds were in use very anciently. The fixed kinds, properly called stocks, were of different sorts, being frames of wood, with holes either for the feet only, or for the feet, the hands, and the neck at once. At Pompeii stocks have been found so contrived that ten prisoners might be chained by the leg, each leg separately by the sliding of a bar. Some of these forms of confinement, particularly that which combined in some sort the pillory with the stocks, were very painful, and are mentioned in the account of the sufferings of the early Christian martyrs. The stocks used in India consist of a frame, which confines the prisoner's hands and feet, and obliges him to lie on the ground in a very distressing position, notwithstanding the freedom allowed to the head. Of confinement for the head, such as our pillory or the Chinese collar, we do not read in Scripture; but it is not improbable that the phrase, ‘*Thou settest a print upon the heels of my feet,*’ may be illustrated from the practice of the Chinese of putting

a seal over the part where the boards joined, so that it could not be opened without detection during the period in which it is appointed to be worn."—*Kitto*.

Ver. 28.—"*And he, as a rotten thing, consumeth, as a garment that*

is moth-eaten." The idea of this verse seems to be that he (Job) was such a worthless creature that it was not worthy of God to lay such afflictions upon him. This verse ought to have been the commencement of the next chapter.

HOMILETICS.—In this portion of Job's appeal to Heaven we discover three things:—

I. A SOLEMN REQUEST. What is the request? Power to lay his case before the Great Judge. "*Only do not two things unto me: then will I not hide myself from Thee.*" The two things he required were the removal of bodily affliction and mental terror. In this request we have—

First: *The expression of the deepest instinct in man.* What is that? A tendency when under false accusations to appeal to the Great Judge. The patriarch's so-called friends had hastily concluded and vehemently affirmed that he was a great sinner because he was the subject of such great affliction. Deep within him, however, was the assurance that the charge was wrong, and that he was a man of uprightness and integrity, who "feared God and eschewed evil." Hence he turns from their unfounded accusations to the Judge of quick and dead. Conscious innocence always turns to heaven under the foul allegations of slander. It takes its case to the Supreme Tribunal with an unhesitating faith, for there justice will be done. The instinct, which is as universal as humanity, implies not only an innate belief in the existence of the Supreme Being, but an ineradicable belief in His omniscience and rectitude. We do not want logic either to prove the existence of a God, or the fact that just and right is He. What appeals against false charges human souls lodge every day in the Supreme Court of the universe with the full assurance that there nought but justice will be done! We have here—

Secondly: *Obstacles to the religious exercises of man.* These are, great bodily affliction and great mental terror. "*Only do not two things unto me: then will I not hide myself from Thee. Withdraw Thine hand from me: and let not Thy*

dread make me afraid." These Job requested should be removed, in order that his case should be fairly laid before his Maker. How greatly do our circumstances, secular and mental, interfere with the free action of the religious instinct. "What a folly it is," says an old writer, "for men to put off their repentance and conversion to a sick-bed and a death-bed. How can even a good man, much less a bad man, reason with God, so as to be justified before Him, when he is on the rack of pain and under terror of the arrests of death? At such a time it is very bad to have the great work to do, but very comfortable to have it done as it was to Job, who, if he might but have a little breathing time, was ready." Here is—

II. A MOMENTOUS INQUIRY. His inquiry refers to two things:—

First: To his *sins*. "*How many are mine iniquities and sins?*" How many? (1) *I am ignorant* of them. I am not conscious that I am guilty of sins that can justify my overwhelming sufferings. Men are often unconscious of their sins. (2) Thou knowest them. Not one, even the most secret of them, has escaped Thine eye. (3) I desire to know the worst. Terrible as the revelation may be, still let me have it: it must come out sooner or later, let the dark scroll be spread out before me now. His inquiry refers—

Secondly: To his *sufferings*. "*Wherefore hidest Thou Thy face?*" (1) Is it just in Thee to treat me as if I were Thy foe? I am not conscious that I deserve it. Why I should be so afflicted, when thousands of sinners around me live in health and pleasure, I know not. Why? I want to see justice. (2) Is it worthy of Thee? "*Wilt Thou break a leaf driven to and fro?*" Why seek to crush an atom? The idea in the mind of Job seems to have been that it is unworthy of the Infinite even to pay attention to such a worthless creature as he, still less to pursue him. He should have remembered two things—that to God there is nothing great or small, and that man, however worthless, is influential.* Here is—

* See *Homilist*, Fourth Series, vol. iii., p. 304.

III. A GRIEVOUS COMPLAINT. He seems to complain of two things:—

First: *The reproduction of his sins.* “*Thou makest me to possess the iniquities of my youth.*” It is a fact that the sins of youth come out in the groans of age. The want of knowledge, the force of passions, the susceptibility to influences, render youth specially liable to sin; and the laws of retribution, habit, memory, render it certain that those sins will be punished in after life. Youthful sins are bound with the indissoluble chain of causation to man’s futurity. Human experience is not like an isolated raindrop that falls from the clouds above and is soon exhaled by the sun, but it is like a river whose present character has been entirely formed by its past history: the soil through which it has flowed, the streams that have rolled into its bosom, have given to it its present hue, form, and volume. Man’s actions of to-day are the result of those yesterday, and the cause of those to-morrow.* He seems to complain of—

Secondly: *The embarrassment of his sufferings.* “*Thou puttest my feet also in the stocks, and lookest narrowly unto all my paths; Thou settest a print upon the heels of my feet.*” Whatever might be the penal torture referred to in the passage, Job means to express his awful consciousness of embarrassment and judicial inspection. He was hampered at every turn, and seemed watched by God with the most vigilant eye.

* For a full discourse on this subject see *Homilist*, Third Series, vol. i., p. 57.

HOMILY No. XXXVII.

JOB'S ARGUMENT WITH HIS THREE FRIENDS.

(3.) HIS APPEAL TO HEAVEN. (*Continued.*)

"*Man that is born of a woman is of few days, and full of trouble.*" &c.—
 CHAP. XIV. 1-13.

EXEGETICAL REMARKS. *Ver. 1.*—"*Man that is born of a woman is of few days, and full of trouble.*" Language this, used to express the frailty, brevity, and sorrow of human life. The images here employed have been adopted in all ages as expressing the feelings of mourners.

Ver. 2.—"He cometh forth like a flower, and is cut down," &c. Strong figures to express the same idea as that in the first verse.

Ver. 3.—"And dost Thou open Thine eyes upon such an one, and bringest me into judgment with Thee?" The meaning is obvious, viz., is one whose life is so fragile, brief, and sad, worthy of Thy notice, or fit to be brought into judgment with Thee?

Ver. 4.—"Who can bring a clean thing out of an unclean? not one." *Dr. Bernard* makes this an exclamation,—"*Oh, that a clean thing could come out of an unclean! Not one will ever.*" *Lee* translates it,—"*Who shall of the unclean pronounce one clean? No one.*" The Authorized Version however to us is a faithful expression of the idea, viz., that imperfect parents will have imperfect children: like begets like.

Ver. 5.—"Seeing his days are determined, the number of his months are with Thee, Thou hast appointed his bounds that he cannot

pass." "Since his days are fixed, the number of his months is with Thee, Thou hast affixed his limits which he cannot pass."—*Dr. Burnes*. The idea is, Thou hast settled the exact duration of his existence on this earth, and to pass beyond that limit is a matter of impossibility.

Ver. 6.—"Turn from him, that he may rest, till he shall accomplish, as an hireling, his day." This verse should not have been detached from the other. The idea is, since his days are determined, and his months are with Thee, since Thou hast fixed his days that he cannot pass, look away from him, and let him rest until he has accomplished his days as an hireling.

Ver. 7.—"For there is hope of a tree, if it be cut down, that it will sprout again, and that the tender branch thereof will not cease." Job refers to two ways in which a tree, though cut down, continues its growth, by branches springing out of the trunk, and by suckers coming out of the root.

Ver. 8.—"Though the root thereof was old in the earth, and the stock thereof die in the ground." The idea here is, that though the tree be cut down and the roots be old and dried, some vitality remains, and it may therefore shoot forth into another tree.

Ver. 9.—"Yet through the scent

of water it will bud, and bring forth boughs like a plant." The word "scent" here means the aroma or odour which anything exhales. "A fine metaphor," says one; "the water acts on the decaying and perishing tree as strong odours act on a fainting person."

Ver. 10.—"But man dieth, and wasteth away: yea, man giveth up the ghost, and where is he?" "But man dieth, he lieth there stretched out; man giveth up the ghost, and where is he?"—*Delitzsch*. The idea is, man entirely vanishes, he leaves nothing to sprout again, no germ, no shoot, no seminal principle, he is gone for ever from the earth. *Rosenmüller* says, "The Romans made those trees to be the symbol of death, which being cut down do not live again, or from whose roots no germs arise, as the pine and cypress, which were planted in burial-places, or were customarily placed at the door of the houses of those who were dead."

Ver. 11, 12.—"As the waters fail from the sea, and the flood decayeth and drieth up: so man lieth down, and he riseth not: till the heavens be no more, they shall not awake, nor be raised out of their sleep." Here is a reference to evaporation in nature. From seas, and lakes, and rivers, waters are constantly ascending in the air, and sometimes,

as in the case of the Nile, their very bed is dried. So, Job says, it is with man. Where is the lake that looked almost like the sea in the winter, after the summer sun has expended its hot beams upon it? It is gone. So it will be with man, "till the heavens be no more." Nothing under the range of human experience is more durable than the heavens, but these heavens will vanish sooner than man will reappear. The whole passage is simply a solemn declaration of Job's belief, not that there is no future state, but that there is no re-appearance of man on the earth after he has once departed by death. And truly his belief was well founded; no one has ever come back.

Ver. 13.—"O that Thou wouldest hide me in the grave, that Thou wouldest keep me secret, until Thy wrath be past, that Thou wouldest appoint me a set time, and remember me!" Whether Job here means by "the grave," the burial spot, or the realm of departed spirits, we cannot determine, nor does it matter. His idea is, that after death he would be sheltered somewhere from those sufferings which he here calls "Thy wrath;" and this he longed for. What he seems to desire is, not only that he should have the shelter, but that he should appear again, and be kindly remembered of God.

HOMILETICS.—Here Job continues his *appeal* to his Maker, and lengthens out his complaint. The whole passage is a sad lamentation, a loud deep wail. In the preceding verses he had complained of his sins and the embarrassments of his sufferings. Here he proceeds to complain of much more.

I. THE SUFFERING OF HIS EXISTENCE, AND THE FLEETNESS OF HIS DAYS.

First: *The suffering of his existence.* "Man that is born of a woman"—frail, fragile woman,—"*is of few days and full of trouble.*" Human life is, and ever has been, more or less a condition of trouble. Even the most favoured men can say, in truth, "Few and evil have the days of the years of my life been." Goethe was considered by his compeers a man highly favoured of Providence: yet, what said he, as he drew near his end, and passed in review his departed years? "They have called me a child of fortune, nor have I any wish to complain of the course of my life. Yet it has been nothing but sorrow and labour; and I may truly say, that in seventy-five years I have not had four weeks of true comfort. It was the constant rolling of a stone that was always to be lifted anew. When I look back upon my earlier and middle life, and consider how few are left of those that were young with me, I am reminded of a summer visit to a watering-place. On arriving, one makes the acquaintance of those who have already been some time there, and leave the week following. This loss is painful. Now one becomes attached to the second generation, with which one lives for a time, and becomes intimately connected. But this also passes away, and leaves us solitary with the third, which arrives shortly before our own departure, and with which we have no desire to have much intercourse." Why should the condition of human life be one of suffering? Indeed, you may ask, Why should *pain* reign universally through all God's sentient creatures here below? Pain is evidently not an accident, not an exception, but a purpose and a rule. The throes of agony are witnessed everywhere: in the air, from the eagle to the winged insect; on the earth, from the lion to the worm; in the sea, from the leviathan to the smallest minnow. One creature is made to tear another to pieces and devour it, as the means of subsistence. Pain in God's irrational creatures is a far greater mystery to me than pain amongst human-kind. Men everywhere feel, not only that the pains they endure they justly deserve, but that a large portion of what they endure they have brought upon themselves by their own conduct. And then, too, it should be remembered that their very afflictions might, and should, be turned to

their spiritual advantage. Still, suffering is suffering; and all men can adopt the language of Job, and say, their days are "*few, and full of trouble.*"

Secondly: *The fleetness of his life.* "*He cometh forth like a flower, and is cut down.*" A flower; not a cedar, an elm, or an oak, but a flower, that blows in the morning, and in the evening is withered and dead. "*He fleeth also as a shadow.*" What on earth is so unsubstantial as a shadow? A vapour is something—it floats over the hills, darkens the landscape, condenses into clouds, and comes down in showers on the earth. But a shadow—what is it? Nothing. True, it implies a something; it implies a light, an obstructive object, and some thing on which it falls; but in itself it is nothing. This is life. "We are shadows," said the great Burke, "and pursuing shadows." Now, on the sufferings and swiftness of life Job grounds an appeal to Heaven, and says, "*And dost Thou open Thine eyes upon such an one, and bringest me into judgment with Thee?*" What he means is, "Since my life is so sad and swift, so full of trouble, so frail and fleeting, why dost Thou watch me with such vigilance, and bring me into such controversy with Thee? What am I, to deserve Thy severe notice, and to stand before Thee in judgment?" Who does not feel the force of this? What sufferer on his restless couch does not groan out the question, in every passing hour, What am I, that the Infinite should thus torture me? He goes on to complain of—

II. THE DEPRAVITY OF HIS ANCESTORS, AND THE LIMITATION OF HIS LIFE.

First: *The depravity of his ancestors.* "*Who can bring a clean thing out of an unclean?*" A general idea this, proverbially expressed. The meaning is, the result must bear the character of the cause. Like begets like everywhere. Job regarded his parents as morally imperfect, and having their imperfection transmitted to him. That parents do transmit their moral character to their children, is one of the most patent facts in all history. The transmission, however, need not be regarded as coming through physical generation, but rather by moral influence and imitation.

The fact that my parents were sinners, my moral nature cannot accept as a justification for my own sinfulness. A man's moral character is ever more his own production; and for it all society, Providence, and his own conscience hold him responsible. Were a man charged with murder to stand up in a court of justice, and say in defence, "My mother was a murderess," would that be felt to be an excuse, or even a mitigation? On the contrary, judge and jury would feel, the sooner such a monster was despatched the better.

Secondly: *The limitation of his life.* "Seeing his days are determined, the number of his months are with Thee, Thou hast appointed his bounds that he cannot pass." Job did not regard his life as a thing of chance or resistless law, but an object of a Divine purpose. He came by a Divine purpose, and came to live here for a given time by a purpose settled and irrevocable. So many "days" and "months"—no more. When those days had run out, his departure was inevitable. "There is no elixir of life," says one, "that can prolong our days beyond that period. Soon we shall come to that outer limit; then we must die." Thank God, we see not the boundary line! It comes not within our horizon; but there it is—clear to the eye of God, but impassable by us as the orbit of the sun. Now, again, on this depravity and limitation of life Job grounds another appeal to Heaven. "Turn from him, that he may rest, till he shall accomplish, as a hireling, his day." Since I am the offspring of imperfect parents, why mark my conduct with such a vigilant eye? Turn away Thy glance from me: since Thou hast thus bounded my time, and I cannot run beyond the tether, let me alone until I reach it, till I shall "accomplish, as a hireling, his day." This appeal is neither wise nor just. (1) The depravity of our life is no good reason why the Almighty should not mark our conduct; but rather the reverse. The son who, of all the family, is the most likely to go wrong, is the one on whom parental eyes are fixed with most interest and constancy. The worst case in the hospital calls for the most vigilant care from the good physician. (2) The limitation of life is no good reason why the Almighty should not mark our conduct.

What though there is around our life an impassable boundary and narrow withal, the influence of our conduct rolls over it and flows down the ages. You may annihilate a man's life, but you cannot a man's influence. Hence there is good reason why the Almighty Governor of the universe should watch a man. He goes on to complain of—

III. THE CERTAINTY OF HIS DEATH, AND THE HOPELESSNESS OF HIS FUTURE.

First: *The certainty of his death.* “*For there is hope of a tree.*” He speaks of his death as something as certain as the death of a tree. The tree dies, either because it is cut down or because it is worn out with age. Though it be an oak that has braved the storms of a thousand years, it must die. He speaks of his death as the drying of the waters. “*As the waters fail from the sea, and the flood decayeth and drieth up.*” Job lived near the Euphrates, which was sometimes called the sea (Jer. li. 36). And the Nile was also called the sea. The Nile, we know, was periodically dried up, and the rugged channel of the once flowing water answers to the outstretched corpse. Certain as that the Nile dried up, Job felt was his death. He felt he was a tree that would be cut down sooner or later; a flowing stream that would be dried up by the sun of mortality. Thus he assumes the certainty of death. And who of all the sons of earth have ever doubted the fact? “It is appointed unto all men once to die.”

Secondly: *The hopelessness of his future.* Whether he had any hope of a life beyond the grave is not for our discussion here. His language, however, states that he utterly despaired of ever *reappearing on the earth* after he had once made his exit. There was hope for the old tree that appeared utterly dead to shoot again to life, but there was no hope that man would ever come back to his earthly sphere. Even the waters that evaporated from lakes and rivers, leaving their channels dry, might come back again in all their plenitude and flow; but not man. So it is; there is no coming back to this earth when once we have gone. “*Till the heavens be no more.*” This language implies—
(1) That the termination of the heavens was far off in the

future. (2) That though far off it would come. (3) That when it came he might not appear. Whatever Job's opinions upon these points, the New Testament undoubtedly sustains them. No coming back to our homes, our scenes of business, pleasure, or worship, till the "*heavens be no more*;" and what more settled than the heavens! Ah me! as we tread a path here never to be traversed again, let us see that we finish our work as we go on. Fill up the day's duty in the daily life. Here, again, he finds an appeal to Heaven—"O that Thou wouldest hide me in the grave, that Thou wouldest keep me secret, until Thy wrath be past, that Thou wouldest appoint me a set time, and remember me!" It is natural, perhaps, for man in suffering to look upon the Almighty as angry and in wrath. Job did so now. He appeals here for two things:—(1) For a period of *rest*. "*Hide me in the grave.*" If by the grave he meant the burying spot, he would have bodily rest there. "There the wicked cease from troubling, there the weary be at rest." If he meant the world of departed spirits, he had confidence he would find rest there; for he was "just" and "upright," one that "feared God" and "eschewed evil." He appeals—(2) For a period of *Divine mercy*. "*That Thou wouldest appoint me a set time, and remember me!*" Does he point to a life beyond the grave? I know not. "There is," says an able author, "the instinctive love of life in his bosom, and he asks that God would appoint a time, though ever so remote; in which He would return to him and permit him to live again. There is the secret hope of some future life, though remote; and he is willing to be hid for any period of time until the wrath of God should pass by, if he might live again. Such is the lingering desire of life in the bosom of man in the severest trials and the darkest hours; and so instinctively does he look on even to the most remote period with the hope of life."

HOMILY No. XXXVIII.

JOB'S ARGUMENT WITH HIS THREE FRIENDS.

(3.) HIS APPEAL TO HEAVEN. (Continued.)

"If a man die, shall he live again? all the days of my appointed time will I wait, till my change come." &c.—CHAP. XIV. 14-22.

EXEGETICAL REMARKS. Ver. 14.—"If a man die, shall he live again? all the days of my appointed time will I wait, till my change come." "The days of my warfare."—*Delitzsch*. The question implies not a denial of the possibility of such a restoration, but a deep sense of its hopelessness. (See "Commentary by the Bishops and other Clergy of the Anglican Church," in *loco*.)

Ver. 15.—"Thou shalt call, and I will answer Thee." This language seems to express a desire that the Almighty would come at once to him in order to settle the questions that agitated his heart. He wanted those questions cleared up. "Thou wilt have a desire to the work of Thine hands." Some think this should be rendered in the imperative: "Do Thou have a desire for the work of Thine hands."

Ver. 16.—"For now Thou numberest my steps; dost Thou not watch over my sin?" The idea is, Thou markest my conduct with a scrutinizing inspection.

Ver. 17.—"My transgression is sealed up in a bag, and Thou sewest up mine iniquity." The meaning seems to be that God treasured up all his wrong doings, in order to repay them fully.

Ver. 18.—"And surely the mountain falling cometh to nought, and the rock is removed out of his place." By the continued operation

of natural bodies on each other, the hardy substances get worn away by attrition. *Gutta cavat lapidem*.

Ver. 19.—"The waters wear the stones: Thou wastest away the things which grow out of the dust of the earth; and Thou destroyest the hope of man." "Water holloweth out stone, its overflowings carry away the dust of the earth, and the hope of man—Thou destroyest."—*Delitzsch*.

Ver. 20.—"Thou prevailest for ever against him, and he passeth." Or overpowerest him, so that he will never recover. "Thou changest his countenance, and sendest him away." Changest in the death-struggle, in the rapid process of decay.

Ver. 21.—"His sons come to honour, and he knoweth it not; and they are brought low, but he perceiveth it not of them." This refers to the hope suggested by Eliphaz, that Job's posterity might still be great and prosperous (chap. v. 25).

Ver. 22.—"But his flesh upon him shall have pain, and his soul within him shall mourn." "Only on his own account his flesh suffereth pain, and on his own account is his soul conscious of grief."—*Delitzsch*. "The meaning of this verse," says *Canon Cook*, "appears to be, one thing only is sure, his flesh on him, while life remain, will suffer, and his soul will mourn over him."

HOMILETICS.—These words bring under notice the following subjects of thought:—

I. A CRY THAT IS UNIVERSAL, AND A DUTY THAT IS IMPORTANT. Here we have—

First: *A cry that is universal.* “*If a man die, shall he live again?*” Will a man live after his bodily organization has been reduced to dust, and he has disappeared from all earthly scenes? Is there a life for him beyond this? or with his last earthly breath does he go out in black extinction? The cry here and everywhere implies a belief both in its possibility and desirability. It is possible to live after death; for “with God all things are possible.” And it is desirable, for nature revolts at the thought of annihilation. But shall I live?—that is the question, a question as wide as the race, as deep as the heart of humanity. “Wilt Thou show wonders to the dead? shall the dead arise and praise Thee?” Where can this deep universal cry of humanity receive a satisfactory answer? In philosophy? No. The ancient sages lived and died without reaching satisfaction on the subject. Nor can reason supply conclusive arguments in proof of a future life. Thank God! the Gospel gives a full answer to the question, “Shall the dead arise and praise Thee?” “Behold, I show you a mystery,” &c. Here we have—

Secondly: *A duty that is important.* What is the duty? (1) A patient waiting for the end. “*All the days of my appointed time will I wait, till my change come,*” or, as some render it, “my discharge come.” Our end must come: it is appointed, fixed to the hour. Let us wait, wait in readiness, wait in calm confidence, wait in hope. What is the duty? (2) Confidence in the kindness of God. “*Thou shalt call, and I will answer Thee: Thou wilt have a desire to the work of Thine hands.*” As if Job had said, It cannot be that He feels no interest in me, Whose creature I am, and whose whole nature is interested in Him. I yearn after Him, and does He not yearn for me? Never let us doubt the fact that God is interested in us, for we are necessarily interested in Him. Is He everything to us, and are we nothing to Him? “*Thou shalt call, and I will answer Thee.*” “Thou

wilt have a desire to the work of Thine hands." These words bring under notice—

II. A DISTRESSING CONSCIOUSNESS AND A RESISTLESS LAW. Here is—

First: *A distressing consciousness.* “*Dost Thou not watch over my sin?*” What was his consciousness? (1) That God observed all his sins. “*For now Thou numberest my steps.*” He felt that the Omniscient Eye of purity was ever resting on him, and from its glance he could not escape. (2) That God stored up all his sins. “*My transgression is sealed up in a bag, and Thou sewest up mine iniquity.*” “All the documents that go to prove his guilt are stored up in the scrip or pouch which hangs from the Judge’s belt, ready to be produced against him at the most opportune moment; and the proofs of his iniquity, *i.e.* of his most heinous offences, are even sewed up in an interior scrip, so anxious is the Judge not by any mischance to lose them, so bent on finding him guilty.”—*S. Cov.* What a terrible consciousness this! A consciousness which every sinner should have, that each sin is noticed and remembered by God: not one is lost. Here is—

Secondly: *A resistless law.* What is the law? The law of dissolution. Job saw it—(1) In the *inorganic* realm. “*And surely the mountain falling cometh to nought, and the rock is removed out of his place.*” Since the Creator rounded this earth, and sent it wheeling through space, how many Alpine hills has Time removed! As large men shrink into dwarf proportions under the weight of years, hugest mountains get smaller and smaller, as ages beat them with their billows—“*the waters wear the stones.*” He saw it—(2) In the *animate* realm. “*Thou washest away the things which grow out of the dust of the earth.*” What “things” have “grown out of the dust of the earth”! What herbs, flowers, orchards, forests! What sentient existences too! for all animal as well as vegetable life—the fowls of heaven, the fish of the sea, the cattle upon a thousand hills—have come out of the “dust of the earth.” And these, too, are subject to the law of wear, tear, and dissolution. “*Thou washest away the things which grow out of the dust of the earth.*”

Blooming landscapes come and go, mighty forests rise and fall, generations of animals succeed one another, like waves that break upon the shore. He saw it—(3) In the *human* realm. “*Thou destroyest the hope of man. Thou prevailest for ever against him: Thou changest his countenance, and sendest him away.*” He seems to have been impressed with this law as it acted in the two great departments of life. (a) The *mental* department. “*Thou destroyest the hope of man.*” Though the patriarch might mean here by “*hope*,” the hope of a life beyond the grave, or the hope of reappearing again on the earth after he had quitted it, his words bear a far wider application. Generally, what is the “*hope of man*”? For the most part it is that which has animated him in all his operations and achievements; it is the spring of all his labours, whether they be literary or scientific, commercial, political, or ecclesiastic. In truth, all the productions of man, that have ever existed or that now exist, were once a human “*hope.*” It is hope that has built the cities, the cathedrals, the temples, palaces, governments, and kingdoms of the world. All human institutions, intellectual systems, and arts, are the creations of hope. hope evoked the purpose, stirred the inventive thoughts, and marshalled the executive forces.

“Hope leads the child to plant the flower,
The man to sow the seed;
Nor leaves fulfilment to her hour,
But prompts again to deed.”

Now, time wears out and destroys all this “*hope.*” As the mountains fall and “*come to nought*,” and rocks are “*removed*” out of their place, and “*waters wear away the stone*,” so time works ruin amongst all human productions. Many great cities it has buried in the dust, and it is sapping the foundations of all that are now flourishing upon the earth. It has shattered kingdoms, and swept dynasties, which once stood as “*mountains*,” from the face of the earth; it has worn out many a religion, and blown away as gorgeous clouds great systems of thought, that once attracted the attention of the greatest thinkers of the world. This hand of decay is as active and ubiquitous to-day as ever: its grim fingers are on everything that is

human, and everything human is shrivelling beneath its touch. Thrones are mouldering, kingdoms are dissolving, the world's greatest institutions are wearing out. The time will come when Rome, Venice, Berlin, St. Petersburg, London, New York, will be as "*mountains*" that have come to "*nought*," as "*rocks*" that have been "*removed*" out of their place.

"Unfathomed sea ! whose waves are years;
Ocean of Time, whose waters of deep woe
Are brackish with the salt of human tears;
Thou shoreless flood, which, in the ebb and flow,
Claspest the limits of mortality,
And sick of prey, yet howling on for more,
Vomitest thy wrecks on its inhospitable shore."—*Shelley*.

He saw this law acting in—(b) The *corporeal* department. "*Thou prevailest for ever against him.*" Truly. Not one out of all the generations of men that have appeared on this globe for 6000 years has been able to stand. The hugest giants as well as the tiniest dwarfs have alike succumbed. "*And he passeth.*" Truly. From his shop, his farm, his office, his home, "*he passeth,*" and no one sees him any more. "*Thou changest his countenance.*" The cheeks flushed with beauty receive a ghastly pallor; the eyes beaming with intelligence and love have a hideous glaze; the rosy lips, once the organs of living thought and love, are blanched, frozen, and motionless. Thou "*sendest him away.*" Truly. His body to the grave, but whither his soul?—ah! whither?

"What's the grandeur of the earth
To the grandeur round Thy throne?
Riches, glory, beauty, birth,
To Thy kingdom all have gone.
Before Thee stand the wondrous band,
Bards, heroes, sages, side by side,
Who darkened nations when they died.

"Earth has hosts, but Thou canst show
Many a million for her one.
Through the gates the mortal flow
Hath for countless years rolled on.
Back from the tomb no step has come;
There fixed, till the last thunder's sound
Shall bid Thy prisoners be unbound."—*Crowley*.

He saw this law acting in—(c) The *social* department. "*His sons come to honour, and he knoweth it not; and they are brought low, but he perceiveth it not of them.*" By this

law the loving father whose whole nature was interested in the history of his children while living, becomes utterly unconscious of all that pertains to his posterity. If they rise to the highest heights of worldly greatness, or descend to the lowest depths of degradation, he knows it not. He has done with them.

CONCLUSION.—This subject teaches—

First : The *unwisdom of worldliness*. What do I mean by worldliness? In other words, who is the worldly man? Not the man who takes a passing interest in the secular questions of the day. There is no harm in this—nay, it is duty. Current occurrences are Divine dispensations in human life. They have a voice that should be heard, a significance that should be studied. Their records are our Books of Chronicles, chronicles of kings and peoples, as they are now on the earth. Not the man who pursues his secular calling. Human labour is the Divine condition of human livelihood. He that works not should not eat—this is a law settled in heaven; diligence in the pursuit of our worldly callings is a Divine obligation. Not the man who is charmed with the beauties and sublimities of the material world, and gives himself to the study of its constitution and laws; to study nature rightly is to study God. But by a worldly man, I mean the man whose spirit is dominated by greed and ambition, whose inspiration is filthy lucre and worldly pride; the man whose interests, pleasures, and dignities are all of the “earth, earthy;” the man to whom the present life is everything, the life to come a blank; the man the grand question of whose daily life is not, “Lord, what wilt Thou have me to do?” but, “What shall I eat, what shall I drink, wherewithal shall I be clothed?” Such a man as this is to the last degree unwise. Worldliness is egregious folly. Folly, because all it gets satisfies not, but leaves the soul empty and gnawing. Folly, because what it gets is very transitory. All beneath the sun is wearing out, the “*mountains*” are falling, the “*rocks*” are being “*removed*,” the stones are being washed away, the things that grow out of the earth are dying, the hopes of man are being destroyed, the whole

generation of men are passing away as shadows under the sun. It is said that the old Romans painted Honour in the temple of Apollo, as representing the form of a man with a rose in his right hand, a lily in his left, above him a marigold, and under him wormwood, with the inscription, *Levate*, "consider." The rose denotes that man flourishes as a flower, but at length is withered and cast away. The lily denotes the favour of man, which is easily lost, and is soon of no account. The marigold shows the fickleness of prosperity. The wormwood signifies that all the delights of the world are sweet in execution, but bitter in retribution. *Levate*, consider what lesson of earthly vanity is here. This subject teaches—

Secondly: *The value of Christianity.* Is this life the end of us? Is man nothing more than animated matter, and subject to the universal and inexorable law of dissolution? Is he to be washed away by the mighty billows of destiny, like all other things that "*grow out of the dust of the earth*"? Is there nothing within him that this law cannot touch, that tower in majesty above it, and will survive the wreck of matter and the crash of worlds? "*If a man die, shall he live again?*" Thank God, the New Testament answers this question. "We know that if our earthly house of this tabernacle were dissolved, we have a building of God, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens." "Though our outward man perish, yet the inward man is renewed day by day."

HOMILY No. XXXIX.

THE SECOND COLLOQUY (EXTENDING FROM CHAP. XV. TO XXI.).

THE SECOND SPEECH OF ELIPHAZ.

"*Then answered Eliphaz the Temanite, and said,*" &c.—CHAP. XV. 1-35.

GENERAL NOTE. The second Here Eliphaz appears for the second colloquy here commences, and extends to the end of chap. xxi. time, and his tone is somewhat changed: he is more harsh and

sarcastic, and he assumes that Job's guilt has been proved.

EXEGETICAL REMARKS. *Ver. 2.*—“*Should a wise man utter vain knowledge, and fill his belly with the east wind?*” Job had spoken of himself as a wise man (chap. xii. 3, xiii. 6); and Eliphaz means to say, that the sentiments that Job had just advanced were an utter refutation of his pretensions to wisdom. He refers to his statements as “vain knowledge,” or, as in the margin, “knowledge of wind.” Wind is the emblem of what is empty and unsubstantial. And the speaker means that the sentiments that Job had advanced were not only as unsubstantial as the wind, but as pernicious as the *east* wind, which is destructive of vegetation. This verse has been thus rendered, “Should a wise man answer with arguments of wind, and fill his bosom with the east wind?”

Ver. 3.—“*Should he reason with unprofitable talk? or with speeches wherewith he can do no good?*” He means to say that it is inconsistent with the character of a wise man to make use of irrelevant arguments, to make a speech that can answer no good service.

Ver. 4.—“*Yea, thou castest off fear, and restrainest prayer before God.*” Here he charges the arguments, if not the character, of Job with irreverence. The rendering of *Dr. Bernard* is, “Nay, more, thou destroyest the fear of the Almighty, and takest away prayer from before God.”

Ver. 5.—“*For thy mouth uttereth thine iniquity, and thou chooseth the tongue of the crafty.*” “For thine own mouth teacheth thine iniquity, though thou chooseth the tongue of the crafty.” The idea is, Thy very argument proves thou art

a guilty man. He means to say that no good man would use such arguments as Job had used.

Ver. 6.—“*Thine own mouth condemneth thee, and not I: yea, thine own lips testify against thee.*” There is an air of haughtiness about this language, as if he had said, I will not deign to argue with thee on the subject, thine own words are a sufficient refutation.

Ver. 7.—“*Art thou the first man that was born? or wast thou made before the hills?*” Eliphaz perhaps alludes to the belief that Adam, the first man, was endowed with perfect wisdom by God. It is a proverbial saying in India: “He is the first man, no wonder he is so wise.” The ancients were in the habit of regarding men wise according to their age. The older the man, the more wisdom they expected. Hence the point of the question, “*Wast thou made before the hills?*”—the most ancient and lasting things on the earth. Perhaps Eliphaz means to say, Thou seemest to regard thyself as the wisest man that ever lived, as if thou hadst been gathering up wisdom from the beginning of the world to this hour. Thou wouldst have men to believe that thou wert the first man ever born, that thou livedst before the hills.

Ver. 8.—“*Hast thou heard the secret of God? and dost thou restrain wisdom to thyself?*” “Hast thou heard the secret counsel of God, and secured wisdom for thyself?” “Wast thou present as a hearer in the council of Eloah?”—*Canon Cook*. If not, why shouldst thou speak about God's procedure with such oracular self-assurance?

Ver. 9.—“*What knowest thou, that we know not? what understandest thou, which is not in us?*” What just pretensions to wisdom

hast thou that we have not? Our advantages are equal to thine.

Ver. 10.—“*With us are both the gray-headed and very aged men, much elder than thy father.*” These words imply what has already been intimated, that wisdom was regarded as being with the aged. And Eliphaz asserts that he had the aged about him as well as Job, who was himself comparatively a young man.

Ver. 11.—“*Are the consolations of God small with thee? is there any secret thing with thee?*” A great variety of renderings have been given to this verse. “Are the consolations of God small with thee, and is His word unavailing with thee?”—*Dr. Lee*. “Dost thou undervalue the consolations or the addresses of kindness to thyself?”—*Wemyss*. “Wilt thou disregard the consolation that God furnishes, and the words that have been so gently addressed to thee?”—*Dr. Barnes*. “Are our strong consolations too little for thee, but was there a gentle word with thee?”—*Dr. Bernard*. Translate, “Are the consolations of God too small for thee; the word softly spoken with thee?” The reference is to the first speech of Eliphaz, v. 17, &c.—*Dr. Samuel Davidson*. His idea, perhaps, is this—The consolations we have addressed to thee are consolations that God has furnished for the afflicted, and are they not sufficient for thee?

Ver. 12.—“*Why doth thine heart carry thee away? and what do thy eyes wink at?*” Why doth thine heart hurry thee away, and thine eyes, what wink they at? Perhaps the meaning of this is,—Why dost thou allow thy feelings to carry thee beyond the boundaries of reason; and why dost thou look with such proud contempt at what I am saying?

Ver. 13.—“*That thou turnest thy spirit against God, and lett'st such words go out of thy mouth?*” Why should thy mind be turned against God, instead of acquiescing in His procedure?

Ver. 14.—“*What is man, that he should be clean? and he which is born of a woman, that he should be righteous?*”—Job had repeatedly stated that he was a righteous man, and that consequently the great sufferings he was enduring were undeserved. Against this Eliphaz sets himself in strong argument. In this verse he makes the broad statement that no man is righteous; that all born of woman are morally corrupt. He had virtually said this before (iv. 17), and Job had admitted it (xiv. 4).

Ver. 15.—“*Behold, He putteth no trust in His saints; yea, the heavens are not clean in His sight.*” Here he repeats in substance the revelation which he had in vision recorded in chap. iv. Those who in that vision he calls servants are here spoken of as saints, and the references are undoubtedly to angels. He does not mean, perhaps, to say that either the angels or the heavens are at all tainted with impurity; but, as compared with the absolute holiness of God, they appear so.

Ver. 16.—“*How much more abominable and filthy is man, which drinketh iniquity like water?*” Fallible man as Eliphaz unquestionably was, here he speaks an undoubted truth, viz., that man is corrupt, and that he delights in sin: he “*drinketh iniquity like water.*” It is to him like water to a thirsty soul. Man is not only sinful, but he has a thirst for sin.

Ver. 17.—“*I will shew thee, hear me; and that which I have seen I will declare.*” From this verse to

the end of the chapter, it has been said, there is a violent declamation, designed to overwhelm Job with the proofs of personal guilt. The whole is drawn from the history of his own experience and that of the ancients.

Ver. 18.—“Which wise men have told from their fathers, and have not hid it.” He means to say that the great men of the past had handed down the doctrine he had set up, viz., that all men were sinful, and that the sinful only were punished.

Ver. 19.—“Unto whom alone the earth was given, and no stranger passed among them.” There seems to be a little patriotic pride, an unkind innuendo in these words. As a genuine Arab, he seems to have been proud that his ancestors had possessed the land, that they had never mixed with foreigners; and he hints that Job, from his proximity to the Sabæans and Chaldeans, had been corrupted in sentiment. Eliphaz appears to have been one of those men, common in all ages, who believe in the transcendent excellence of the past, who are ever looking back to some holy Arcadia or golden age.

Ver. 20.—“The wicked man travaileth with pain all his days, and the number of years is hid den to the oppressor.” Here he states the great doctrine of what he conceives to be an infallible antiquity. He means to say the ungodly are always miserable.

Ver. 21.—“A dreadful sound is in his ears: in prosperity the destroyer shall come upon him.” Margin: a “sound of fears is in his ears.” He has always the presentiment of danger. The voice of Nemesis seems always to boom about him. Even in peace and

prosperity he is full of terrible forebodings.

Vers. 22-24.—“He believeth not that he shall return out of darkness, and he is waited for of the sword. He wandereth abroad for bread, saying, Where is it? he knoweth that the day of darkness is ready at his hand. Trouble and anguish shall make him afraid; they shall prevail against him, as a king ready to the battle.” The following extract from *Dr. Bernard* gives, I think, the sense of the verses:—“He doth not believe he will return from darkness. That he will ever be able to extricate himself from the gloom and misery which will be his lot. Seeing that he is watched by his fate for the sword. He is impressed with the belief that his fate is watching him very closely, ready to smite him with the sword, and he does not therefore venture out from his dwelling. If at all he does stir abroad, it is to ask for bread, saying, Where is it? Nothing but urgent hunger can induce him to go out, because he knoweth that the day of darkness is ready at his hand. He is aware that his doom is sealed, and his end is close upon him. Trouble and calamity affright him; it, like a mighty and irresistible king, shall overpower him: a king against whom is no rising up; he is destined for its fall. He is destined to be incessantly tossed about by calamity like a ball. Comp. Isaiah xxii. 18, where Shebna the treasurer is told that God will surely violently turn and toss him like a ball.”

Ver. 25.—“For he stretcheth out his haul against God, and strengtheneth himself against the Almighty.” That is, wieldeth his spear as a rebel against the Almighty. The whole image here is taken from war.

The idea is, that the wicked man wages war against the Eternal.

Ver. 26.—“*He runneth upon him, even on his neck, upon the thick bosses of his bucklers.*” Boss with us means a knot either of silver, brass, or ivory as an ornament. The Hebrew means something arched, and here it refers to the shield. The imagery is from ancient warfare, and is here employed to represent the defiance and violence with which wicked men oppose the Almighty.

Ver. 27.—“*Because he covereth his face with his fatness, and maketh collops of fat on his flanks.*” He lived in luxury and excess, a self-indulgent voluptuary. Like those to whom the Psalmist refers in Psalm xvii. 10 :—“They are enclosed in their own fat, with their mouth they speak proudly.” “The connection of thought is this, He shall not have an abiding prosperity, because he had lived in luxury, a godless, carnal life, and dwelt in houses which he had acquired by violence, by the ruin of the lawful possessors, and therefore destined to destruction.”—*Canon Cook.*

Ver. 28.—“*And he dwelleth in desolate cities, and in houses which no man inhabiteth, which are ready to become heaps.*” Perhaps the proper reading of this is,—“Therefore he shall dwell in desolate cities, in houses which no one will inhabit, that are ready to become a hill of ruins.” “The explanations here are very various, and the sense obscure.”—*Dr. S. Davidson.*

Vers. 29, 30.—“*He shall not be*

rich, neither shall his substance continue, neither shall he prolong the perfection thereof upon the earth. He shall not depart out of darkness; the flame shall dry up his branches, and by the breath of his mouth shall he go away.” These verses, in strong figurative language, describe the ruin to which the wicked must ultimately be reduced.

Ver. 31.—“*Let not him that is deceived trust in vanity: for vanity shall be his recompence.*” Here Eliphaz begins an exhortation. The meaning of this is, all earthly good is vanity, and the wicked will find it to be such at last.

Vers. 32, 33.—“*It shall be accomplished before his time, and his branch shall not be green. He shall shake off his unripe grape as the vine, and shall cast off his flower as the olive.*” He in these verses takes up the image of a tree in order to describe the ruin that must come upon the wicked. It will be cut off before its time; its branch will never get green; it shall fall as an unripe grape from the vine, and as flowers from the olive. “Bloody and deceitful men shall not live out half their days.”

Vers. 34, 35.—“*For the congregation (household) of hypocrites shall be desolate, and fire shall consume the tabernacles of bribery. They conceive mischief, and bring forth vanity, and their belly prepareth deceit.*” They deceive themselves with ideas of their own greatness, and this overweening pride leads to their ruin.

HOMILETICS.—This second address of Eliphaz may be conveniently divided into four sections: his personal reproof, theological theory, historical knowledge, and practical exhortation.

Notice :—

I. HIS PERSONAL REPROOF.

First: Eliphaz charges Job's arguments with *vanity*. "Should a wise man utter vain knowledge, and fill his belly with the east wind?" He means to say that there was no more substance or weight in Job's arguments than in mere wind. His sentiments were vapid and volatile, not worth notice. He insinuates—(1) That such empty sentiments occupied *his entire mind*. "Filled his belly," i. e., soul, himself. He insinuates that Job's mind was tolerably furnished; not with truths, but with errors—not with realities, but with phantasies, mere "*wind*." (2) That those empty sentiments were *pernicious*. They were the "*east wind*." A wind which in summer is sultry and scorching; in winter cutting and withering; seldom pleasing or profitable, but often unpleasant and injurious. Now, whilst this charge was utterly false in relation to the ideas which Job had for the most part advanced, it is, alas! too true in relation to multitudes of men in every age and land. Their knowledge is "*east wind*." It swells out the mind in self-conceit, and flows forth both in literature and talk as "*east wind*," which, although it may make a little stir by lashing the waters and shaking the forests, effects but little good, and produces enormous mischief. God knows there is plenty of this "*east wind*" in parliamentary debates, in platform discussions, in literary productions, and even in pulpit discourses.

Secondly: He charges Job's arguments with *impiety*. "Yea, thou castest off fear, and restrainest prayer before God." He does not mean, I presume, that Job did not pray, but that his arguments destroyed the reason and grounds for prayer. This language implies that reverence for God, *prayer to Him*, was regarded by these ancient men, who lived outside the sphere of special Divine revelation, as a solemn duty. In truth, this is the teaching of natural religion. Nature teaches that God should be held in reverence by every member of His intelligent creation. The irreverent soul sins against nature. Prayer to God was also regarded by these men as a solemn obligation. Prayer is not an arbitrary ordinance, it is an instinct of the soul, and a want of our nature. A praying habitude is the normal mood of mind. Alas, that men living under the

light of God's special revelation should be irreverent and prayerless, cast off fear, and restrain prayer!

Thirdly: He charges Job's arguments with *condemning himself*. He refers to the *nature* of his arguments as proving himself *sinful*. "*For thy mouth uttereth thine iniquity.*" "A man may pursue an argument and defend positions that shall as certainly show that he is destitute of religion as though he lived an abandoned life. And he who holds opinions that are dishonourable to God can no more be a pious man than if he dishonoured God by violating His law." This, Eliphaz seems to have felt. Then the *reasoning* of his arguments, too, he thought, proved his sinfulness, "*Thou choosest the tongue of the crafty.*" A man may use a sound and lawful argument in a sinful way, a way that is artful, evasive, and disingenuous. Eliphaz thought that Job's argument was of this character, hence he says, "*Thine own mouth condemneth thee, and not I: yea, thine own lips testify against thee.*" Although I am far enough from admitting that this charge against Job's arguments had any good foundation, it is an undoubted fact that a man's reasoning often reveals his true character, and a character against which he himself would protest.

Fourthly: He charges Job's arguments with *presumption*. "*Art thou the first man that was born?*" The meaning of these words seems to be this: (a) Thou hast been reasoning as if thou existedst before the beginning of time. One would suppose from thy talk that thou wert the "*first man,*" that thou wast "*made before the hills,*" and therefore that no one knows so much as thou. The opinions of others thou either ignorest or treatest with haughty indifference. (b) Nay, more, one would suppose from thy talk that thou hadst been taken into the very counsels of the Eternal. "*Hast thou heard the secret of God? and dost thou restrain wisdom to thyself?*" (c) But notwithstanding this assumption of thine, our means of information are equal to thine. "*What knowest thou, that we know not? what understandest thou, which is not in us? With us are both the grayheaded and very aged men, much elder than thy father.*" Thou art only a boy as compared with our compeers and neighbours. Thy father is younger than some of the sages with whom

we are acquainted, and with whom sometimes we are in converse. A tolerably severe reproof is this of Job's presumption; whether warranted or not, every student of the patriarch's language will decide for himself.

Fifthly: He charges Job's arguments with *truth-depreciation*. "*Are the consolations of God small with thee? Is there any secret thing with thee?*" "The true idea seems to be, that Eliphaz regarded the considerations adduced by him and his friends as the gracious consolations which God had provided for men in affliction, and as the results of all former reflections and the design of God in sending trial. He now represents Job as regarding them as of no value, and maintaining sentiments directly in variance with them." It has been said that a man condemns that in others most strongly which he himself possesses in the highest degree. This is, it must be confessed, often true. A man who has the most intolerance in his own heart often thunders the most vigorously against tyranny and oppression. He who is the greatest pope in his own family or in his own Church, whether established or dissenting, will, as a rule, always be the most fierce and furious in denouncing the Pope of Rome. Eliphaz is here charging Job with presumption, and at the same time assuming that his own arguments were the "*consolations of God.*" His real meaning seems to be this: What I and my friends have been saying to thee is Divine; our sentiments are "*consolations*" from God, and yet thou dost not appreciate them. If we have spoken strongly, I may ask, "*Is there any secret thing with thee?*" i. e. was there any gentle thing with thee? Didst thou not speak strongly too?

Sixthly: He charges Job's arguments with *haughty impulsiveness*. "*Why doth thine heart carry thee away?*" Why dost thou allow thy feelings to overbear thy judgment, and withal "*wink*" thine "*eyes*" with such apparent contempt at what I say? It is certainly a morally regrettable thing to allow our feelings to get the mastery of our understanding. When this is the case the soul is like a ship at sea without a pilot or a rudder, at the mercy of the elements. And it must be confessed that Job often seemed in this condition: his heart carried him away, and he spoke

with a frantic wildness. Blessed is the man whose intellect controls his strongest impulses, and whose conscience controls his intellect.

Seventhly: He charges Job's arguments with *rebelliousness*. "*Thou turnest thy spirit against God, and lettest such words go out of thy mouth.*" It must be acknowledged, that whilst Job's spirit in the main was in sympathy with God, under the force of his anguish he seemed sometimes to rise in hostility against Heaven. Eliphaz marked this, and here strikes the reproof. Several general truths come out of the whole of this section. (1) *That monotheistic piety is incumbent on all men.* Eliphaz here refers to reverence, prayer, submission, towards *one* God, as common, acknowledged, and solemn obligations. He does not argue either their existence, importance, or obligation. He assumes them as if they were universally admitted both by himself, his friends, and men of his times and country. And so they were. These elements of religion are as old as man, as inextinguishable as the instincts of our nature. Another truth that comes out of the whole is—(2) *That a man's language reveals his character.* "*Thine own mouth condemneth thee.*" Men may and do use their language at times to conceal and misrepresent their character; but the free common language of men reveals the heart as streams the fountain, as sunbeams the sun. "Out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh." Another truth is—(3) *That the older a man is, the wiser he should be.* "*Art thou the first man that was born?*" We are sent into the world to get knowledge. Streams of intelligence flow from every part of nature and every event of life. Man has a natural thirst for these streams, and a capacity to take into his soul an indefinite quantity. The longer he lives, therefore, the more he should know. An ignorant old man is an anomaly in the world, and a perverter of life. Another truth is—(4) *That one man may administer the "consolations of God" to another.* Man, with the elements of Divine truth and genuine sympathy of soul, has the power of assuaging the grief and healing the broken heart of afflicted men. This is the highest mission of man. "Comfort ye, comfort ye My people." Another truth is—(5) *That all men should hold a religious*

control over their impulses. "Why doth thine heart carry thee away?" Ungoverned impulses have ruined millions, and are ruining millions now.*

Notice:—

II. HIS THEOLOGICAL THEORY.

First: *The universal depravity of man.* "What is man, that he should be clean? and he which is born of a woman, that he should be righteous?" Job himself held the same doctrine, and stated it in the fourth verse of the preceding chapter—"Who can bring a clean thing out of an unclean? Not one." The doctrine is taught elsewhere in many places in Holy Scripture. David says, "There is none that doeth good: no, not one" (Psalm xiv. 3). Solomon challenges his race with the question, "Who can say, I have made my heart clean, I am pure from my sin?" (Proverbs xx. 9). Paul says we are "by nature the children of wrath (that is, 'children justly exposed to punishment') even as others" (Eph. ii. 3). John says, "If we say that we have not sinned, we make Him a liar, and His word is not in us" (1 John i. 10). So that this old Arabian, who lived, in all probability, before Abraham, maintains an opinion that runs through the Bible. Do you ask me how he learnt it? I ask, how was it possible for him not to learn it? In all souls there appears with more or less vividness an *ideal* of manhood; and between this ideal and the characters of all living men there is a most striking and painful contrast. Through the long course of ages only one Man has appeared whose character seems congruous with the moral instincts of our nature, and that One is the "Son of Man." Two remarks may be offered here. (1) Universal depravity is no reflection upon the character of God. (a) We can account for it without tracing it to Him, who tempteth no man. The well-known might of parental influence is sufficient to explain the whole. (b) Every man charges his sins upon himself. Hence remorse, &c. (2) *Universal depravity* shows the necessity of a universal remedy. A system to restore man to the knowledge, the image, and fellowship of his Maker must be adapted for all men of all conditions, all ages, and all climes. Such a system, thank God, we have

* See *Homilist*, Enlarged Series, vol. v. (*in loco*).

in the Gospel. Another theological doctrine which Eliphaz seems to have held is—

Secondly: *The absolute purity of God.* “Behold, He putteth no trust in His saints; yea, the heavens are not clean in His sight.” This is a doctrine that also runs through the Bible: everywhere are we taught that He is glorious in holiness, that “without holiness no man can see the Lord.” God’s holiness is—(1) *Underived*, (2) *Immutable*, (3) *The standard of character to all moral beings in the universe.* How did Eliphaz get at this doctrine? It is an instinctive belief in all souls: a belief which is the light by which we discover the depravity of men, by which we realize our own sinfulness, by which we feel bound to love, adore, and serve the Infinite. This belief is a light which burns like fire in every guilty conscience. No infidelity can destroy this innate faith. It is the “light that lighteth every man that cometh into the world.” Unquenchable light. The other theological doctrine which Eliphaz seems to have held is—

Thirdly: *The abhorrent character of sin.* “How much more abominable and filthy is man, which drinketh iniquity like water?” Sin is “abominable”—(1) To all holy creatures. It is more loathsome than death to the eye of an angel. It is “abominable”—(2) To universal conscience. God has so constituted conscience that it cannot approve of sin: it must loathe, it must damn it. It is “abominable”—(3) To the holy God. It is the thing He hateth, the only thing He does hate; and He hates it because it is repugnant to His nature, because it disturbs the order of His universe, and destroys the happiness of His creatures. Now all this is what may be called natural theology. Eliphaz did not get this knowledge from the Bible; there was no Bible extant in his day; he got it from his own nature; he read it on the pages of his own soul.

Notice:—

III. HIS HISTORIC KNOWLEDGE. “I will shew thee, hear me; and that which I have seen I will declare; which wise men have told from their fathers, and have not hid it: unto whom alone the earth was given, and no stranger passed among

them." What is the historic truth which this man had learnt, not only from his own experience, but from the traditions of those venerable sages who had been bred and born in his country? That wicked men are *miserable all their days*. "*The wicked man travaileth with pain all his days, and the number of years is hidden to the oppressor.*" From his historic knowledge he urges—

First: That the miseries of the ungodly are specially *mental*. They have sufferings of body as all men have; but their sufferings are specially in the mind. The peculiar mental suffering to which Eliphaz refers, is that of *moral forebodement*. "*A dreadful sound is in his ears.*" He does not hear the real music of nature: strange sounds of terror echo in his ears,—notes rung out from a guilty conscience; every sound to him seems to be the footfall of the Divine Avenger. He is like a criminal fleeing from justice, who thinks in every man he sees a detective. (1) This painfully affects him even in his happiest circumstances. "*In prosperity the destroyer shall come upon him.*" When all his material surroundings seem bright and promising, he is disturbed by the apprehension of danger. Guilty conscience breaks his slumbers, throws a chilling shadow over his heart, even when the sun of prosperity shines brightly on him. (2) This bereaves him of all courage. "*He believeth not that he shall return out of darkness, and he is waited for of the sword.*" It steals from him his manhood; he is timid and nervous. He feels himself doomed, and he lives in constant dread. How true is this! A wicked man can have no conscious security. (3) This makes him restless and unsettled. "*He wandereth abroad for bread, saying Where is it?*" The soul of the wicked man has lost its centre—God, and has no repose. The wicked are like the troubled sea, they know no rest. "*Trouble and anguish*" fill him with dread, they seize him as a "*king ready to the battle.*" His fears and apprehensions, the creations of his own guilty conscience, rush upon him with the violence of an armed king ready for battle. Shakspeare himself has not given a more truthful and graphic description of a guilty conscience than this old Eliphaz. From his historic knowledge he urges—

Secondly: That the miseries of the ungodly *spring from opposition to God*. “*For he stretcheth out his hand against God, and strengtheneth himself against the Almighty.*” This hostility to Heaven explains, and is the cause of, all the mental miseries of man. Eliphaz here indicates—(1) The *recklessness* of this opposition. “*He runneth upon Him.*” “*Runneth*” heedlessly, impetuously, thoughtlessly. Oh, if men thought, would they dare to raise themselves in opposition to Omnipotent power and love? (2) The *stolidity* of this opposition. “*He covereth his face with his fatness, and maketh collops of fat on his flanks.*” He gives himself up to a life of gluttony, luxury, and licentiousness, and buries his soul in animalism. Like a fattened ox, he goes with a brutish stolidity in his way of stolid opposition. How truly this describes the conduct not only of those whose god is their belly, but the conduct of all those who walk after the flesh. (3) The *ultimate ruin* of this opposition. “*He dwelleth (or, therefore shall he dwell) in desolate cities.*” (α) The ruin is described by a miserable habitation. He shall dwell, not in towns or cities tenanted by an active and prosperous population, but amid the fallen ruins of places that have once been great, such as Petra and Babylon. Dwell in desolation and privation, dwell where savage beasts of prey and vultures make their home. (β) The ruin is described as withering away in darkness. “*He shall not depart out of darkness.*”

Notice:—

IV. HIS PRACTICAL EXHORTATION. Eliphaz concludes his speech by addressing to Job a practical exhortation. “*Let not him that is deceived trust in vanity.*” By implication he charges Job here with false confidence. Indeed, all along, his charge against him is, that he was not a true man; and here he warns him of his danger. Now although his idea of Job was wrong, yet what he here says as the evil consequences of a sinful life is very striking and very true. He teaches—

First: That sin will *punish the sinner*. “*Let not him that is deceived trust in vanity: for vanity shall be his recompence.*” How many men are trusting in “*vanity*,” living a false life,

pursuing false pleasures, false honours, false riches, resting on things that have no substance, no abiding. What will be the end of such? "*Vanity.*" They will soon be stripped of all they now esteem as valuable. Sin is its own punishment. You trust in vanity, and vanity will ruin you; what you now prize will be your destruction; what you now esteem the honey of your life will be the poison that will rankle in your being for ever. He teaches—

Secondly: That sin leads to premature death. "*It shall be accomplished (cut off) before his time, and his branch shall not be green. He shall shake off his unripe grapes as the vine, and shall cast off his flower as the olive.*" Like a branch that has not reached its perfection he shall be cut off: like grapes that fall from the vine before they are ripe, they shall die before they otherwise would. Like the blossom that falls from the olive before the fruit is set, he shall fade and fall. Sin is unfavourable to longevity: its tendency is to abbreviate life. Physicians talk learnedly of the germs of disease that float in the atmosphere. My impression is, that every sinful thought, passion, impulse, have in them the germ of physical disease and dissolution.

Thirdly: That sin leads to utter desolation. "*For the congregation (the household) of hypocrites shall be desolate, and fire shall consume the tabernacles of bribery. They conceive mischief, and bring forth vanity, and their belly prepareth deceit.*"

CONCLUSION.—First: *Men may attain a very large amount of moral and religious truth who have no Bible.* Gospel preachers, I fear, greatly and perniciously err by extolling the Bible in such a way as to depreciate the capacity of nature as a religious teacher. True, we cannot prize the Bible too highly; but in doing so let us not depreciate the original Scriptures of God—His writings on the heavens and on the earth, and, above all, on the wondrous pages of the human soul. In every part of nature Divine wisdom stands and proclaims its oracles.

Secondly: *Men may preach good sermons that are nevertheless inapplicable to their audience.* Many very true, beautiful, and solemn truths did this old sage of Arabia now proclaim

in the ear of Job ; but they were beside the mark : they did not touch his case. Much of what he said Job knew well, and it therefore gave him no instruction, whilst his leading theme struck alike against his theology and his consciousness. The value of a sermon is always greatly determined by its adaptation to the circumstances of the congregation.

HOMILY No. XL.

JOB'S SECOND REPLY TO ELIPHAZ, IN WHICH HE REPROVES HIS FRIENDS OF UNMERCIFULNESS.

(1.) HIS CENSURE AND COMPLAINT.

“*Then Job answered and said,*” &c.—CHAP. XVI. 1-22.

GENERAL NOTE.—This second reply of Job to Eliphaz occupies two chapters. In this first chapter he rejects the statements of Eliphaz as platitudes such as any one could employ, he portrays the circumstances of his suffering, and afterwards appeals to earth, heaven, and to God Himself.

EXEGETICAL REMARKS. *Vers. 1, 2.*—“*Then Job answered and said, I have heard many such things: miserable comforters are ye all.*” What he means here is, that the irritating sentiments which they had addressed to him were by no means original. He had often heard such things, such wise saws as identify guilt with suffering, before. Perhaps they had spoken in such a way as to indicate that they were great discoverers in the realms of morals and religion. Job declines to regard them as such: “*Miserable (troublesome) comforters are ye all.*” They had come from a distance with the avowed object of administering consolation

to him under his great afflictions, but the speeches they addressed had produced a result the most opposite. They wounded his feelings, they intensified his distress.

Ver. 3.—“*Shall vain words have an end?*” margin: words of wind. Eliphaz had charged Job (xv. 2, 3) with using such words—words devoid of thought—volatile. Here Job retorts on him, returns the accusation, “*or what emboldeneth thee that thou answerest?*” “*Provoketh*” perhaps would be better than “*emboldeneth.*” What has exasperated thee that thou shouldst speak thus to me?

Ver. 4.—“*I also could speak as ye do: if your soul were in my soul's stead.*” He means to say, If you were in my place, I could speak to you in the same way as you address me. The idea is, There is no difficulty in finding arguments to overwhelm the afflicted. “*I could heap up words against you,*” or, as some render it, “*I could string up words against you.*” Probably, Job means

to imply here that what they had said was merely the stringing together, without much skill or order, a number of old proverbs which were not fitted to his case. "*And shake mine head at you.*" To shake the head at another was in the most ancient times, as well as now, an expression of contempt. (Jeremiah xviii. 16. Lamentations ii. 15. Zephaniah ii. 15. Matthew xxvii. 29.) He means to say, I can express contempt as well as you.

Ver. 5.—"*But I would strengthen you with my mouth, and the moving of my lips should assuage your grief.*" He means to say, that although he could have spoken as they did, he would not. On the contrary, he would have spoken to them in such a way as would have strengthened, calmed, and succoured them.

Ver. 6.—"*Though I speak, my grief is not assuaged: and though I forbear, what am I eased?*" He means to say, It matters little whether I speak or not; so far as my sufferings are concerned, whether I enter into discussion or remain mute, my distress is the same.

Ver. 7.—"*But now He hath made me weary.*" With the general consent of expositors, the reference is in this and the next verse to God. He says that the Almighty had made him weary, had exhausted his strength and deprived him of all his society. "*Thou hast made desolate all my company* (household)." The allusion perhaps is to a happy social circle of which at one time he was the head and father, but now he was bereft of all.

Ver. 8.—"*And Thou hast filled me with wrinkles, which is a witness against me.*" "Thou hast compressed me, and this is a witness against me."—*Barnes*. "*And my leanness rising up in me beareth*

witness to my face." The meaning of this seems to be, "My leanness riseth up against me, and accuseth me to my face." To understand this, it must be remembered that the leading position in the speeches of all his friends was, that because he was a great sufferer he must be a great sinner. By this expression Job probably means to say, Well, my miserable personal appearance seems to rise up as a witness against me, and confirms what these men say.

Ver. 9.—"*He teareth me in his wrath, who hateth me: he gnasheth upon me with his teeth; mine enemy sharpeneth his eyes upon me.*" Expositors have differed widely as to the person referred to in this verse. Some have supposed the reference to have been to Satan, others to God, and others to Eliphaz. The second is the only one admissible.—*Dr. S. Davidson*.

Ver. 10.—"*They have gaped upon me with their mouth; they have smitten me upon the cheek reproachfully; they have gathered themselves together against me.*" Here he changes the form from the singular to the plural, and includes all his pretended friends, Zophar, Bildad, and Eliphaz. They had all acted to him as wild beasts, united together in tormenting him.

Ver. 11.—"*God hath delivered me to the ungodly, and turned me over into the hands of the wicked.*" "God left me to the mercy of the ungodly, and cast me into the hands of the evil doer."—*Delitzsch*. He means to say, God has shut me up, and handed me over into the hands of wicked men to torment me.

Ver. 12.—"*I was at ease, but He hath broken me asunder: He hath also taken me by my neck, and shaken me to pieces, and set me up for His mark.*" Job was once a

happy and a prosperous man, but he was now an utter wreck. He here ascribes his ruin to God, and represents Him as a beast of prey, taking him by the neck, and as a warrior directing His arrows against him.

Ver. 13.—“*His archers compass me round about.*” Allusion is here made to those who claim to be friends, but who now show, to his apprehension, that they were merely sharpshooters under the control of God to deepen his distress. “*He cleaveth my reins asunder, and doth not spare; He poureth out my gall upon the ground.*” The meaning here is, I am transfixed with a deadly wound, and must die, God has come upon me as an armed man, and has pierced my vitals.

Ver. 14.—“*He breaketh me with breach upon breach, He runneth upon me like a giant.*” A repetition, this, of the same idea under a new figure.

Ver. 15.—“*I have sewed sackcloth upon my skin.*” This was the usual emblem of mourning among the ancients in the East. As we sew crape around the hat, they sewed sackcloth around the body, to symbolize their grief. “*And defiled my horn in the dust.*” A horn made of silver was worn both by males and females in the East as an emblem of strength and honour. The language of Job means, I am humbled as in the dust.

Ver. 16.—“*My face is foul with weeping, and on my eyelids is the shadow of death.*” “My face is exceeding red with weeping.”—*Delitzsch*. The original word means the heat produced by fermentation, the inward heat of passion. The meaning is, that darkness covered his eyes, he felt he was about to die. The language implies that he

felt the shadows of death gathering around him.

Ver. 17.—“*Not for any injustice in mine hands: also my prayer is pure.*” Here he still holds on to the conviction that he was not the wicked man that his friends represented him, and that his great sufferings did not prove that he was so.

Ver. 18.—“*O earth, cover not thou my blood, and let my cry have no place.*” Impassioned appeals to nature are found elsewhere in the Scriptures. He seems to regard himself as a murdered man whose blood had been shed on the ground, and calls upon the earth not to cover it, so that retribution may come upon the heads of his murderers.

Ver. 19.—“*Also now, behold, my witness is in heaven, and my record is on high.*” Here the patriarch seems to return again to his confidence in God. His great physical sufferings and the highly irritating address of his pretended friends would at times betray him into hasty utterances and impatience, and almost tempt him to doubt the Almighty. But here he returns to his settled rest, his trust in God.

Ver. 20.—“*My friends scorn me: but mine eye poureth out tears unto God.*” Unjustly reproached by his pretended friends, he turns to his Almighty Friend, and unburdens his heart to Him.

Ver. 21.—“*O that one might plead for a man with God, as a man pleadeth for his neighbour!*” “That He would decide for man before God, and the son of man with respect to his friend. The verse belongs closely to the preceding one, viz., ‘Mine eye poureth out tears unto God that He would declare me just before Him, notwithstanding all that He has

inflicted upon me, and pronounce me innocent in opposition to my friends and adversaries (the three)."

—*Dr. S. Davidson.*

Ver. 22.—"When a few years are come, then I shall go the way whence I shall not return." "For the years that may be numbered are coming on, and I shall go away without return." The same idea is

expressed in chapter vii. 21. He felt that he should soon die, but desired earnestly before that event occurred he should obtain the approbation of his Maker. He seemed to shrink from the idea of dying under the cloud of accusations which his pretended friends had brought against him.

HOMILETICS.—This portion of Job's reply to Eliphaz and his companions, consists of two subjects.

I. CENSURE. He represents their addresses—

First: *As commonplace and uncomforting.* (1) As commonplace. "I have heard many such things." I am not as inexperienced, as ill-informed, as you suppose me to be. I know the traditions you have been referring to; I am acquainted with the proverbs you have quoted; I have not passed through life with an unobservant eye or an unthinking mind; and I have heard many such things as those contained in your addresses. You speak as if you knew all and I knew nothing; but the utterances you consider original, are to me only platitudes. There is a sad tendency in many of those who assume the office of public instructors, to imagine that what they propound is very original, and unknown to their auditors. Christian congregations are grievously afflicted with these assumptions, and groan out their complaints in their social circles every week. The modern pulpit has, to a great extent, become the organ of dead platitudes. (2) As uncomforting. "Miserable comforters are ye all." You come here avowedly to console me under my grievous afflictions; but all you say only tends to intensify my distress. It is often the case that men in their attempt to comfort the sorrowful only aggravate their pains. Their words, however wisely chosen and appropriate, are but poor comforters. Genuine sympathy, too strong and deep for words—that shakes the frame, and unseals fountains of tears—this is the balm to heal the broken heart. He represents their addresses—

Secondly: *As empty and ill-tempered.* (1) As empty.

"*Vain words*," or, as in the margin, "words of wind." Vain words are words which are vehicles of trifles, fallacies; or if truths, are truths out of their true relations, and inappropriate. Some of the words of these men convey truths, but in their wrong application. They did not meet the case of Job, they were "*vain words*," words of no practical purpose, and having no point. The daily conversation of men, the productions of the press, the discourses of the pulpit, too often abound with "*vain words*"—words of wind. (2) As ill-tempered. "*What emboldeneth thee that thou answerest?*" The word "*emboldeneth*" here, means "*provoketh*." And Job implies, that these men spoke from irascibility and malign irritation. It is very sad when those whose office it is to instruct others, deliver themselves under the influence of ill-temper. We have such discourses in parliamentary debates, in ecclesiastical controversies, and sometimes in pulpit disquisitions. But all acrimony and spleen in the addresses of public instructors are to be deprecated as evils, and should be studiously avoided. Words of passion may annoy the hearer, but they degrade the speaker; and the memory of them stings him with remorse and covers him with shame. He represents their addresses—

Thirdly: *As poor and ungenerous*. (1) As poor. "*I also could speak as ye do: if your soul were in my soul's stead, I could heap up words against you, and shake mine head at you.*" There is nothing very great in your performance. You have spoken very oracularly and, you imagine, with great eloquence, but there is no greatness in it. You in health, I in agony, to talk to me in that way is an easy thing. "*I also could speak as ye do,*" if our positions were reversed. I could string proverbs together as you have done, and shake my head at you as you have at me, if I were you. It is poor, miserably poor, all of this. It is a poor thing to lecture men in distress, and God knows we have plenty of that lecturing in this land of ours, in this age. (2) As ungenerous. "*But I would strengthen you with my mouth, and the moving of my lips should assuage your grief.*" To do this would be generous on your part. This I should do, were you in my place—instead of stringing irritating words together, I should speak to you tenderly and with a

loving sympathy, in order to "*assuage your grief.*" The patriarch believed, what all men have experienced, that the words of true sympathy and love can assuage mental distress. "*The moving of my lips:*" ah, the moving of the lips, what good they have accomplished ere now! Christ "opened His mouth." The grandest event, this, in the history of humanity.

Such is Job's censure. Whether just or not, it is very suggestive, and serves to indicate both the right and the wrong way of dealing with suffering men. The other subject in this part of Job's speech is—

II. COMPLAINT. What does he complain of?

First: *He complains of the severity of his sufferings.* Strong, striking, and impassioned is the metaphorical language with which he sets forth his sufferings. He speaks of himself as being mangled by Divine anger—" *He teareth me in His wrath;*" as being given up to the fury of his enemies—" *God hath delivered me to the ungodly;*" as being shivered to pieces—" *He hath broken me asunder;*" as a butt for the arrows of his enemies—" *His archers compass me round about;*" as crushed by an irresistible foe—" *He breaketh me with breach upon breach, He runneth upon me like a giant;*" as reduced to the utmost humiliation—" *My face is foul with weeping, and on my eyelids is the shadow of death; not for any injustice in mine hands: also my prayer is pure.*" He seems to have struggled for language to set forth the sufferings with which he was afflicted. In his description of their severity, two facts appear.

(1) They were mental as well as physical. His corporeal sufferings were inexpressibly distressing. Satan "smote Job with sore boils from the sole of his foot unto his crown; and he took him a potsherd to scrape himself withal, and he sat down among the ashes." A torturing ulcer seems to have covered his whole body, producing an eruption attended with acutest pains through every part of his frame. But in addition to this, and worse than this, there was mental agony. He speaks of "*grief,*" bereavement—" *Thou hast made desolate all my company;*" abasement—" *his horn in the dust;*" of tears—" *my face is foul with weeping;*" of

contempt—" *my friends scorn me.*" Mental suffering is the worst: "a wounded spirit who can bear?" If the mind is free from pain, endowed with noble principles, and in the full possession of its faculties, it can alleviate, deaden, and bear away the greatest physical sufferings. All sensation seems to be in the mind; and if the mind is flooded with elevated thoughts and happy emotions, it carries off the sense of bodily pain. Hence martyrs have sung exultingly in the flames. But terrible indeed is the condition of the man whose body and mind are in tortures. This seems to have been Job's case now, when he made this reply to his companions. Another fact appears here in connection with his sufferings: (2) They were by the permission of God. Greatly as the arguments, appeals, and conduct of his so-called friends distressed his soul, he felt that they were acting towards him by Divine permission. Hence he says, " *God hath delivered me to the ungodly, and turned me over into the hands of the wicked.*" He saw God in all. Satan had bereft him of his children, but in that he saw the Almighty; he says, " *Thou hast made desolate all my company*" (household). Satan had covered his body with a torturing ulceration, but in that also he saw the Almighty—" *Thou hast filled me with wrinkles.*" His so-called friends had, in their arguments, treated him, as he thought, with a savage cruelty; but he saw God even in their treatment—" *He teareth me in His wrath, Who hateth me,*" &c. &c.

Now the feeling that all his sufferings came upon him by the knowledge and permission of the great God would perhaps rather intensify than mitigate his anguish. He would be likely to ask, Why should the God whom I love and seek to serve allow this? Am I deceived in His character? Can it be that a holy and benevolent Being would permit the Prince of Evil and also ignorant and malignant men to torment one who feels in his heart that he loves and adores Him? What good man has not experienced something like this in passing through the trials of life?

Secondly: He complains of the *undeservedness of his sufferings*. " *Not for any injustice in mine hands: also my prayer is pure.*" As if he had said, These sufferings cannot have come upon me in consequence of any wrong I have

done, nor of any disrespect on my part towards God, for my prayer also was pure. The prayers I addressed to Him in the days of my prosperity, and particularly at the time I offered up the sacrifices, according to the number of my sons, were not mere outward show, but were made in all sincerity of heart. In his complaint of the undeservedness of his sufferings, three things are to be observed.

(1) Deprecation. "*Also now, behold, my witness is in heaven, and my record is on high.*" In other portions of the Scripture we have impassioned appeals to the earth (Isaiah i. 2). Strong emotions often personify the impersonal, invest dead nature with the attributes of intelligence and heart. Job felt himself in his sufferings to be an injured man; and those injuries he wished not to be hid, but to be exposed to the eyes of men, and to be known everywhere. He would not have the earth to hide him, nor the universe to obstruct his cries; "*Let my cry have no place,*" let its echoes not stop anywhere, but vibrate through immensity. This is natural. A man conscious of injuries wishes his injuries known—known that love may sympathize and that justice may avenge. Another thing to be observed here is—(2) Assurance. "*Behold, my witness is in heaven, and my record is on high.*" Or, as some render it, "my testimony is in high heaven," or as in the margin, "in the high places." He means, I appeal to Omniscience to prove my sincerity. God knows! Injured men, humanity everywhere, groaning under a sense of injustice, involuntarily appeal to heaven. My injuries are known in high places; and from high places I shall have justice ere long. Another thing to be observed is—(3) Supplication. "*My friends scorn me, but mine eye poureth out tears unto God.*" Mark—(a) The earnestness of his prayers, "*Poureth out tears.*" Though men scorned him, he believed in a sympathizing God, and unto Him he turns and pours out his soul in tears. Tears are the best prayers. No devout expressions, no liturgical language, has such influence in heaven as tears. Tears are electric with the best natures here: and are they not so with the Highest? Mark—(b) The subject of his prayers. "*O that one might plead for a man with God!*" His idea seems to be, that there might be some one to come forward and plead in favour of

man before God, as every man ought to plead in favour of his fellow. As man should interpose on behalf of him to whom injustice is done, he would that some one would plead on his behalf with God. The patriarch here ignorantly conceives the Almighty to be influenced as man is. Eternal justice requires no one to plead in order to get the right done. Eternal love requires no one to plead in order to get mercy shown. (c) The urgency of his prayers. "*When a few years are come, then I shall go the way whence I shall not return.*" I want redress and relief now; it will soon be too late. I shall soon be gone from the earth altogether, never, never to return. This language represents the condition of all men. All are going the way whence they shall not return. Job did not wish to die overwhelmed by calamities and reproaches. He desired the reproaches of his friends to be wiped away, and his character cleared up before his contemporaries. This also is natural. Who would wish his sun to go down under a cloud? Who would wish to leave the world with a stain on his reputation? He who leaves behind him an untarnished name is a benefactor to his race. The memorials of the sainted dead float about the atmosphere of the world charged with genial and fertilizing showers.

Yes, their virtues
 Downward flow
 In deepening river,
 Now, and through all time,
 For ever.

HOMILY No. XLI.

JOB'S SECOND REPLY TO ELIPHAZ, IN WHICH HE REPROVES HIS FRIENDS OF UNMERCIFULNESS.

(2.) HIS THREEFOLD ADDRESS.

"My breath is corrupt, my days are extinct, the graves are ready for me,"
 &c.—CHAP. xvii. 1-16.

GENERAL NOTE. Here Job continues his address, and concludes (verses 11-16) in a spirit of utter hopelessness, so far as life is concerned.

EXEGETICAL REMARKS. *Ver. 1.*—"My breath is corrupt." Does he by this express the idea that his breath was fetid and foul? We are told that in the case of elephantiasis in the East the breath becomes exceedingly offensive. Or does he mean that his vital powers were nearly gone? We think the latter. The Chaldean sense of the verb suggests this; and in the margin the expression is, "spirit is spent." He means to say that his life was all but gone. "*My days are extinct.*" A repetition of the idea. "*The graves are ready for me.*" This expression is more forcible when the word *ready* is omitted. The grave is already Job's. He feels that he belongs to it, and it to him.

Ver. 2.—"Are there not mockers with me? and doth not mine eye continue in their provocation?" The meaning of these words seems to be, that his observation of their wickedness was so constant that he could not be deceived. He was constantly witnessing their endeavours to excite and provoke him.

Ver. 3.—"Lay down now, put me in a surety with Thee; who is he that will strike hands with me?"

This is an appeal to God, strange, if not irreverent. To understand its meaning, it is necessary to remember that Job had more than once complained that a man ought not to suffer from Heaven without having an opportunity of pleading his cause. He seems to have had the idea that, as a criminal is tried at a human tribunal before he is condemned, so he ought to be tried before the Divine bar, and allowed a fair explanation and defence. Indeed, in chap. xiii. 18-21, he declares himself prepared for such a trial, and expresses a wish that in such a trial a man may be allowed an advocate to represent his cause. He now seems to go farther, and to express a desire that God would remit him to bail until the time for trial came. Hence *Dr. Bernard* translates the verse, "Order it thus, I pray Thee: who is there else that will strike hands for me?" No man can I find generous enough to bail me, I look to Thee.

Ver. 4.—"For Thou hast hid their heart from understanding: therefore shalt Thou not exult them." He here refers to his three friends, and declares that the Almighty had so darkened their understanding about the great question in debate, that he would not exalt them to the honour of pronouncing a right decision on his character and deserts.

Ver. 5.—"He that speaketh flat-

tery to his friends, even the eyes of his children shall fail." This is a most difficult verse. *Schultens* says this verse is "a gordian knot," hence all translators vary. *Noyes*:—"He that delivers up his friend as a prey, the eyes of his children shall fail."

Wemyss, nearly the same. *Goode*:—"He that rebuketh his friends with mildness, even the eyes of his children shall be accomplished." *Sept.*:—"He announces evil for his portion, his eyes fail over his sons." *Vulg.*:—"He promises spoil to his companions, and the eyes of his sons fail." *Scott* joins the first word of this verse with the preceding verse. The *Syr.* the same. "The right translation is, 'One betrays friends to the lot, and the eyes of his sons pine away.' This general sentiment is meant for Job himself, who is betrayed by his friends, abandoned to the lot like a prisoner, while his innocent children look on and perish with him."—*Dr. Simuel Davidson*.

Ver. 6.—"He hath made me also a byword of the people; and aforetime I was as a tabret." "I am an object of spitting in the face."—*Cunon Cook*. "Me has he placed for a byword among the people, I am an object of scorn before their face."—*Barnes*. The word "tabret" is an unfortunate rendering. Abhorrence is the idea.

Ver. 7.—"Mine eye also is dim by reason of sorrow, and all my members are as a shadow." A representation, this, of the physical condition to which he was reduced by reason of his sufferings:—Eyes worn out with weeping, and limbs a mere shadow or skeleton of his former self.

Ver. 8.—"Upright men shall be astonished at this, and the innocent shall stir up himself against the hypocrite." He means to say, that

good men would be amazed at the cruelty of his friends, and bestir themselves against hypocrites.

Ver. 9.—"The righteous also shall hold on his way, and he that hath clean hands shall be stronger and stronger." "Clean hands," here as elsewhere, denote a pure life. Although Job has here a special reference to himself, and means to say he was a good man and would therefore hold on his way and become stronger and stronger; yet the language might become proverbial, and is certainly of universal application. Good men will hold on and progress.

Ver. 10.—"But as for you all, do ye return, and come now: for I cannot find one wise man among you." Job, having concluded his address to God, now turns and speaks to his so-called friends. The paraphrase of *Dr. Bernard* on these words seems as faithful as it is spirited. "In spite of the upright man, who would be amazed; in spite of the innocent man, who would bestir himself against the hypocrite; in spite of the just man, who would hold fast his way, and him, clean of hands, whose fortitude would be increased, ye would come back with your empty arguments. Nothing would deter you, and you would have the effrontery to continue your unmeaning speeches in the face of all good men who would sympathize with me and be shocked at the terrible lot which had been assigned to me. But I do not care for you or your reasonings. Yea, come ye even now, with your shallow arguments; I heed them not, for I know I shall not find one wise man among you."

Ver. 11.—"My days are past, my purposes are broken off, even the thoughts of my heart." From this verse to the end of the chapter he

seems to turn from the Almighty and from men, and speaks to himself. The verses are a sad, pensive monologue. He virtually says, I am dying, all is over. My days are run out, my purposes are frustrated, and even the thoughts of my heart, —as some render it, the possessions of my heart, are gone.

Ver. 12. — “*They change the night into day: the light is short because of darkness.*” “Ye explain night as daylight is near, when darkness sets in.” — *Delitzsch.* “They change.” Whom does he mean? Some suppose the reference is to his friends, and that he means to say that they wished to make out that light for him was near at hand, when darkness was coming; and that darkness was near at hand when light was about breaking upon his path. Others suppose that the reference is to the thoughts of his heart mentioned in the preceding verse; and that he means to say that those thoughts changed the outward world to him, made light darkness, and darkness light.

Vers. 13-16.—“*If I wait, the grave is mine house: I have made my bed in the darkness. I have said to corruption, Thou art my*

father: to the worm, Thou art my mother, and my sister. And where is now my hope? as for my hope, who shall see it? They shall go down to the bars of the pit, when our rest together is in the dust.” These verses have been thus paraphrased: “Truly I hope for the grave to be mine house. I hope for the time when I shall have spread out my couch in the darkness. Dreadful as is the idea of rotting and mouldering in the grave, yet so great are my sufferings now, that I am become quite reconciled to it. Nay, death were for me a most happy and welcome change, so happy and welcome indeed, that with joy *I would call out to corruption, Thou art my father!* to the worm I would call out, O my mother, and, O my sister! For where is now my hope? What can I yet hope for? What use to prolong a life so utterly miserable and bereft of hope? Yea, as to my hope, who will ever see it realized? As to these limbs, destined to the grave, let them go down. Verily, quiet is altogether in the dust. There is neither quiet nor peace in this life for man, and it is only in the dust that he can look for them!”

HOMILETICS.—This chapter concludes Job’s second reply to Eliphaz. His reply, we have seen, is characterized by censure and complaint. In the preceding chapter he complains, in language strong and vehement, both of the severity and undeservedness of his sufferings. He continues his complaint in this chapter; and it comes out in a threefold address.

I. His address to THE ALMIGHTY. In this address we find three things:—

First: *The piteous.* There are three things which he bewails in touching tones of sadness. (1) The near approach of his death. “*My breath is corrupt, my days are extinct,*

the graves are ready for me." This language means, condensely, I am dying. All is over. My powers are exhausted: my spirit has spent its force. The days I have are even "*graves*" to me. The solemnest sight on this earth is a man in conscious contact with death, the frame convulsed, the world receding, eternity parting its awful folds. Such an experience awaits us all. Kind Heaven, prepare us for it! He bewails—(2) The cruel conduct of his friends. "*Are there not mockers with me? And doth not mine eye continue in their provocation?*" They did not deal out to him now and then the language of scorn and provocation, but were persistent in their aggravating talk. They gave him no respite: and scarcely had he answered their arguments before they bounded again with fresh vehemence and apparent heartlessness into the controversy. Had it been a mere theoretical debate, a discussion on abstract dogmas, he might have borne their language better; but it was a discussion which involved his virtue, his purity and honour, and which, by implication, charged him personally with a guilt and rebellion of which he was consciously innocent. And this was a provocation most bitter and burning. He bewails—(3) His utter prostration. "*Mine eye also is dim by reason of sorrow, and all my members are as a shadow.*" This may mean, I am a mere skeleton: a skeleton, too, whose eyes are well-nigh sightless with sorrow. Strange that a good man like Job, a man upright, "fearing God and eschewing evil," should be reduced to such a truly pitiable condition! Such a fact demonstrates the existence of moral evil in the world, and prophesies a future retribution. In this address we find—

Secondly: *The reprehensible.* "*Lay down now, put me in a surety with Thee; who is he that will strike hands with me?*" There is certainly much that is reprehensible in the language which he here addresses to the Almighty. (1) There is lamentable ignorance here. He degrades his Maker to the level of a man, when he asks Him for a "*surety.*" His language implies a doubt that the Almighty would not of His own accord deal out full justice to him. Hence he seeks some special pledge from Him that justice shall be done. The universal tendency of depravity is to bring the Eternal

down from His transcendent elevation to a level with ourselves, to humanify Him, give Him the weaknesses, the passions, and even the sins of men. Alas! even modern pulpits are found presenting to the people a human God: a God of vengeance, who will either wreak vengeance on the transgressor or on his substitute. (2) There is lamentable profanity here. "*For Thou hast hid their heart from understanding; therefore shalt Thou not exalt them.*" Here he is virtually charging the Almighty with a sin. He ascribes the moral darkness of his friends' understanding to His agency. There is no need for the Almighty to conceal moral truths from His creature man. Depravity and the devil have done this; and to suppose Him capable of doing it, is an insult to His immaculate holiness and a contradiction of His own expressed declaration, that He "tempteth no man." No; His work is not to darken, but to enlighten the human soul. (3) There is a lamentable egotism here. This seems to come out in the words, "*He that speaketh flattery to his friends, even the eyes of his children shall fail. He hath made me also a byword of the people; and aforesime I was as a tabret. Upright men shall be astonished at this, and the innocent shall stir up himself against the hypocrite.*" Here he seems to make himself of enormous importance. He considers that the man who injures him, "*even the eyes of his children shall fail.*" The time would come when "*upright men*" would be astonished at his injuries, and would be stirred up with indignation. He seems to say, The time will come when the best men will be amazed that God allowed such a holy man as I am to suffer so much, and to be treated as I am, by these friends. Now, egotism is always bad; but never does it appear so vile and hideous as when it manifests itself in an address to God. And this is not uncommon. There is a vast amount of egotism in our social prayer-meetings, and even in our pulpit devotions. The "*I*" is constantly projecting itself in our prayers. Men are only what they ought to be, are only true men, as they become self-oblivious. It is only as the carnal *ego* is crucified with Christ, that the true *ego* rises into life, honour, and nobleness. In this address we find—

Thirdly: *The commendable.* "*The righteous also shall hold*

on his way; and he that hath clean hands shall be stronger and stronger." This is an utterance worthy of the lips of an apostle or an angel. It expresses the universal truth, viz., that goodness in the long run will triumph. The words suggest three things—(1) The nature of moral goodness. It is here represented by "*clean hands.*" That is, a clean life, a pure heart. It is a character absolutely free from all the defilements of error and sin. (2) The firmness of moral goodness. "*Shall hold on.*" Hold on to its convictions, its purposes, its loyalty and devotions. Hold on in its race, hold on in its battle. (3) The progress of moral goodness. "*Stronger and stronger.*" Stronger and stronger in faith, hope, and charity. Job's complaint comes out in—

II. His address to HIS FRIENDS. "*But as for you all, do ye return and come now; for I cannot find one wise man among you.*" In this verse there seems to be—

First: *A contempt.* "*As for you all.*" Who are you? What are you? You are only erring men at most, and much of your spirit and argument I despise. Contempt is not a feeling bad in itself, it is often virtuous. Contempt for the contemptible is natural and right. Judges may commit men for "contempt of court," but if the court is contemptible, no fines or imprisonments will put it down. They may muzzle the lion for a time, but it will roar all the louder in future days. There seems to be in this verse—

Secondly: *A challenge.* "*Do ye return!*" This may mean, return from your uncharitable and unjust statements concerning me, abandon your unfounded conclusions; or it may mean, return with your arguments, I challenge you to a further discussion, I defy your shallow logic. Whatever were the defects in Job's character, he was strong in his conviction that he was right in the core, and that Heaven would vindicate him at last. "Thrice is he armed who knows his quarrel just." There seems to be in this verse—

Thirdly: *A charge.* "*I cannot find one wise man among you.*" If by a "*wise man*" Job meant, as no doubt he did, a man who understood his character in relation to God, he was right. Not one of them knew him. They concluded that because he was a great sufferer, therefore he was a great

sinner; and he in his inmost soul knew that this was false. This address to his friends suggests two facts—(1) The power of sufferings to aggravate language. Job's language seems unjustifiably severe, uncharitable, and indignant, but really natural when one considers his intense and almost intolerable sufferings. Language must ever take its colour and measurement from the existing condition of the speaker. You must not judge the language of a man in torture by the common canons of speech. (2) Man's ignorance of the inward experience of his most intimate acquaintance. These three men had perhaps known Job from childhood, had been his companions and *confidants* for many a year, and yet the inner depths of his life they knew not. His invincible allegiance, which ruled his whole life, they had never discovered. So it ever is, inwardly we are strangers to each other. "The inner man" has a life of his own. He has an orbit as distinct from all others as the planets that roll in space millions of miles away from each other. Every heart alone "knoweth its own bitterness," but alone also knoweth its own deep principles of action. Absolute loneliness is after all the condition of souls. All have to climb mountains, concerning which the Almighty has said, "No man shall come up with thee." Job's complaint comes out in—

III. His address TO HIMSELF. The whole of the following verses are a soliloquy. Job speaks to himself, communes with his own heart. The grand subject of his self-communion was the *grave*. He speaks of the grave—

First: *As near at hand*. "My days are past." Days of secular pleasure past, days of domestic life past, days of redemptive discipline past. He speaks of the grave—

Secondly: *As the frustration of his purposes*. "My purposes are broken." Man's brain teems with purposes—purposes relating to commerce, literature, politics, family. The grave ends them all. He speaks of the grave—

Thirdly: *As beclouding his soul*. "They (*i.e.*, the thoughts connected with the grave) change the night into day." Death is that one great object that throws a dark shadow over human life. Under this shadow most men at times shiver and quake. The worst of men fail to get rid of the dark

thought : indeed the whole of man's life is a walk through the "valley of the shadow of death." He speaks of the grave—

Fourthly : *As the home of the distressed.* "If I wait, the grave is mine house. I have made my bed in the darkness." The grave is my long home, my final resting-place. What a house is the grave ! How vast, how crowded, how awful, how lasting, how common ! He speaks of the grave—

Fifthly : *As the parent of his body.* "I have said to corruption, Thou art my father ; to the worm, Thou art my mother and my sister." The earth is the "mother" of us all. She brought us forth at first ; she nursed us with her provisions through life ; at death she takes us back into her still but faithful bosom. "Dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return." He speaks of the grave—

Sixthly : *As the end of his worldly hopes.* "And where is now my hope ? As for my hope, who shall see it ? They shall go down to the bars of the pit when our rest together is in the dust." The grave is a pit in which all worldly hopes, possessions, enterprises, concerns, are lost for ever. All rest together in the dust. There is sometimes a melancholy pleasure in musing upon the grave. When weighed down beneath the trials of life, and when the heart is sickened with the alarming and growing prevalence of social fawnings and flunkeries, arrogancies and tyrannies, falsehoods and frauds, one's heart turns to the grave and finds relief in that deep tide of melancholy thoughts that bury all.

"I love to muse, when none are nigh,
Where yew-tree branches wave ;
And hear the winds, with softest sigh,
Sweep o'er the grassy grave.

It seems a mournful music, meet
To soothe a lonely hour ;
Sad though it be, it is more sweet
Than that from pleasure's bower.

I know not why it should be sad,
Or seem a mournful tone,
Unless by man the spot be clad
With terrors not its own."—*Bernard Barton.*

HOMILY No. XLII.

THE SECOND DISCOURSE OF BILDAD.

THE REPREHENSIBLE IN CONDUCT AND THE RETRIBUTIVE
IN DESTINY.

"Then answered Bildad the Shuhite, and said," &c.—CHAP. xviii. 1-21.

EXEGETICAL REMARKS. *Ver. 1.*
—"*Then answered Bildad the Shuhite.*" This Bildad had spoken before (chap. viii), and had given Job some encouragement to hope that circumstances would improve with him, and that his end would be favourable. There is nothing in this second address of this character. He seems fierce with resentment and retributive warning. He has become somewhat vituperative and heartless. Indeed the spirit of all the interlocutors seems to get worse and worse as they advance in the discussion.

Ver. 2.—"How long will it be ere ye make an end of words?" "Ye." Meaning perhaps those who held the same opinion as Job. He complains of prosi-ness, and means to say, "Why all this talk?" "How long wilt thou go on artfully and deceitfully devising words for the purpose of entrapping us?" "Mark, and afterwards we will speak." "Attend, and afterwards we will speak."—*Delitzsch.* "Ye should put an end to words, ye should first consider, and then let us speak. What use is it talking at random without first well considering whether or not our arguments and assertions rest on a solid foundation?"—*Bernard.*

Ver. 3.—"Wherefore are we counted as beasts, and reputed vile in your sight?" Why should you regard us ignorant as brutes, and as vile and worthless too?

Ver. 4.—"He teareth himself in his anger: shall the earth be forsaken for thee? and shall the rock be removed out of his place?" "Thou art he who teareth himself in his anger; shall the earth become desolate for thy sake, and a rock remove from its place?"—*Delitzsch.* "O thou, who tearest thyself in thine anger, shall the earth be deserted for thy sake, or the rock removed from its place? Whilst treating us as senseless, thou art a furious maniac. Be forsaken! Are you of so much importance that the earth should be made vacant for you to dwell in?"—*Eltzas.* "Wert thou not punished, as thou art, and as thou art unwilling to bear, the eternal order of the universe (immovable as the rock) would be disturbed, and the earth become desolate through unavenged wickedness. Must the eternal and Divine law, by which the universe is governed, be set aside in order that you may escape the punishment of your wickedness?"—*Umbreit.*

Vers. 5, 6.—"Yea, the light of the wicked shall be put out, and the spark of his fire shall not shine. The light shall be dark in his tabernacle, and his candle shall be put out with him." Having resented what he considered Job's insulting expressions, he proceeds to foretell the retributions of the wicked. Light stands for prosperity, and Bildad means to say, that instead of having the lamp and fire of

prosperity burning in his home, the dark cold night of adversity would set in.

Ver. 7. — “*The steps of his strength shall be straitened, and his own counsel shall cast him down.*” The meaning is, that the gigantic strides of his ambition shall be shortened, and his rash plans shall prove his ruin.

Ver. 8. — “*For he is cast into a net by his own feet, and he walketh upon a snare.*” “He is caught in his own tricks, as if he had spread a net or dug a pitfall for another, and had fallen into it himself. The meaning is, that he would bring ruin upon himself while he was plotting the ruin of others.” — *Barnes*.

Vers. 9, 10. — “*The gin shall take him by the heel, and the robber shall prevail against him. The snare is laid for him in the ground, and a trap for him in the way.*” “The gin will take him by the heel; the noose will prevail against him: for its cordage lieth hidden in the ground, and a trap for him in the pathway.” — *Elzas*. The language refers to the modes of capturing wild beasts. The general idea is, that wicked men will be as suddenly and stealthily seized by calamities as wild animals for which snares are laid.

Ver. 11. — “*Terrors shall make him afraid on every side, and shall drive him to his feet.*” “Terrors are here represented as allegorical personages, like the furies in the Greek poets.” — *Noyes*.

Ver. 12. — “*His strength shall be hunger-bitten, and destruction shall be ready at his side.*” The Hebrew is, “Hungered, his strength is out.” Bildad means to say, the wicked are not only encompassed and pursued by terrors, but exhausted by hunger.

Ver. 13. — “*It shall devour the strength of his skin: even the first-born of death shall devour his strength.*” “The first-born of death eats the members of his body, it eats the members, *i.e.*, the deadly disease keeps eating at his members till the whole be consumed.” — *Dr. Samuel Davidson*.

Ver. 14. — “*His confidence shall be rooted out of his tabernacle, and it shall bring him to the king of terrors.*” Some read, “Terror pursues him like a king;” others, “Dissolution shall invade him like a monarch;” others, “Terrors shall seize him like a king;” but none of the readings seem to require the erasure of the phrase, “King of terrors.” “He is torn away out of his tent wherein he trusted; it drives him down to the king of terrors.” — *Dr. Samuel Davidson*.

Ver. 15. — “*It shall dwell in his tabernacle, because it is none of his: brimstone shall be scattered upon his habitation.*” “Beings strange to him dwell in his tent: brimstone is strewn on his habitation.” — *Delitzsch*. The idea is, that his forsaken tent shall be a place of terror, and will no longer be his; it will be to him a place in which brimstone has been scattered — a place of desolation. There may be a reference here to Sodom and Gomorrah.

Ver. 16. — “*His roots shall be dried up beneath, and above shall his branch be cut off.*” Nothing will grow in a field that is covered with brimstone. Sulphur destroys all vegetation. His desolation will be complete.

Ver. 17. — “*His remembrance shall perish from the earth, and he shall have no name in the street.*” Having detailed the calamities that shall befall the wicked man, he proceeds now to indicate what will

become of his name and fame when he shall be no more. In the public places—the street—where during his lifetime he made a conspicuous figure, his name will never be mentioned.

Ver. 18.—“*He shall be driven from light into darkness.*” He shall be buried in the night of eternal oblivion. “*Chased out of the world.*” Hurried away. His contemporaries glad to dismiss him.

Ver. 19.—“*He shall neither have son nor nephew among his people, nor any remaining in his dwellings.*” All his family will be cut off, and no one left to perpetuate his name.

Ver. 20.—“*They that come after him (men of the west) shall be*

astonied at his day, as they that went before were affrighted.” “They that went before” may mean either his contemporaries or they that came after him. “Later generations shall be astounded at his last day, just as their predecessors (that is, those who were contemporaries of the wicked man) were seized with horror.”—Bernard.

Ver. 21.—“*Surely such are the dwellings of the wicked, and this is the place of him that knoweth not God.*” This is the conclusion of the whole matter, and was aimed undoubtedly at Job. He means to say, all wicked men must meet with a terrible end: you are wicked, and your end must be terrible.

HOMILETICS.—We may look at these words of Bildad as representing—

I. THE REPREHENSIBLE IN CONDUCT. There are four things implied which must be regarded as elements of evil.

First: There is *wordiness*. “*How long will it be ere ye make an end of words?*” Job had spoken much. His words had flowed from him as torrents from the hills. Wordiness is an evil in many respects. It is an evil to the speaker. It implies superficiality. Copiousness of speech is seldom found in connection with profundity of thought. But it promotes as well as implies infertility of thought. The man of fluent utterance gets on so well without thinking, that he loses the habit of reflection. Volubility is generally the offspring of vacuity. Nor is it less an evil to the hearer. The wordy man wastes the precious time, exhausts the patience, and often irritates his auditors. Truly “in the multitude of words there wanteth not sin.”

Secondly: There is *unthoughtfulness*. “*Mark, and afterwards we will speak.*” He insinuates that Job had spoken without thought or intelligence, and calls upon him to deliberate before he speaks, to weigh well his arguments before he advances them. Unthoughtfulness is an evil of no small magnitude. Were men’s moral impulses quick

and sure to discern the right, and ever regal in all activities, as are (in all probability) the impulses of unfallen spirits, men might get on without cultivating a thoughtful habitude of soul. But it is not so; our moral impulses are blunt, dim, and weak, and thoughtfulness is necessary before we dare act, if we would act wisely and well.

Thirdly: There is *contemptuousness*. “*Wherefore are we counted as beasts, and reputed vile in your sight?*” Job had said in the preceding chapter, “Thou hast hid their heart from understanding: therefore shalt thou not exalt them.” Bildad perhaps refers to this, and insinuates that Job had treated him and those who were on his side as the beasts of the field—senseless and polluted. Contempt for men is an evil: it is a moral wrong. You may despise the moral character of bad men, for their character is their own production; but you should honour their natures, for they are the creation of God.

Fourthly: There is *rage*. “*He teareth himself in his anger.*” Bildad means to indicate that Job was in a paroxysm of fury, that he had thrown aside the reins of reason, and that he was borne on the whirlwind of exasperated passion. Hence he administers reproof: “*Shall the earth be forsaken for thee?*” As if he had said, Thou speakest as if everything and everybody must give way to thee; as if the interests of all others must yield to thee; and that thou must have the whole world to thyself, and all of us must clear off. “*Shall the rock be removed out of his place?*” As if he had said, It would seem from thy reckless speech that thou wouldest have the most immutable things in nature to suit thy comfort and convenience. Rage is bad. When man gives way to temper he dishonours his nature, he imperils his well-being, he wars with God and the order of the universe.

“Thou must chain thy passions down :
Well to serve, but ill to sway,
Like the fire, they must obey.
They are good in subject state,
To strengthen, warm, and animate;
But if once we let them reign,
They sweep with desolating train,
Till they but leave a hated name,
A ruined soul, and blackened fame.”—*Eliza Cook.*

Now we are far enough from justifying Bildad in charging these *evils* upon Job; albeit he was right in treating them as evils. Wordiness, unthoughtfulness, contemptuousness, and rage, are *bad* things wherever found, inconsistent with virtue, obstructive to happiness, and opposed to the will of God. They appeared bad to this old Arabian in the dim light of natural religion millenniums ago; they should appear worse to us in the bright noontide of the Gospel dispensation. The words of Bildad represent—

II. The RETRIBUTIVE IN DESTINY. Bildad, proceeding on the false and uncharitable assumption that Job was a wicked man, sketches some of the retributive calamities that pursue and overtake the sinner. What are the calamities?

First: *Desolation*. “*Yea, the light of the wicked shall be put out, and the spark of his fire shall not shine. The light shall be dark in his tabernacle, and his candle shall be put out with him.*” “*Light*,” by the old Orientals, was ever used as the emblem of prosperity. The extinction of the light therefore is an image of utter desolation. Every lamp extinguished, every spark extinct, and cold black midnight reigning in every apartment of the dwelling. Sin evermore makes desolate. Another calamity mentioned is—

Secondly: *Embarrassment*. “*The steps of his strength shall be straitened, and his own counsel shall cast him down. For he is cast into a net by his own feet, and he walketh upon a snare. The gin shall take him by the heel, and the robber shall prevail against him. The snare is laid for him in the ground, and a trap for him in the way.*” All this is a metaphorical representation of the self-embarrassing, self-confounding consequences of sin. In every step of the sinner’s path it may be said “*the snare is laid for him.*” Truly the wicked is snared by the work of his own hands. Another calamity mentioned is—

Thirdly: *Alarm*. “*Terrors shall make him afraid on every side, and shall drive him to his feet.*” Fear is at once the offspring and avenger of sin. The guilty conscience peoples the whole sphere of life with the grim emissaries of retribution. The wicked “*flee when none pursueth.*” Fear is one

of hell's most tormenting fiends. Under the influence of this terror the "*strength shall be hunger-bitten,*" "*destruction shall be ready at his side,*" all "*confidence rooted out of his tabernacle,*" and he shall be brought to the "*king of terrors.*" Terror shall be his king: a guilty conscience will ever place a man under the reign of terror. Another calamity mentioned is—

Fourthly: *Destruction.* "*It (strange creatures) shall dwell in his tabernacle, because it is none of his.*" His home will be gone; his tabernacle will be "*none of his*" any longer. It will be as if "*brimstone*" had been "*scattered*" about it so that no life will appear, and be as desolate as death itself. His memory will be gone. "*His remembrance shall perish from the earth.*" Once his name was heard in the street, pronounced perhaps often in the day by merchant, manufacturer, clerk, but it has passed away from all tongues. His name is as if it had never been. His *presence* will be gone. "*He shall be driven from light into darkness, and chased out of the world.*" His contemporaries do not follow him with slow and sorrowful step to the grave, but hasten to bury him out of their sight, as one of whom they are utterly tired. His *progeny* will be gone. "*He shall neither have son nor nephew among his people.*" His nearest relations will soon follow him to the grave, and none will appear to make mention of his name. Other men will come who will hear of him with astonishment. "*They that come after him shall be astonished at his day, as they that went before were affrighted.*" Any reference to him would strike them with wonder and horror.

Now concerning this retribution, Bildad says, "*Surely such are the dwellings of the wicked, and this is the place of him that knoweth not God.*" Though it cannot be admitted that Job deserved the retribution here indicated, or that retribution would come on every sinner in the precise manner here described, we are bound to believe that retribution of the most terrible kind must overtake the impenitent sinner. "*The wicked shall be turned into hell, and all the nations that forget God.*" "*The fearful and unbelieving, and the abominable, and murderers, and whoremongers, and sorcerers, and idolaters, and all liars, shall have their*

part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone: which is the second death." Suffering must follow sin, as certain as season follows season. Hell is bound to sin by chains stronger than those that bind the planets to the sun.

"Nature has her laws
That will not brook infringement,—in all time,
All circumstance, all state, in every clime
She holds aloft the same avenging sword;
And sitting on her boundless throne sublime,
The vials of her wrath, with justice stored,
Shall in her own good hour on all that's ill be poured."—

J. G. Percival.

HOMILY No. XLIII.

JOB'S SECOND REPLY TO BILDAD:
BITTERLY COMPLAINING, AND FIRMLY TRUSTING.

"*Then Job answered and said,*" &c.—CHAP. xix. 1-29.

GENERAL NOTE.—"After a brief expostulation (ver. 3-4) Job declares in the strongest possible language, his conviction that the calamities, which he enumerates with greater force and fulness than in any preceding discourse, are not reconcilable with any known principle of the Divine government; they come from God, and cannot be justified by such reasonings as those which he has repeatedly refuted (6-20); they ought to excite pity; man ought to sympathize with his fellow when he is smitten by God. This course of thought issues in a complete triumph of the inner principle. He calls attention to the words which he is about to speak as the only ones which deserve a perpetual record, which sum up the whole of his convictions, and will endure for ever. His cause, being the cause of righteousness, is secure: for God (who has hitherto but shown Himself in wrath, in terror, in accusa-

tions, as an object of mysterious awe and terror) is Himself his Redeemer, a Redeemer now living in Heaven, hereafter to be manifested in Earth: to be seen after the destruction of Job's whole bodily frame, by Job's own eyes. He concludes with an emphatic warning that they who judge harshly will be judged unsparingly."—*Canon Cook.*

EXEGETICAL REMARKS. *Ver. 2.*—"How long will ye vex my soul, and break me in pieces with words?" In the previous chapter, Bildad had asked Job, "How long will it be ere ye make an end of words?" And here Job seems to retaliate.

Ver. 3.—"These ten times have ye reproached me." Ten times, a definite number for an indefinite multitude. It may be read, "many times." The meaning of the verse seems to be this: Why do you continue time after time to reproach me by bringing against me un-

founded charges? "Ye are not ashamed that ye make yourselves strange to me." Margin, "that you harden yourselves against me."

Ver. 4.—"And be it indeed that I have erred, mine error remaineth with myself." Granting that I am in the wrong, that is my concern, not yours. I, not you, shall have to bear the consequences.

Ver. 5.—"If indeed ye will magnify yourselves against me, and plead against me my reproach." "But truly ye would magnify yourselves above me, and would bring my disgrace as an argument against me."—*Bernard*. Perhaps Job meant to say, If God has brought all these sufferings upon me, you ought to show me commiseration, rather than triumph over my miserable condition.

Ver. 6.—"Know now that God hath overthrown me, and hath compassed me with His net." In order that they might understand his case, he now proceeds to a description of the calamities with which Heaven had visited him. "Know thou that God has overthrown me, He has encircled me with His net."—*Barnes*. He felt himself ruined and embarrassed.

Ver. 7.—"Behold, I cry out of wrong, but I am not heard: I cry aloud, but there is no judgment." "Behold, I cry out wrong, but I am not heard: I cry aloud, but there is no justice." He felt himself unrighteously dealt with, and he cried out now for redress both to man and God, but received no answer from either.

Ver. 8.—"He hath fenced up my way that I cannot pass, and He hath set darkness in my paths." He felt himself like a traveller, hedged in on all sides, so that he could not proceed on his journey. And more,

his path was enshrouded in darkness.

Ver. 9.—"He hath stripped me of my glory, and taken the crown from my head." The meaning is, I am stripped of all my greatness. All the distinctions I prized are taken from me, my glory is departed.

Ver. 10.—"He hath destroyed me on every side, and I am gone: and mine hope hath he removed like a tree." All is over. My hope is like an uprooted tree, left to the scorching sun and bleak winds, never to grow again, but to rot.

Ver. 11.—"He hath also kindled his wrath against me, and he counteth me unto him as one of his enemies." Job does not mean to acknowledge that he himself was an enemy to God, or that God was actually indignant with him; but what he means is, that God treated him as if there was a hot mutual antagonism.

Ver. 12.—"His troops come together, and raise up their way against me, and encamp round about my tabernacle." He regarded his calamities as God's troop of soldiers, sent forth to destroy him. "They encamp round about my tabernacle," like an army determined on my ruin.

Vers. 13-19.—"He hath put my brethren far from me, and mine acquaintance are verily estranged from me." &c. He proceeds to describe other sources of trial, sources which have their rise in the antipathies of his acquaintance, kinsfolk, brethren, domestics, wife, and children. The whole passage is so faithfully and beautifully rendered by *Dr. Bernard*, that we give it entire:—

"My brethren hath He put far from me;
And they that know me are verily
estranged from me:
My kinsfolk have failed me,

And mine acquaintance have forgotten me.

The dwellers in mine house, yea, mine own maids,

Account me for a stranger :

I am become an alien in their eyes.

I call to my servant but he will not answer,

With my own mouth must I entreat him ;

My breath is become offensive to my wife,

And so were my caresses to my children :

Yea, little children despise me,

Even when I stand by, they speak against me ;

All my familiar friends abhor me,

And such as I loved are turned against me."

So clear is the language of this version, that it precludes the necessity of any explanatory remarks.

Ver. 20.—*"My bone cleaveth to my skin and to my flesh, and I am escaped with the skin of my teeth."*

This is proverbial. I have escaped with bare life: I am whole only with the skin of my teeth, *i. e.* my gums alone are whole, the rest of the skin of my body is broken with sores (chap. vii. 5). "Satan left Job speech, in hope that he might therewith curse God. When God had made him such a pitiable spectacle, his friends should spare him the additional persecution of their cruel speeches."—*Fausset*.

Ver. 21.—*"Have pity upon me, have pity upon me, O ye my friends; for the hand of God hath touched me."* "Pity me, pity me, O my friends; for the hand of God has smitten me."—*Elzas*. God has touched me, smitten, crushed me; and I implore your pity, not your arguments. I want commiseration, not controversy.

Ver. 22.—*"Why do ye persecute me as God, and are not satisfied with my flesh?"* By implication he calls them wild beasts. There is, methinks, an irreverence implied

in this expression. His idea seems to be, God has persecuted me, dealt unjustly with me, and you are doing the same.

Ver. 23.—*"Oh that my words were now written! oh that they were printed in a book!"* The translators of the authorized version have made a strange mistake by rendering the original "printed." In the days of Job printing was unknown: in fact the Hebrew verb has quite a different meaning, and should be rendered "recorded."

Ver. 24.—*"That they were graven with an iron pen and lead in the rock for ever!"* This verse seems to refer to the ancient practice of cutting the letters with a chisel first, and then filling up the space with molten lead, so that the record might become more permanent. Job felt so strongly, that to have his words inscribed in a book would not be durable enough for him, but he would have them cut in the rock with lead in them, that they might remain for ever. The engraving of inscriptions on rocks is of very ancient date.

Vers. 25-27.—*"For I know that my Redeemer liveth, and that He shall stand at the latter day upon the earth: and though after my skin worms destroy this body, yet in my flesh shall I see God: Whom I shall see for myself, and mine eyes shall behold, and not another; though my reins be consumed within me."* These three verses have given rise to great controversy amongst Biblical critics. Some regard Job as expressing his full confidence in the Redeemer of the world and His advent in the last day, to raise him from the dead and vindicate his character before the universe; and others maintain, that all he means to express is his confidence, that God on this earth will appear to

vindicate his character before He took him away from this world. But this is, by the general consent of the best critics, a mis-translation, which, although it conveys an idea very dear to the Christian heart, is not the idea which was in the mind of the author. The following is a literal rendering by *Dr. Samuel Davidson*, which I insert, with his remarks :

“But I know, my Vindicator lives,
And the last, He will arise over the
dust :
Yea, after my skin, when this (body) is
destroyed,
Even without my flesh shall I see God :
Yea, I shall see Him for myself,
Mine eyes shall behold Him, none
other (shall do so),
My reins pine within me.”

This passage expresses a hope of immortality. In it the spirit of Job pierces beyond Sheol into the future : confidently looking for a vision of God to vindicate his righteousness. While putting such language into the speaker's mouth, the poet was not aware of the extent of

meaning to which a calm thinker might carry out his words. His habitual ideas of a future state were those of his age and nation, as we infer from the fact that other passages present the ordinary views of Sheol : and that the precious gem here presented is not seen in the book elsewhere. It was a momentary outburst, and triumph of faith on the part of the inspired poet ; not a settled or serious belief.”

Ver. 28.—“*But ye should say, Why persecute we him, seeing the root of the matter is found in me?*” Then should you say, Why persecute we him? Then, when the Vindicator appeareth, seeing that the root of the matter is found in me.

Ver. 29.—“*Be ye afraid of the sword : for wrath bringeth the punishments of the sword, that ye may know there is a judgment.*” Tremble then at the punishment that will be inflicted upon you at the coming of the Judge. Know ye therefore that there is a judgment !

HOMILETICS.—This chapter presents Job in two aspects—

I. AS BITTERLY COMPLAINING.

First : He complains of the conduct of his *friends*. He deplores in a most pathetic manner their want of sympathy with him, and that they should regard his calamities as an undoubted proof of his guilt. (1) They exasperated him with their words. “*How long will ye vex my soul, and break me in pieces with words?*” There are words which are often vexatious, and which break the heart to pieces as the blows of a hammer shiver the rocks. Some people have a remarkable facility for using such words—words that pierce the heart, and make the tenderest nerves quiver in agony. (2) They exasperated him with their persistent hostility. “*These ten times have ye reproached me.*” They did not press all their hostile arguments and feelings into a few words and then cease, but they persevered, they reiterated

over and over again their tantalizing ideas. (3) They exasperated him with their callousness. "*Ye are not ashamed that ye make yourselves strange to me.*" Margin, "harden yourselves against me." Nothing I say touches you ; my sufferings awake in you no sympathy. My arguments and my anguish seem to fall on your hearts as flakes of snow on flinty rocks. (4) They exasperated him with their assumed superiority. "*If indeed ye will magnify yourselves against me, and plead against me my reproach.*" If what the patriarch has declared of these, his professed friends, was true, he had indeed just and strong reasons for complaint. Nothing tends more to aggravate a man's suffering than the heartless and wordy talk of those who controvert his opinions in the hour of his distress. Man in affliction requires from his fellow-man, not controversial speech, but practical sympathy, it may be silent, it must be sincere, and strong.

Secondly: He complains of the conduct of his *God*. (1) He complains that God had overthrown and confounded him. "*Know now that God hath overthrown me, and hath compassed me with His net.*" He had reversed his fortune and entangled him in poverty and distress. (2) He complains that God *refused him a hearing, and hedged up his way.* "*Behold, I cry out of wrong.*" His cries to Heaven awake no response, and his endeavours to march on to a better and happier life were like that of a traveller whose way was blocked up with obstructions and black with night. (3) He complains that he was utterly deprived of his honours and his hope. "*He hath stripped me of my glory.*" Once he was held in honour by society, prospered on every side of his life, and abounded in hope ; but now all was gone, glory, crown, prosperity : on every side all gone. His hope was like an uprooted tree, never to sprout again. (4) He complains that God *treated him as an enemy, and sent troops of calamities to overwhelm him.* "*He hath also kindled His wrath against me.*" (5) He complains that God *had put all society against him.* He complains that his "*brethren*" were far from him ; his acquaintances estranged from him ; his "*kinsfolk*" had failed him. They that dwelt in his "*house,*" and his "*maids,*" counted him a "*stranger,*" that he was an "*alien in their sight,*" that his

“servants” gave him no “answer,” that his “breath” was to his own wife loathsome and offensive, that “young children despised” him and “spake against” him, that all his “inward friends”—those in the inner circle of his friendship—“abhorred” him and turned away. He complains that God had reduced his body to the most wretched condition. “My bone cleaveth to my skin and to my flesh, and I am escaped with the skin of my teeth.” Disease had so preyed upon his frame that all had wasted away but his mere lips and gums by which he was able to speak, and that was all. (6) He complains of God’s treatment until he turns again to his friends for pity. “Have pity upon me, have pity upon me, O ye my friends; for the hand of God hath touched me.” He seems to say, O my friends, there is no pity in God for me; I look to you for help; I implore your compassion.

Two remarks are suggested concerning these complainings of the patriarch. (a) They reveal a *most lamentable condition* of existence. Job was tortured in body and mind; he felt that God and man were against him. He seemed to feel himself bereft of everything that could make his existence even tolerable. Wealth gone, reputation gone, respect gone, friends gone, man and Heaven against him, and he a miserable wretch, whose existence had become a curse to himself. To what a state can moral evil reduce intelligent creatures! Satan, by Divine permission, brought all this on Job. What must be the condition of those who are tormented without hope by the devil and his angels! Beware of sin. “Resist the devil, and he will flee from you.” (b) They reveal considerable *imperfections in moral character*. Job, in the main, was a “just” man, one that “feared God” and “eschewed evil,” yet he was far from being perfect. There is here revealed much irritability of temper in relation to man, much impious murmuring in relation to God. He was gold, but gold connected with much that was base and worthless, which required the fires of affliction to consume. He was now in the hot fire, and no wonder that he cries in the scorching furnace. The more fiercely the billows beat upon the shore, the more the pebbles are rounded and polished; the more the diamond is cut, the more brilliant it becomes. Afflictions are the

billows that polish souls for the temple of eternity, they are the instruments that make them sparkle as diamonds in the heavens above. This chapter presents Job—

II. AS FIRMLY TRUSTING. Although his complaints were varied, great, and vehement, he still held on to his faith in God as the Vindicator of his character. Although he was bereft of well-nigh everything but sheer existence, he was not bereft of his trust in Heaven. "*I know that my Redeemer liveth.*" The "I" is emphatic. *I!* whoever else is ignorant of it, I know it. In this confidence his spirit lived and battled against outward forces, and like a gallant bark defied the hurricane which bore him in safety over the bounding billows. In what was his strong confidence? *The future vindication of his character.* So strong was his faith in this, that he wanted it written, not on parchment, not merely engraven on the rock, but engraven "*in lead in the rock for ever.*" Strong faith evermore cries for utterance. "*Oh that my words were now written! oh that they were printed in a book!*" As if he had said, "It boots nothing to declare my confidence in the future vindication of my character to *you*: you are disbelieving. You are heartless. I would have it engraved in the most imperishable way on those eternal rocks that lie around me." He felt certain of four things concerning the Divine Vindicator.

First: He felt certain of His *existence*. "*I know that my Redeemer liveth.*" The word translated "*Redeemer*" is *Goel*, or avenger of blood,—a Divinely appointed officer in the old Hebrew world, who in God's name stepped forth to avenge the wrong that had been inflicted upon his murdered relative. Job believed there was for him such a Goel, Avenger, or Vindicator. "*I know that my Redeemer (my Vindicator) liveth.*" I *know* it, not as a matter of logic, but of consciousness. I am confident that there is a Divine One *living* who will vindicate the right.

Secondly: He felt certain of His *appearing on the earth*. "*He shall stand at the latter day upon the earth.*" Or "*He will arise over the dust.*" He regarded Him as living, but not so living upon the earth as He would one day, when He would appear on his behalf. Whatever Job meant, whoever

he referred to, *we* know that the Vindicator of the true and the good will one day stand upon this earth. He shall appear, and "every eye shall see Him."

Thirdly : He felt certain of his *seeing Him for himself*. "*Whom I shall see for myself.*" Mine own eyes shall see Him, I shall have a personal conscious view of Him. Yes, "*though after my skin worms destroy this body, yet in my flesh (or, without my flesh) shall I see God.*" Worms must destroy this body, worms may destroy the body before the advent of my Vindicator, albeit I shall see Him. Whatever happens to my body, *I shall be*, and I shall "*see God.*" See God! What meaneth this? The doctrine of the body's resurrection is not necessarily taught here. The language implies—(1) A belief that he should live after his body was no more; and—(2) That in life he should witness a vindication of his character. He believed his *existence* and *identity* would be preserved whatever transformation occurred in his state. "*I shall see*" Him for "*myself.*" "*Mine eyes shall behold, and not another.*"

Fourthly : He felt certain of his *confounding his accusers*. "*But ye should say, Why persecute we him, seeing the root of the matter is found in me?*" As if he had said, When my Vindicator appears, you will condemn yourselves for persecuting me; you will see there was no ground for accusation; in that day you will reverse your judgment. And not only so, but you will also suffer for the charges you have brought against me. "*Be ye afraid of the sword : for wrath bringeth the punishments of the sword, that ye may know there is a judgment.*"

HOMILY No. XLIV.

ZOPHAR'S SECOND SPEECH.

ASPECTS OF A POLEMICAL, A NATURAL, AND A DOGMATICAL RELIGION.

"Then answered Zophar the Naamathite, and said," &c.—CHAP. XX. 1-29.

GENERAL NOTE. Zophar now appears on the scene again, more vehement and coarse even than before. The dogma that wickedness inevitably brings with it such misery as Job was now enduring, instead of being weakened by the discussion, seems to have taken a stronger hold on him. In this address he seems to have exhausted himself: he has reached his limit, and appears no more in the dialogue.

EXEGETICAL REMARKS. *Vers.* 1, 2.—"Then answered Zophar the Naamathite, and said, Therefore do my thoughts cause me to answer, and for this I make haste." Margin, "my haste is in me." Job seems to have irritated Zophar, and here he appears to speak with impetuosity. It would seem that his emotions were irrepressible.

Ver. 3. — "I have heard the check of my reproach, and the spirit of my understanding causeth me to answer." "The correction of my reproach I must hear, nevertheless the spirit of my understanding informeth me."—*Delitzsch*. He seems to say, The reason for my being so prompt to reply is, I hear a correction intended for my shame, I hear Job launching accusations and charges against me which, if true, cover me with reproach, therefore my understanding urges me to answer, reason tells me I ought not to be silent. The man is perturbed.

Vers. 4, 5.—"Knowest thou not

this of old, since man was placed upon earth, that the triumphing of the wicked is short, and the joy of the hypocrite but for a moment?"

As if he had said: Does not the history of the distant past, even back to the time when man was placed on the earth, show thee that the triumph of the evil-doer is not for long, and the joy of the sinner but for a moment?

Vers. 6, 7.—"Though his excellency mount up to the heavens, and his head reach unto the clouds; yet he shall perish for ever like his own dung: they which have seen him shall say, Where is he?" However vaunting his pride, or elevated his secular position amongst his competitors, he shall perish for ever as the vilest substance: so utterly shall every vestige of his greatness be swept away, that those who are accustomed to see his self-importance and grandeur will say, "Where is he?" Not a vestige of his former splendour remains. The coarseness of one of the similes here, is the result of a coarse mind, who looks on Job upon his heap of ashes, and sees in him an object loathsome and disgusting.

Ver. 8.—"He shall fly away as a dream, and shall not be found: yea, he shall be chased away as a vision of the night." You may as well seek after the unsubstantial vision of the night as search for him. He is gone.

Ver. 9.—"The eye also which

saw him shall see him no more; neither shall his place any more behold him." This expression is very similar to that which Job had employed elsewhere concerning himself. (See chap. vii.)

Ver. 10.—“His children shall seek to please the poor, and his hands shall restore their goods.” “His children must appease the poor, and his hands give up his wealth.”—*Delitzsch*. He means to say, that his children will have to conciliate the poor, to win back the hearts of those whom their father, as a huge oppressor, had made poor. It is clear from (verse 6) that Zophar refers not to an ordinary oppressor, but to some ruthless tyrant; and he means to say that his fortune “will one day take such a turn that either his children will have to sue for peace to those weaker princes whom their father had stripped of provinces, treasuries, &c., or that even he himself in his lifetime will be obliged to restore to every one of his victims all that he had plundered them of.”—*Bernard*. “His hands,”—in all probability he means the hands of his posterity,—would give back the property which their ancestor had unjustly acquired. Restitution is the idea.

Ver. 11.—“His bones are full of the sin of his youth, which shall lie down with him in the dust.” “His bones were full of youthful vigour; now it is laid down with him in the dust.”—*Delitzsch*. Though full of life and in the prime of youthful strength, he shall lie in the dust.

Vers. 12, 13.—“Though wickedness be sweet in his mouth, though he hide it under his tongue; though he spare it, and forsake it not; but keep it still within his mouth.” “The poet, in these verses, compares wickedness to a dainty morsel in the mouth. As a child, for in-

stance, plays with a sugar plum, rolling it under his tongue, pressing it against his palate, using every device, in short, to extract all its sweetness and perfume; so does the wicked man play and dally with his wickedness, not a whit less luscious to his taste.”—*Bernard*.

Vers. 14-16.—“Yet his meat in his bowels is turned, it is the gall of asps within him. He hath swallowed down riches, and he shall vomit them up again: God shall cast them out of his belly. He shall suck the poison of asps: the viper’s tongue shall slay him.” “His bread is now changed in his bowels, it is the gall of vipers within him. He hath swallowed down riches and now he spitteth them out; God shall drive them out of his belly. He sucked in the poison of vipers, the tongue of the adder slayeth him.”—*Delitzsch*. Here again we have the coarse similes of a coarse mind. What he means to say is, what was sweet in the mouth becomes bitter in the experience; what was pleasant in the taste convulses the system with pain. All the wealth he has appropriated shall so sicken him, that he shall vomit it up. The whole will turn to a moral poison as the “gall of asps,” and sting him as the tongue of a viper.

Ver. 17.—“He shall not see the rivers, the floods, the brooks of honey and butter.” Margin, “streaming brooks.” “He shall not delight himself in streams like to rivers and brooks of honey and cream.” The idea is, that he shall no more enjoy prosperity, that the period of luxury and plenty is over for ever.

Ver. 18.—“That which he laboured for shall he restore, and shall not swallow it down: according to his substance shall the restitution be, and he shall not rejoice therein.” The restitution he will

have to make will be to the utmost farthing, not a particle shall remain with him to cause rejoicing.

Vers. 19, 20.—"Because he hath oppressed and hath forsaken the poor; because he hath violently taken away a house which he builded not; surely he shall not feel quietness in his belly, he shall not save of that which he desired."

"Because he cast down, let the destitute lie helpless, he shall not, in case he hath seized a house, finish building it; because he knew no rest in his craving, he shall not be able to rescue himself with what he most loveth." "Seeing that he had crushed and hath abandoned the poor. He first ruined them completely and then left them to their fate without the least commiseration. Seeing he hath violently taken away a house which he never built. Seeing that he never felt quietness within him. He was always restless and bent upon doing mischief, therefore he shall not escape with that which he delighted in."

Ver. 21.—"There shall none of his meat be left; therefore shall no man look for his goods." Because he was so greedy as not to leave anything for the poor, his prosperity shall terminate. Covetousness brings ruin.

Ver. 22.—"In the fulness of his sufficiency he shall be in straits: every hand of the wicked shall come upon him." Some render "*sufficiency*" "need," and "*wicked*" "needy." And then the idea is, that he shall be straitened by his necessities, and be crushed by the poor.

Ver. 23.—"When he is about to fill his belly, God shall cast the fury of His wrath upon him, and shall rain it upon him while he is eating." When he is about gratifying his

hunger, God shall visit him with indignation.

Vers. 24, 25.—"He shall flee from the iron weapon, and the bow of steel shall strike him through. It is drawn, and cometh out of the body; yea, the glittering sword cometh out of his gall: terrors are upon him." He may endeavour to escape the weapon of iron, but the bow of brass shall strike him through. He escapes one blow only to be crushed by another. The glittering weapon shall go into him, and if extracted some other terror shall come upon him. "Each word gives a distinct image. Conquered in the battle, he flees; the steel bow sends its arrow, it reaches him; he draws it out, but the life-blood follows the glittering point, and the king of terrors seizes on its prey."—*Canon Cook.*

Ver. 26.—"All darkness shall be hid in his secret places: a fire not blown shall consume him; it shall go ill with him that is left in his tabernacle." *Delitzsch* gives the true version, "All darkness is reserved for his treasured things, a fire that is not blown upon devoureth him; it feedeth upon what is left in his tent." "Every sort of darkness and calamity is concealed for his hidden treasures. The dangers with which his treasures are threatened are not perceived by him till they are no longer to be shunned. A fire not fanned by human hands shall devour him. Misfortunes shall befall him, the origin of which neither he nor any one else shall be able to discover. The one remaining in his dwellings shall fare ill."

Ver. 27.—"The heaven shall reveal his iniquity; and the earth shall rise up against him." Heaven and earth will unite to reveal his wickedness and iusure his ruin.

He intends this, perhaps, as a direct answer to what Job had said (chap. xvi. 18). As if he had said, Yes, there is a witness in heaven, but one that will reveal his guilt; earth will hear his cry, but only to rise in indignation against him.

Ver. 28.—“*The increase of his house shall depart, and his goods shall flow away in the day of his wrath.*” A repetition of an idea

several times expressed in this chapter.

Ver. 29.—“*This is the portion of a wicked man from God, and the heritage appointed unto him by God.*” Zophar having finished his terrible descriptions of the calamities that shall befall a wicked man, triumphantly exclaims, Such is the portion of a wicked man, and the heritage appointed him by God.

HOMILETICS.—It is difficult to bring all the varied parts of this chapter into sermonic unity, so that modern preachers may turn it to practical use. Looking, however, carefully through it with this view, I think the whole may be gathered up and fairly and forcibly employed to illustrate three subjects—

I. THE IRRITATING INFLUENCES OF A POLEMICAL religion. It must be admitted that the so-called friends of Job were great controversialists, and their controversy aggravated not a little the agony of his sufferings. The discussion that had been going on indeed irritated all parties engaged in it. Zophar appears almost maddened by it, he says—“*My thoughts cause me to answer, and for this I make haste. I have heard the check of my reproach.*” The man’s emotions were so roused and heated that he seems to be urged irresistibly to utter the most spiteful, cutting, and terrible things he can think of. He had spoken before with something like an impassioned fury (chap. xi.); but now his whole nature seems aflame. It is the last time in the controversy that he speaks, and he is determined to pour out all the lava of his being. Polemical religion irritates in two ways—

First: *By striking at one’s cherished prejudices.* The religious prejudices of men are often tender to them as the apple of the eye, as dear to them as their life. In truth, they seem to become a part of their spiritual nature, the most sensitive nerves of their heart. When these are wounded, the man’s whole nature is roused into antagonism, and he will fight for them to the death. I am disposed to

believe that no argument will uproot a man's religious prejudice ; that is only done by the moral force of spiritual light and goodness. It is under the rays of Christly virtues that their roots will alone wither and rot. Polemical religion irritates—

Secondly : By *wounding one's self-esteem*. In many ways is a man's vanity offended in religious controversy. His opponent often either ignores or treats, as he thinks, unjustly his arguments. Zophar is an illustration of this. The arguments of Job, which he had just listened to, he passes by and does not touch. He pours out his own views in utter disregard to the positions which Job had laid down. It is ever so. The controversialist seldom or never conducts his argument in such a way that his opponent is bound to feel its fairness and its truth. Who doubts the irritating influences of a polemical religion ? Who has not read it in almost every chapter of ecclesiastical history, in every page of theological discussion, and in every utterance of sectarian zeal ? Nay, who has not felt it in his own experience ? Perhaps there is nothing that has created more ill-feeling between man and man, community and community, than a *polemical* religion. It cuts up the family of the good into contending sects ; it nurses the demon of bigotry, and kindles the fires of persecution. It falls upon the rivers of social life like the apocalyptic star, and turns the flowing waves of thought and feeling into wormwood. True religion is not logic, but love ; the one divides, the other unites ; the one creates discord, the other wakes the harmonies of heaven. The speech of Zophar illustrates—

II. THE RETRIBUTIVE APPREHENSIONS OF NATURAL religion. There is no reason to believe that Zophar had any written revelation or any special communication from God, like the old patriarchs and prophets had. He was left to the light of nature. What he learnt of God and man, and of the relations between them, with all the obligations springing therefrom, he learnt from the phenomena above, beneath, around, and within him. His Bible was the starry vault, the rolling ocean, the open plain, and the workings of his own soul. Nature was his Bible, Reason his interpreter,

and Experience his preacher. From this source he had reached a strong conviction that there was a *Dicine retribution* for wickedness. He had no doubt about this; and this indeed is the truth written legibly and indelibly on the consciences of all men. What strong language, what startling imagery, he here employs to express his thoughts concerning the working out of this retributive law! He states—

First: *That, however exalted a wicked man may be, retribution will bring him down.* “*Knowest thou not this of old?*” &c. What though he “*moult up to the heavens*” and his “*head reach unto the clouds,*” he shall “*perish for ever,*” and be swept from the world like a “*vision of the night,*” “*fly away as a dream.*” Those who knew him will search for him, but he shall not be found; “*the eye also which saw him shall see him no more.*” This is true, all history proves it: the eternal law of retribution has ever been and still is working in this direction. Through all history and through all society you see great men falling from their pedestals like meteors from the clouds, and are lost. He states—

Secondly: *That however great the property he bequeaths to posterity, retribution will compel restitution.* “*His children shall seek to please the poor, and his hands shall restore their goods. That which he laboured for shall he restore, and shall not swallow it down: according to his substance shall the restitution be, and he shall not rejoice therein.*” Though he die a millionaire the hands of posterity shall distribute his property amongst the poor. This also is true. Retributive Providence is constantly dealing with the large fortunes that wicked men have built up, as the parabolic tempest with the house on the sand, breaking them into pieces, and carrying on its floods all the parts into the ocean of common wants. He states—

Thirdly: *That however strong with youthful vigour, retribution will bring him to the dust.* “*His bones are full of the sin of his youth, which shall lie down with him in the dust.*” “*Sin*” is not in the original: the idea is youthful vigour. Retribution has no more respect for vigorous youthhood than it has for secular opulence and power. The young man pursuing a course of wickedness, bounding with high

hopes and rejoicing in his energy, it strikes down on all hands. Youthful vigour is no protection against the stroke of insulted justice. Beware, young men! He states—

Fourthly: That *however great his pleasure in sin, retribution will turn the whole into inexpressible misery.* “*Though wickedness be sweet in his mouth . . . Yet his meat in his bowels is turned; it is the gall of asps within him.*” There is a pleasure in sin,—a sensual worldly pleasure,—or men would not pursue it. But though wicked men relish it at the time, roll it as a sweet plum in the mouth, and feel its deliciousness, the issue will be agony; it will turn into wormwood, it will rankle as a hellish virus in every vein of the soul. This also is true to all experience. Sin, like some delicious opiate, not only renders the system insensitive to all pain, but fills the brain with enchanting visions; and all the while saps the foundation of health and brings on the “horrors of great darkness.” He states—

Fifthly: That *however great his possessions, retribution will reduce him to the utmost destitution and misery.* “*He shall not see the rivers, the floods, the brooks of honey and butter.*” This means, no more worldly prosperity for him; its rivers, floods, brooks, are all dried up. But more than destitution, there is misery. This is described in verses 19-26. What a picture of wretchedness is here. No more “*quietness in his belly,*” i. e., his soul. His soul will be like an ocean of fire in a tempest. “*God shall cast the fury of His wrath upon him, and shall rain it upon him while he is eating.*” He states—

Sixthly: That *however much he may conceal his wickedness, nature will compel him to reveal it.* “*The heaven shall reveal his iniquity, and the earth shall rise up against him.*” Retribution makes nature a witness against, and an antagonist to, him. If God is against us, the universe is against us, and we are against ourselves. Such are roughly and briefly the ideas which this old Arabian seemed to entertain concerning Retribution in relation to the wicked. His idea was, that it worked ruin, worked it gradually, terribly, certainly. However mistaken this man was in the details and forms of its operation, and however morally blame-worthy in spirit, in this he was true, that misery must

evermore follow the wicked. The Bible is full of this truth. "Rejoice, O young man, in thy youth," &c. "We must all appear before the judgment-seat of Christ," &c. The speech of Zophar illustrates—

III. The UTTER HEARTLESSNESS OF A DOGMATICAL religion. "*This is the portion of a wicked man from God, and the heritage appointed unto him by God.*" This is the conclusion of Zophar's address; and no doubt he intended to apply it to Job. He meant to say, You are a wicked man, and your afflictions are penal. The *dogma* that Zophar and his friends held was this, that calamity in this world always followed the wicked, and that Job *was a very wicked man because his calamities were so great.* By dogma, I mean an opinion that man has accepted on the authority of others, and not reached as the result of his own honest and independent investigation and reasoning.* This idea possessed him and possessed his friends also. It was in them a settled belief, or, what is truer, a settled prejudice. Any argument against this dogma, instead of weakening its power, only irritated their temper. Now, though they came to Job as his friends, and perhaps had a generous sympathy with him when they started on their visit, this dogma not only dried up their friendly feelings, but evoked within them a kind of revulsion towards him. In its light they saw in him a kind of monster, and they loathed and denounced him. More terrific figures to represent punishment it was almost impossible for the human mind to create than were employed in this speech of Zophar; yet he directs the whole against Job. He seems exultant in forging thunderbolts to hurl at the head of the suffering patriarch. With a kind of fiendish delight he draws the most horrible pictures of the sufferings that must overtake the wicked man, and presents them to Job as applicable to his case. Job's appeal for compassion, his entreaties, his wails, his groans, his miserable appearance, kindled no sparks of pity within him. Why all this? A theological dogma had dehumanized the man, had turned a friend into a fiend. It is ever so. When men become the victims of a theological dogma they become heartless and

* See my *Philosophy of Happiness*, p. 227.

cruel, their delight is in hurling anathemas at the heretic, forging fetters to manacle his limbs, kindling fires to burn his body to ashes. A man under the controlling influence of a theological dogma, is as heartless as the fabled Procrustes, who on his iron bedstead tied all who fell into his hands, stretching out those limbs that were too short to fit and cutting off those that were too long. Dogmatists through all ages have been cruelly maiming those men who would not fit into the little bedstead of their hard and narrow crotchets.

HOMILY No. XLV.

JOB'S SECOND REPLY TO ZOPHAR.

THAT GREAT SUFFERINGS IN MAN ALWAYS IMPLY GREAT WICKEDNESS, A GREAT FALLACY.

“*But Job answered and said,*” &c.—CHAP. XXI. 1-34.

GENERAL NOTE.—This chapter is Job's third answer, and in language bold and sublime he maintains a proposition directly opposed to theirs, viz., that great sufferings do not imply great wickedness. This he maintains by a reference to his own consciousness, his observation of facts, his historic knowledge, and his theory of Providence.

EXEGETICAL REMARKS. *Ver. 2.*—“*Hear diligently my speech, and let this be your consolations.*” “Let this be instead of your consolations.”—*Delitzsch.* You came to console me, but in this you have failed. Instead of any more of your consolations let me speak, hear me. This perhaps is his meaning. Hitherto Job had made his own unparalleled case of distress the grand topic of his address; but as

his friends had all along been urging on him the condition of the wicked in this world, he now takes up that subject and exposes their fallacy.

Ver. 3.—“*Suffer me that I may speak; and after that I have spoken, mock on!*” Give me a fair hearing, and when I have finished, mock on if you like.

Ver. 4.—“*As for me, is my complaint to man? and if it were so, why should not my spirit be troubled?*” “As for me, then, doth my complaint concern man, or wherefore should I not become impatient?”—*Delitzsch.* Perhaps he means to say, I have not been speaking of the fate of the wicked, I have only been referring to my own case. Your arguments do not meet mine at all, and I have therefore reason to complain. “Why should not my spirit be troubled?”

How can I be but impatient at your talk?

Ver. 5.—“*Mark me, (margin: look unto me,) and be astonished, and lay your hand upon your mouth.*” Observe the condition I am reduced to, compare it with the state in which you once knew me, and be amazed at yourselves for treating me thus.

Ver. 6.—“*Even when I remember I am afraid, and trembling taketh hold on my flesh.*” When I reflect that, contrary to all that one might expect from friends, you have had the heart to talk to me as you have, I am troubled and my body is seized with trembling. Or, it may be, he means, When I call the scenes through which I have passed to memory I feel a trembling through my whole body.

Ver. 7.—“*Wherefore do the wicked live, become old, yea, are mighty in power?*” You assert that the wicked are punished in this world. How happens it then, that many wicked men live to old age, become mighty, and live in peace? Facts are against you. This is the whole question, stated at once clearly and condensely.

Ver. 8.—“*Their seed is established in their sight with them, and their offspring before their eyes.*” You say that the posterity of the wicked are cut off. Both Zophar (xx. 5), Bildad (xviii. 19), Eliphaz, (xv. 4), had stated this. Job says it is not so. Look around you, and you see they flourish on all hands.

Ver. 9.—“*Their houses are safe from fear, (margin: peace without fear,) neither is the rod of God upon them.*” The “rod” is the emblem of punishment. The idea of Job is, that, contrary to what they had maintained, punishment

did not always come to the children of the wicked.

Ver. 10.—“*Their bull gendereth, and fuleth not; their cow calveth, and casteth not her calf.*” The general idea is, that the wicked in this world prosper as well as the pious. Their cattle multiply in a natural way, as the cattle of others.

Vers. 11, 12.—“*They send forth their little ones like a flock, and their children dance. They take the timbrel and harp, and rejoice at the sound of the organ.*” The wicked are blest with children; and their children are happy, they sport as lambs that gambol on the sunny hills. The playfulness of children reveals the benevolence of the Creator. The human creature is made for happiness.

Ver. 13.—“*They spend their days in wealth, and in a moment go down to the grave*” (sheol). Sudden death was considered by Job a blessing (chap. ix. 23, 24). He meant, that they had a prosperous life and a happy death.

Ver. 14.—“*Therefore they say unto God, Depart from us; for we desire not the knowledge of Thy ways.*” As if he had said, They are prosperous and happy though they dislike God, and have no desire to know anything about Him.

Ver. 15.—“*What is the Almighty, that we should serve Him? and what profit should we have, if we pray unto Him?*” What claim has He to our service? and should we pray to Him, what good should we get thereby?

Ver. 16.—“*Lo, their good is not in their hand: the counsel of the wicked is far from me.*” “This should be corrected in part by the Septuagint. With that version the negative in the first clause should be omitted; and a single letter should be changed in the second,

so that the meaning comes out: 'Lo, their prosperity is in their own hand: the conduct of the wicked is far from Him.'—*Dr. Samuel Davidson*. Some read the verse thus, "You say, Lo, their good is not in their own power." And suppose that Job's friends would thus answer his statements. "Perhaps," says *Barnes*, "the meaning is this, Do not misunderstand me. I maintain that the wicked have often prospered, and that God does not in this life deal with them according to their deserts. They have life, and health, and prosperity. But do not suppose I am their advocate. Far be it from me to defend them."

Vers. 17, 18.—"How oft is the candle of the wicked put out? and how oft cometh their destruction upon them? God distributeth sorrows in his anger. They are as stubble before the wind, and as chaff that the storm carrieth away." The patriarch does not seem to convey the idea that sudden calamities came often upon the wicked, but the reverse, that such occurrences were not frequent. Hence *Delitzsch* translates the first clause of (verse 17) thus: "How rarely is the light of the wicked put out." You say that calamities as a rule follow the wicked here; I say, it rarely occurs. In fact, seldom does God treat the wicked here as they deserve.

Ver. 19.—"God layeth up his iniquity for his children: He rewardeth him, and he shall know it." Here again Job supposes them to reply to his argument. "You will say that it certainly sometimes happens that God does not punish the wicked man in his lifetime, but then He is a God "visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children unto the third and fourth generations," and consequently the

iniquity of the wicked man, if not punished in his own person, will certainly be expiated by his children and descendants. But such an answer as this I could by no means regard as satisfactory: such a proceeding on the part of God would be anything but just; He ought to requite it to the wicked man himself, that he should know."—*Bernard*.

Ver. 20.—"His eyes shall see his destruction, and he shall drink of the wrath of the Almighty." The friends of Job had maintained that not only would retribution overtake the wicked in this life, but would descend to their posterity: that God had laid up punishment for their children. Job controverts this, and asserts that the wicked man's own eyes should see and experience his ruin.

Ver. 21.—"For what pleasure hath he in his house after him, when the number of his months is cut off in the midst?" "For what careth he for his house after him, when the number of his months is cut off?"—*Delitzsch*. What does the wicked man care for posterity? What concern hath he for his house after him? When he is gone, when the number of his months is cut off, what matters the condition of his posterity to him?

Ver. 22.—"Shall any teach God knowledge? seeing He judgeth those that are high." "Job's friends seem to have done this. Their argument seems to imply a more exact knowledge of the course of the world than the Creator Himself has."—*Dr. Samuel Davidson*.

Vers. 23-26.—"One dieth in his full strength, being wholly at ease and quiet. His breasts are full of milk, and his bones are moistened with marrow. And another dieth in the bitterness of his soul, and

never eateth with pleasure. They shall lie down alike in the dust, and the worms shall cover them." "One dieth in his full strength, being still cheerful and free from care. His troughs are full of milk, and the marrow of his bones is well watered. And another dieth with a sorrowing spirit, and hath not enjoyed wealth. They lie beside one another in the dust, and worms cover them both."

—*Delitzsch*. Where then, he means to say, either in life or death, is the difference between the condition of the good man and the wicked—between the one who deserved a reward and the other who deserved punishment? Providence does not make the distinction here. All things come alike to all. The circumstances in which you find men in this life are no criteria of their character, whether good or bad.

Ver. 27.—"Behold, I know your thoughts, and the devices which ye wrongfully imagine against me." I see that you are not satisfied with what I have said, I know your thoughts, and the arguments by which you intend to silence me.

Ver. 28.—"For ye say, Where is the house of the prince? and where are the dwelling places of the wicked?" You ask me where is the house of the prince, that is, the wicked man? You think that the habitations of the wicked are always destroyed in this life. It is not so.

Ver. 29.—"Have ye not asked them that go by the way? and do ye not know their tokens?" Ask history, and you will find that in the day of calamity the wicked man is spared, even in the day when wrath is brought on: that when judgments come from above, the wicked are frequently left unscathed.

Ver. 30.—"That the wicked is reserved to the day of destruction? they shall be brought forth to the day of wrath." *Delitzsch* translates thus—"That the wicked was spared in the day of calamity. In the day of the outburst of wrath they were led away." "Render, 'That the wicked is spared in the day of calamity, in the day when the floods of (Divine) wrath approach.'" —*Dr. Samuel Davidson*. The patriarch wishes to maintain that here men were not dealt with according to character, and that this was the current opinion amongst travellers that had gone into other lands.

Ver. 31.—"Who shall declare His way to His face? and who shall repay Him what He hath done?" "He hath done it; who will requite Him? All the pronouns refer to God." —*Dr. Samuel Davidson*.

Vers. 32, 33.—"Yet shall he be brought to the grave, and shall remain in the tomb. The clods of the valley shall be sweet unto him, and every man shall draw after him, as there are innumerable before him." He is brought to his grave—or, in margin, "graves,"—with as much honour as other men. And he remains in the tomb watched and guarded as other men. Flowers are planted on his grave, and sculptured marble perpetuates his memory. And beneath the clods of the valley he lies as calmly as other men, and all will have to follow him to the same long home.

Ver. 34.—"How then comfort ye me in vain, seeing in your answers there remaineth falsehood?" How then comfort ye me in vain, seeing that your answers every one of them prove to be a fallacy?

HOMILETICS.—The dogma that the three so-called friends

of Job had got into their heads,—aye, into their very mental life,—was, as I have said, *that wherever in any man there was great suffering there must be great wickedness.* This came out in all their speeches, and filled them with antagonism to Job. None of the patriarch's protestations, expostulations, or reasonings, could touch it. In this chapter he sets himself in a somewhat formal and systematic way to argue against it. He seems to reveal more logic and less passion in this address than in any of his preceding speeches. Here he makes it to appear that their dogma was opposed to his consciousness of right, his observation of facts, his knowledge of history, and his theory of Providence. I infer from this address of his, that he felt their dogma to be opposed—

I. TO HIS CONSCIOUSNESS OF RIGHT. If their dogma was true, he must be a sinner above all the rest, for his sufferings were of the most aggravated character. But he felt profoundly that, as compared with his contemporaries, he was not a great sinner; that, on the contrary, the "root of the matter" was in him; that he was "perfect," "upright," one that "feared God" and "eschewed evil." The first six verses seem to reveal this consciousness in him.

First: This consciousness *urged him to speak.* "*Hear diligently my speech, and let this be your consolations.*" So strongly did he feel within him that their doctrine was wrong, that he craves their attention to his refutatory remarks. "*Let this be your consolations.*" Or, as some render it, "Instead of your consolations." Your "*consolations*" are worthless. I shall be relieved and consoled by being allowed to disburden my mind on this question. What greater consolation can a calumniated man have, than a full opportunity to vindicate himself? Libelled virtue the world over, and the ages through, will have this opportunity one day.

Secondly: This consciousness *gave him confidence in speaking.* "*Suffer me that I may speak; and after that I have spoken, mock on.*" I shall speak the truth, heedless of the result. I have little hope of convincing you, but the discharge of my conscience is a duty. When I have done this you may do what you please. "*Mock on.*" Reiterate your reproaches. You may thunder them louder than ever; what

matters it to me. I am certain I am right. No man who from his own consciousness knows he is speaking the truth cares for the mocking of his auditory. Better be faithful and wake the reproaches of your hearers than truculent and evoke their cheers.

Thirdly: This consciousness *inspired him with religious solemnity*. “*As for me, is my complaint to man? and if it were so, why should not my spirit be troubled? Mark me, and be astonished, and lay your hand upon your mouth. Even when I remember I am afraid, and trembling taketh hold on my flesh.*” The sentiment running through these verses seems to me to be this, *awe at the inscrutability of the Divine procedure*. “*Is my complaint to man?*” What troubles me, agitates my heart, is, not your opinions concerning my character, but the mysteriousness of God’s ways with me. When I remember, when I think of them, I am troubled until my body is seized with shuddering; and at this you too should be astonished. “*Mark me, and be astonished, and lay your hand upon your mouth.*” (1) The providential dealings of God with man are often terribly mysterious. How often have men so felt the Divine throne wrapped in clouds and darkness, that the Governor of the universe could not be seen. Most thoughtful men have felt under some Providence the “horror of great darkness.” Jacob, Asaph, Daniel, &c. (2) Under these mysterious events solemn silence rather than controversy is more befitting us. “*Lay your hand upon your mouth.*” Do not talk, but worship. “*Stand in awe and sin not.*”

In all this, Job seems to reveal a consciousness that stood in firm and solemn defiance against their dogma. It is infinitely better to have consciousness on the side of truth than mere logic. I infer from this speech, that he felt their dogma to be opposed—

II. TO HIS OBSERVATION OF FACTS. “*Wherefore do the wicked live, become old, yea, are mighty in power?*”* And on to (verse 16) he proceeds to state facts in relation to wicked men. Observe from the verses:—

First: That he saw *wicked men about him*. Their character he describes as follows: “*They say unto God, Depart from us; for we desire not the knowledge of Thy ways. What is the*

* For a sermonic sketch of this verse, see *Homilet*, Fourth Series, vol. iii., p. 369.

Almighty, that we should serve Him? and what profit should we have, if we pray unto Him?" In this description of wicked men we have two of the primary elements of depravity. (1) Hostility to God. Hostility shown (α) In a desire for His absence. "*Depart from us.*" The instinct of all depravity is to banish God from His universe, to quench the sun from the moral heavens, and to light up the world with the smoky lamps of corrupt reason. Hostility shown (β) In a repugnance for His knowledge. "*We desire not the knowledge of Thy ways.*" Who wants to hear the name of one he dislikes? The name of the man I hate will fall as fire on my ears. I desire not a knowledge of His "*ways.*" Hostility shown (γ) In a rebellion against His authority. "*What is the Almighty, that we should serve Him?*" What authority has He over us? What impious hardihood! Few men will utter all this hostility in words; but in practice the millions declare it. (2) Devotion to self. "*And what profit should we have, if we pray unto Him?*" * Here is the essence of selfishness, and selfishness is the root of all immorality. Such were the wicked men Job saw around him on all hands. Observe—

Secondly: He saw wicked men *very prosperous*. (1) They prosper in their own *persons*. They "*become old, yea, are mighty in power.*" Although virtue is necessarily productive of good health and long life, wickedness often outpowers and outlives it. There are, perhaps, as many centenarians found in the ranks of sin as in the ranks of holiness. (2) They prosper in their *property*. "*Their houses are safe from fear, neither is the rod of God upon them. Their bull gendereth, and faileth not; their cow calveth, and casteth not her calf.*" Natural providence treated them as beneficently as the good; their habitations were unmolested, Divine chastisements were not manifest, and their herds multiplied as the herds of other men. Nature knows nothing of moral distinctions: she treats all characters alike. (3) They prosper in their *posterity*. "*Their seed is established in their sight with them, and their offspring before their eyes. . . . They send forth their little ones like a flock, and their children dance. They take the timbrel and harp, and-rejoice at the sound of the organ.*" He saw the

* For sketch on this verse, see *Homilist*, Third Series, vol. ii., p. 288.

children of the wicked skip about them happy as a flock of lambs. Observe—

Thirdly: He saw wicked men happy in *living and dying*. “*They spend their days in wealth, and in a moment go down to the grave.*” Wealth means mirth, and a sudden death was regarded as a blessing. In death they had no torturing pain, no lingering disease; they had no bands in their death, their strength was firm. All these facts Job saw, and he states them as a refutation of the dogma that his friends held and urged against him. His argument means this: You say that wickedness brings suffering and ruin in this world, meets here with a prompt and adequate retribution. What say you to these facts, which are dead against your theory? Why hold a dogma which all the facts of life refute? To these facts Job supposes them to make three remarks, to which he replies. Notice—(1) Their *first* remark and his reply. We have this in verses 16, 17, and 18. “*Lo, their good is not in their hand.*” This is what they say, which seems to mean this: Their prosperity as well as themselves may be annihilated by God in one moment; how then can they dare to use such insulting language to God as you indicate? Their idea seems to be, that their prosperity after all is not theirs, they do not enjoy it, it depends for its continuance every moment on the will of God. Job replies, “*The counsel of the wicked is far from me.*” Their language (which I have quoted) is foreign to my sympathies, repugnant to my nature: all I know is, that such is their language. “*How oft is the candle of the wicked put out?*” That is, how often is their prosperity brought suddenly to an end? You say that their good is “*not in their hand,*” but in the hand of another who will draw it suddenly and violently; but I ask, “*how oft*” this occurs? Job does not mean by this interrogatory, that it frequently occurred, but that it very seldom transpired. He means to say, that as a rule the wicked were not suddenly overtaken in calamities as they maintained. How often is the “*candle*” put out, how often does their “*destruction*” come upon them, how often does God distribute sorrows in His “*anger,*” how often do they become as “*stubble before the wind*” and as “*chaff that the storm carrieth away?*” You

say it is common ; I say it is seldom. As a rule they are dealt with here as the best of men. What Job says is true enough. "Think ye that they were sinners above all men," on whom the "tower in Siloam fell." Notice—(2) Their *second* remark and his reply? "*God layeth up his iniquity for his children.*" You say, "*God layeth up his iniquity*"—that is, punishment—"for his children," *i. e.* the wicked man's children. You say that judgment not only pursues the wicked man here, but his children when he has left the world. My reply is, that the wicked man himself ought to feel the punishment of his wickedness. Where is the justice in letting his punishment pass over him and fall on his children? He himself should feel it. "*His eyes shall see his destruction, and he shall drink of the wrath of the Almighty. For what pleasure hath he in his house after him, when the number of his months is cut off in the midst?*" Job means to say, the wicked man himself should feel his punishment, should with his own eyes see his destruction, with his own heart drink of the "*wrath of the Almighty,*" for what does it matter to him when he is in his grave, what becomes of his posterity? This is good reasoning. I ask why, under the righteous government of God, wicked men are allowed to prosper here? I am told that the punishment will fall upon their children. The answer is an insult to my reason and my conscience. Job felt this. Notice—(3) Their *third* remark and his reply. "*Shall any teach God knowledge? seeing He judgeth those that are high.*" This is a grand utterance, but no answer to Job's arguments. No one can teach Omniscience. No one can dictate to the absolute Monarch of the universe. He knows all and directs all. Job of course would accept with a loyal reverence such an utterance as this. It was no more in their favour than in his. He replies by directing them again to the plain facts that were about them, which showed that Providence as a rule made no distinction between the good and the bad. "*One,*" perhaps he meant the wicked man, "*dieth in his full strength, being wholly at ease and quiet. His breasts are full of milk, and his bones are moistened with marrow.*" He dies without knowing what poverty, secular anxiety, physical pain, and exhaustion are. "*Another dieth,*" probably he

means the good man, "*in the bitterness of his soul, and never eateth with pleasure.*" This is a fact common enough in all lands and times. "*They shall lie down alike in the dust, and the worms shall cover them.*" In the grave there is no difference. Common worms feed on them, and their flesh moulders back to dust in the same way. Notice—(4) Their fourth remark and his reply. "*For ye say, Where is the house of the prince? and where are the dwelling-places of the wicked?*" To this Job virtually replies: You say it is quite impossible for short-sighted mortals to decide positively with regard to any house, whether it harbours a good or a wicked man, because, judging as they do only from appearances, they may mistake one for noble-minded who, in reality, is wicked and depraved, or hold another to be wicked who is secretly and without ostentation acting in a manner altogether pleasing and acceptable to Him Who "knoweth the secrets of the heart." By thus disputing the competency of a man to pronounce any one of his fellow-men to be either just or wicked, you of course mean to insinuate that I too, though you can bring no distinct charge against me, have all my life been wicked and depraved.

Thus Job answers the real, or imaginary, or both, objections, which his friends had urged against his reiterated statements that the wicked did not meet with their full punishment here; and throughout he appeals to facts in society that came under his own observation. I infer from his speech that he felt their dogma to be opposed—

III. TO HIS HISTORIC KNOWLEDGE. "*Have ye not asked them that go by the way? and do ye not know their tokens, That the wicked is reserved to the day of destruction? they shall be brought forth to the day of wrath.*" If you are not satisfied with the facts which I have stated as falling under my own observation, I will refer you to the testimony of other men—men who have travelled through other lands and lived in other times. They have noted down their experience, and you will find that their observations of society in remote times and countries agree with all that I have stated.

First: They observed, as I have, that the *wicked are often protected in common calamities*. They are "*reserved to the day of destruction, they shall be brought forth to the day of wrath.*" Our translators have given a wrong idea of this verse. It does not mean (as their version conveys) that the wicked will meet with a terrible retribution in a life beyond this. The version of *Delitzsch*, which agrees with *Bernard* and others, gives, I think, the idea, which is, that the wicked are withdrawn from the "*day of destruction*" and led away on "*the day of wrath.*" Job means to say, that wicked men often manage to escape calamities that overtake and overwhelm other men. This also is a fact: wicked men who have wealth, often manage to escape pestilence, famines, dangers, wars, which come down with a crushing weight upon others.

Secondly: They observed, as I have, that *few, if any, are found to deal out punishment to wicked men in power*. "*Who shall declare his way to his face? and who shall repay him what he hath done?*" He means to say, that the social influence of a prosperous and affluent wicked man is so great that people, as a rule, stand in awe of him, that they will not reprove him "*to his face,*" nor "*repay him what he hath done,*" that is, punish him for his crimes. This also is a fact. Wicked men in power, who have been guilty of the most flagrant crimes in Church and State, in social, commercial, and political life, find few, if any, as a rule, who will have the courage to charge home their crimes, and seek to bring down upon them the chastening rod of justice. It is even so now. Rich men who swindle the people of enormous sums, are left in the full enjoyment of their mansions, their liberty, and their pleasures, whilst the poor, who from the gnawings of hunger may steal from another even a loaf of bread, shall be degraded by incarceration.

Thirdly: They observed, as I have, that *the wicked man goes to his grave with as much peace and honour as other men*. "*Yet shall he be brought to the grave, and shall remain in the tomb. The clods of the valley shall be sweet unto him, and every man shall draw after him, as there are innumerable before him.*" He dies, and is borne with stately solemnity to his grave. His tomb is guarded and watched with reverence; quietly

he sleeps in the dust. “*The clods of the valley shall be sweet unto him.*” No violence is offered to his ashes, and to him multitudes without number will draw. There is nothing in his death, any more than in the death of other men, to indicate retribution. He dies, is borne to his grave, sleeps in his sepulchre, and men in teeming multitudes follow after him as they have and will all that have ever lived. This also is true. There is nothing in the death, the funeral, or the grave of a wicked man to indicate his wickedness. I infer from his speech that he felt their dogma to be opposed—

IV. TO HIS THEORY OF PROVIDENCE. Whilst I can find nothing in Job’s speech here expressive of his belief in a state of retribution beyond the grave, we think it is implied. In his last speech (chap. xix.), and his second answer, he had declared with an impassioned eloquence that his Vindicator not only lived, but would appear on his behalf after his body had been destroyed. It cannot be supposed that this belief, which seemed so strong a short time before, was either extinct or inoperative now. The high probability is, that he assumed it as a doctrine upon which he and his friends were agreed, and therefore there was no need formally to introduce it. In sooth, it would have been impossible for Job to have retained his confidence in God as he did to the last, had he not had the deep and settled conviction that there was a state beyond this, where the discrepancies of Providence would be satisfactorily explained, and where the balance of human affairs will be struck with the pen of inexorable justice. I see not how there can be any real religion, which is supreme love to the Author of our being, where there is not a well-settled faith in a future state. If this life embraces the whole of human history, then I see no justice or goodness in my Creator. If I see not these, how can I love Him? How can I be religious?

CONCLUSION.—God’s system of governing the race has been the same from the beginning. He has never dealt with mankind here on the ground of character. True, there are occasional flashes of Divine retribution which reveal moral distinctions and requite moral conduct; but they are only

occasional, limited, and prophetic. Job perhaps erred in not fully acknowledging this in his speech. Sometimes you see the wicked struck down as by a thunderbolt from heaven, and Job should have admitted such cases. Had he done so, he would have been more just as a debater, and stood a greater chance of carrying conviction into the hearts of his opponents. No stronger argument for a future state of full and adequate retribution would it be possible to have, than that which is furnished by God's system of governing the world, a system where apparent discrepancies and outrages on justice keep the soul of the world ever in view of a judgment to come.

HOMILY No. XLVI.

THE THIRD COLLOQUY, EXTENDING FROM CHAPTER XXII. TO CHAPTER XXVI.

THE THIRD SPEECH OF ELIPHAZ.

(1.) THE THEOLOGICAL SECTION.

"Then Eliphaz the Temanite answered and said," &c.—CHAP. xxii. 1-4.

GENERAL NOTE.—This is the third and last appearance of Eliphaz on the stage. He comes with the same dogma, which seems as strong as ever. After this he withdraws, and is seen no more.

EXEGETICAL REMARKS. *Ver. 2.*—*"Can a man be profitable unto God, as he that is wise may be profitable unto himself?"* "Is a man profitable unto God? No: indeed the intelligent man is profitable unto himself."—*Delitzsch*. The idea is, that a wise man may by his conduct serve himself, but that no efforts of his can be of any advantage to the Almighty.

Ver. 3.—*"Is it any pleasure to the Almighty, that thou art righteous? or is it gain to Him, that thou*

makest thy ways perfect?" This is almost a repetition of the same idea, viz., that the Almighty is in no way benefited by our conduct, however wise or righteous.

Ver. 4.—*"Will He reprove thee for fear of thee? will He enter with thee into judgment?"* "Will He reason with thee because He standeth in awe of thee?"—*Bernard*. The idea seems to be this, that inasmuch as God is absolutely independent of human conduct, He will not condescend to enter into an argument as to His treatment of man. Job seems often to express a wish that God would go into judicial discussion with him, and Eliphaz here intimates that such a thing was not to be expected from one so great as God.

HOMILETICS.—In this address of Eliphaz, running on to the close of the chapter, there are four distinct classes of remark—*theological, recriminatory, historical, and admonitory.*

This section comprises the first class, viz., the theological, and includes two general truths.

I. THAT THE GREAT GOD IS PERFECTLY INDEPENDENT OF MAN'S CHARACTER, WHETHER RIGHT OR WRONG. “*Can a man be profitable unto God, as he that is wise may be profitable unto himself? Is it any pleasure to the Almighty, that thou art righteous? or is it gain to Him, that thou makest thy ways perfect?*”

First: He is so independent of it that He is not *affected by it*. No hellish crimes can lessen His felicity: no heavenly virtue can heighten His blessedness. He is the Eternal Fountain of purity and happiness. Were hell quenched He would be no happier: were heaven annihilated His glory would neither be dimmed nor His blessedness diminished. “If thou sinnest, what doest thou against Him? or if thy transgressions be multiplied, what doest thou unto Him? If thou be righteous, what givest thou Him? or what receiveth He of thine hand?” He is infinitely more independent of all the virtues of heaven than the orb of day is independent of a candle's feeble rays, more independent of all the crimes of hell than noontide brightness is of a mere whiff of smoke. He is not “worshipped with men's hands as though He needed anything.” This fact should impress us—(1) With the duty of *humility*. God is independent of the most righteous services of the highest intelligence in the universe. None are necessary to the carrying out of His purposes. He can do without us, let us be humble. This fact should impress us—(2) With the *benevolence* of His legislation. Why does He lay down laws for the regulation of human conduct? Simply and entirely for our own happiness. He requires us to worship Him, because in worship alone our natures can be harmoniously developed. The moral code of the universe originates in sovereign love. God's laws are but love speaking in the imperative mood.

Secondly: He is so independent that He will not *condescend to explain His conduct*. “*Will He reprove thee for fear*

of thee? will he enter with thee into judgment?" One great cause of Job's murmuring was that God had sent punishment upon him without any explanation. For this Eliphaz here reproves him, and virtually says, Is it not in the highest degree absurd to expect that the Maker should be willing to explain His doings to the creatures He has made? When a man requires an explanation from his fellow-man, he thinks, of course, he has a right to demand it of him, and forms his expectation of its being given upon the feelings of respect or fear with which he conceives himself to be regarded by him to whom he addresses the demand. But can a man expect God to give an explanation of His dealings with him from any such motives? What blasphemous folly it is to expect the Almighty to give an account of His doings! The other general truth here is—That whilst the Great God is perfectly independent of man's character, whether right or wrong—

II. MAN'S CHARACTER IS OF THE UTMOST IMPORTANCE TO HIMSELF. "*He that is wise may be profitable unto himself.*" Eliphaz means to say that the wise and pious man is "*profitable unto himself.*" To the man himself, character is everything. The wealth of Cræsus, the strength of Samson, the wisdom of Solomon, and the dominion of Cæsar, are nothing to a man in comparison with his *character*. His character is—(1) the fruit of his existence—(2) the organ of his power—(3) the law of his destiny. It is the only property he carries with him beyond the grave; and that out of which his hell will blaze or his paradise bloom. Whilst my character is nothing to the Almighty Maker and Monarch of the universe, it is everything to me. The man who is cultivating an ungodly character here, is going every moment "into everlasting punishment:" whilst he who is cherishing principles and forming habits of Christly virtue, is going every moment "into life eternal." Out of the character of the good Paradise blooms, out of that of the wicked hell flames. The grand object of Christ in the world was to enable men to form a holy character. "The grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men, teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we

should live soberly, righteously, and godly in this present world." "We all, with open face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord."

HOMILY No. XLVII.

THE THIRD SPEECH OF ELIPHAZ.

(2.) THE RECRIMINATORY SECTION.

"*Is not thy wickedness great? and thine iniquities infinite?*" &c.—
 CHAP. XXII. 5-14.

EXEGETICAL REMARKS. *Ver. 5.*
 —"*Is not thy wickedness great? and thine iniquities infinite?*" Here for the first time Eliphaz brings a distinct charge of guilt against Job, and means to say that his guilt must be infinite because of the amount of his sufferings. He probably means by this expression, "Since I see thy sufferings are great, thy sins must also be great; thy matchless afflictions prove to me thy matchless iniquities." This is the only place in the Bible, it is said, where the word "infinite" has been applied to sin. *Dr. Samuel Davidson* says that the Hebrew means literally, there is no end to thy iniquities. "Infinite" belongs only to the received version.

Ver. 6.—"For thou hast taken a pledge from thy brother for nought, and stripped the naked of their clothing." Margin: "The cloth of the naked." The probability is that this charge is an unfounded calumny. If Eliphaz did not fabricate it himself, he based it perhaps on the words of some

slanderer, for slanderers have ever abounded. Anyhow it is interesting to know that Eliphaz regarded injustice and cruelty towards the helpless as an enormous crime.

Ver. 7.—"Thou hast not given water to the weary to drink, and thou hast withholden bread from the hungry." Here is the charge of inhospitality, which amongst the Orientals was always regarded as a great sin.

Ver. 8.—"But as for the mighty man (margin: man of arm), he had the earth; and the honourable man (margin: eminent, or accepted for countenance,) dwelt in it." By this he means to say, Job, in the days of his prosperity and influence, had used his great power in a way not humane. His might went against the right. This also, perhaps, in all probability was false.

Ver. 9.—"Thou hast sent widows away empty, and the arms of the fatherless have been broken." This charge Job subsequently contradicts (xxix. 11-16), in language the most sublime and impressive.

Ver. 10.—“*Therefore snares are round about thee, and sudden fear troubleth thee.*” Here comes out his false and pernicious logic. “Therefore.” The history of Providence protests against this “therefore.” Suffering here is no test of character.

Ver. 11.—“*Or darkness, that thou canst not see; and abundance of waters cover thee.*” “Darkness” and “waters” are employed elsewhere, as well as here, to signify great affliction.

Vers. 12-14.—“*Is not God in the height of heaven? and behold the height of the stars, how high they are! And thou sayest, How doth God know? can He judge through the dark cloud? Thick clouds are a covering to Him, that He seeth not; and He walketh in the circuit of heaven.*”

“Is not Eloah high as the heavens?
See but the head of the stars how
exalted!
So then thou thinkest, What doth God
know?
Can He judge through the thick cloud?
Clouds veil Him, that He seeth not;
And in the vault of heaven He walketh
at His pleasure.”—*Delitzsch.*

Here Eliphaz seems to charge Job with the error of regarding God as so remote from the earth, so far up in the regions of immensity, as not to know what was going on in this little planet. Perhaps Eliphaz drew this conclusion from the circumstance that Job denied that God punished the wicked according to their conduct in this world. His thoughts seem to be this, Because thou entertainest this idea, thou thinkest that God is too great and too far away to notice the sins of individual men.

HOMILETICS.—This section of this third speech of Eliphaz I have designated the *recriminatory*. The charges here brought against Job are twofold, the one wrong in relation to man, and the other wrong in relation to God.

I. Wrong in relation to MAN. In regard to the charge which he here brings against Job, it is worthy of note that whilst most expositors regard Eliphaz as speaking in his own name, others (amongst whom *Dr. Bernard*) regard him as indicating merely the charges which the Almighty might bring against him. If Eliphaz and the other friends had known Job to have committed such atrocities as are enumerated in these verses, we can hardly believe that they would have come to sympathize with and comfort him; much less that they would have torn their garments and sprinkled dust upon their heads on account of the fall of such a barbarous oppressor. Moreover, since Job had challenged them as early as (chap. vi. 24), to point out to him in what he had erred, it is difficult to understand how, if they had charges like these to bring forward against him—charges which they could not have failed to perceive must

put him to the blush and silence him for ever and ever—they could have kept them back till now. The truth of the matter is, Eliphaz merely meant to say this, “We certainly cannot point out to you a single thing in which you have done wrong; but this does not prove that God could not, as He may have seen you commit many atrocious crimes which remain concealed from us as well as others who know you.” But even if he is supposed to speak in the name of the Almighty, he must be regarded as endorsing the charges himself. From what we know of this Eliphaz, there is no reason to believe that he would be so impious as to put into the mouth of the Almighty charges against men if they were unfounded and false. I believe, therefore, that I am justified in regarding his language as *recriminatory*. What is the charge that he brings here against Job in relation to his conduct toward man? It is his flagrant inhumanity:

First: He was *rapacious*. “*For thou hast taken a pledge from thy brother for nought, and stripped the naked of their clothing.*” He extorted even from his own brother a “*pledge*” to which he had no just claim, and stripped the ill-clad of their tattered garments.

Secondly: He was *inhospitable*. “*Thou hast not given water to the weary to drink, and thou hast withholden bread from the hungry.*” To those parched with thirst and exhausted by hunger thou hast shown no sympathy, nor stretched forth the helping hand.

Thirdly: He was *tyranic*. “*But as for the mighty man, he had the earth; and the honourable man dwelt in it. Thou hast sent widows away empty, and the arms of the fatherless have been broken.*” His great power he had used, not to help the widow, the orphan, and the indigent, but to crush them. In all this he means to say that Job’s “*iniquities*” were “*infinite*,” hence his punishment was condign and signal. The other charge which he here brings against Job is—

II. Wrong in relation to God. “*Is not God in the height of heaven? And behold the height of the stars, how high they are! And thou sayest, How doth God know? Can He judge through the thick cloud? Thick clouds are a covering to Him,*

that He seeth not; and He walketh in the circuit of heaven." His charge here against Job in relation to God, is a denial of the Divine *inspection and superintendence of individual man*. This error, which he falsely charges on Job, was the leading error of the old Epicureans, and the leading error of Deists in all ages.

Now, although this allegation was in all probability unfounded in relation to Job, it is undeniably applicable to the vast majority of men in all creeds and churches, regions and religions, territories and times. Idolatrous images, immorality in life, formality in worship, moral dulness in mind, are abundant proofs that man regards God as a Being foreign and remote. If all men felt God to be in conscious contact with them, idolatry, immorality, dormancy of soul, could not exist. Many causes have been assigned for man's tendency to regard God as remote, such as—(1) The mediatory method of Divine operation. He does not deal directly with man. (2) Man's power of spontaneous action. He is left free, he does not feel the hand of God on the springs of his being. (3) The unbroken regularity of natural laws. Nature shows no changes, indicates no interruption. (4) The disorders of the moral world. Sin is allowed to prosper, crimes to run riot. But the grand cause is (5) *dread of God*. Men have sinned, and their guilty consciences invest the Almighty with such attributes of vengeance that they turn away in horror from Him. The language of men is, "Depart from us, for we desire not a knowledge of Thy ways."*

CONCLUSION.—Learn from this—

First: *That even in natural religion the ill-treatment of our fellow-men is regarded as a great crime*. There is no reason to believe that Eliphaz had any revelation from God but that which nature supplies; and yet in his language to Job he expresses in a strong and unmistakable manner his conviction, that to be not only cruel, but even inhospitable, to our fellow-men is wicked. The obligation to be socially sympathetic, loving, and kind, the God of love has written on the human soul. When men become reckless in relation

* See *Homilist*, Third Series, vol. x., p. 270.

to the interests of their fellow-men, grow callous and malign, they outrage the law of their own nature. Xenocrates, though a heathen, was pitiful to a poor sparrow, that, being pursued by a hawk, fled to him for succour. He sheltered her until the enemy was fled, and afterwards, letting her go, said, *Se supplicem non prodidisse*, that he had not betrayed his poor suppliant. Learn—

Secondly: *That men often denounce evils in others of which they themselves are guilty.* Strong as was the implied denunciation of Eliphaz against unkindness in Job, was he not himself unkind in tantalizing him now when he was overwhelmed with suffering, by charges that were utterly false? So it ever has been: the man who has the “beam” in his own eye is most ready to discover the “mote” in his brother’s. Indeed, as a rule, the greatest sinner is the greatest censor. How severe was the judgment which David pronounced upon the man whose portrait Nathan drew! How rigorous and hasty was the judgment which the proud Pharisee in the temple passed upon the penitential publican! How ready were the Scribes and Pharisees to pronounce the severest judgment even upon the conduct of Christ and His disciples! The greatest sinners adjudged to death the holiest Being that had ever trod this earth. There is no difficulty in accounting for this remarkable and patent fact.

HOMILY No. XLVIII.

THE THIRD SPEECH OF ELIPHAZ.

(3) THE HISTORIC SECTION.

"Hast thou marked the old way which wicked men have trodden?" &c.—
CHAP. XXII. 15-20.

EXEGETICAL REMARKS.—*Ver. 15.*—*"Hast thou marked the old way which wicked men have trodden?"* "Wilt thou observe the way of the world which evil men have trodden?"—*Delitzsch.* Eliphaz utters these words, in all probability, in relation to the error which he charged upon Job in the twelfth verse, viz., as regarding God as being too foreign and too great to concern Himself with the individual affairs of individual men, as being in the "height of heaven," and beyond the stars, &c. What he here means to say, is, "Wilt thou keep then to the old path which sinful men trod of old?"—*Dr. Samuel Davidson.*

Ver. 16.—*"Which were cut down out of time."* The old sinners to whom Eliphaz here refers were, he intimates, men whose wickedness led to a premature ruin: they withered, they shrivelled up before their time. Heaven would bear with them no longer. *"Whose foundation was overthrown with a flood."* Some think that the "foundation" here referred to those fundamental principles of erroneous belief which he regarded Job as holding in common with them, and that he asserts that these foundation principles of theirs were borne away before them as a rushing stream or an overflowing river, and that has come down and streamed into his mind. But the reference undoubtedly is to some great and well-known calamity that

had happened to wicked men of the past. Nearly all commentators regard the reference as being to the flood.

Ver. 17.—*"Which said unto God, Depart from us: and what can the Almighty do for them?"* Here is the secret principle of these men's wickedness; they were practical atheists. They "said unto God, Depart from us," &c. These men had no wish to retain God in their knowledge. "The whole passage," says *Dr. Burnes*, "is a most sarcastic retort on what Job had said in (chap. xxi. 14, 15). He had affirmed that though wicked men used this language, yet they prospered. Eliphaz takes the same language, and applies it to the sinners before the deluge, and says that they expressed themselves just in this manner. The language which Job puts into the mouths of the wicked, had indeed, said Eliphaz, been used. But by whom? By those who lived in security and prosperity. By the men who lived before the deluge, says he, the race that was so wicked that it was necessary to cut them off by the flood. These are the men to whose sentiments you appeal, these the men with whom you have sympathy!"

Ver. 18.—*"Yet He filled their houses with good things."* "Notwithstanding He had filled their houses with good things."—*Delitzsch.* Bad as they were, they

were prosperous. Some regard this expression as a biting sarcasm. Job had maintained that the wicked were prosperous. "True," Eliphaz says, "their houses were well filled; but what became of them?" "*The counsel of the wicked is far from me.*" Here he flings Job's own words in his face (chap. xxi. 16).

Vers. 19, 20.—"*The righteous see it, and are glad: and the innocent laugh them to scorn. Whereas our substance is not cut down, but the remnant of them the fire con-*

sumeth." "The righteous see it and rejoice, and the innocent mock at them. Verily our opponent is destroyed, and the fire hath devoured their abundance." This thought corresponds to that expressed as a wish, hope, or anticipation at the close of many of the psalms; that the retributive justice of God, though we may have to wait a long time for it, becomes at length the more gloriously manifest, to the joy of those hitherto innocently persecuted.

HOMILETICS.—Having noticed the *theological* and the *re-criminatory* sections of this third address of Eliphaz to Job, I have now to notice the *historic*. Eliphaz here points Job to the history of wickedness, and the words suggest four things in relation to it.

I. It is a history of ANCIENT DATE. It is an "*old way.*" Or, as some render it, the "track of old." Eliphaz spoke these words 4000 years ago, and the way of sin was an "*old way*" then. When did sin break out in the universe? It dates too far back for us to ascertain. But however ancient, it is not *eternal*. The character of God, the teaching of the Bible, the dictates of conscience, show that sin must have had a beginning—that it was not *in* God, but an apostasy *from* Him. There was a period when not the shadow of an error darkened any single intellect, not an impure feeling heaved in any breast, not one discordant note was heard anywhere throughout immensity. Holiness alone is eternal, because God is eternal. But we can no more answer the *when* of its birth than the *how*; all we know is, that it prowled about the creation when Eden was in its bloom, and Adam was in his pristine innocence. The way of sin is an "*old way,*" a way in which all generations have trod. The history of the world is indeed but the history of this "*old way.*"

II. It is a history of TERRIBLE CALAMITIES. "*Which were cut down out of time.*" Some terrible calamities are referred

to here. Most expositors acknowledge this, though they differ in their speculations concerning the exact particulars. What are the calamities connected with this "*old way*?" There are *personal* calamities. Deadness of intellect, dormancy of conscience, pollution of imagination, perversion of will. The soul is a vineyard laid waste, a temple in ruins, an empire in anarchy, a world in chaos. There are *social* calamities. The chicaneries of commerce, the feuds of families, the wars of nations, the groans of the oppressed, the wails of the bereaved, the moans of the dying, the graves of the dead. There are *material* calamities. Yawning earthquakes, withering pestilences, blighting famines, scathing lightnings, desolating tempests. All these are calamities connected with the history of the "*old way*." Truly an awful way is the "*old way*."

III. It is a history of PRACTICAL ATHEISM. "*Which said unto God, Depart from us : and what can the Almighty do for them ?*" The untold millions who have trod this "*old way*," who are treading it now, and will tread it through coming times, differ from each other in innumerable particulars ; but they are all agreed in this practical atheism. This is the philosophy of their conduct and the essence of their guilt. They have not only no *sympathy* with God, and therefore no blessed connection with the Fountain of life, light, and love, but an *antipathy* towards Him : they say, "*Depart from us.*" (1) A guilty conscience makes men *dread* God. Sense of guilt evermore invests Almighty Love with attributes of vengeance and terror. (2) Dread of God makes men *hate* Him. Once you get to fear a being, and you will soon get to hate him. Your fear will clothe him with attributes that will kindle your hottest indignation. (3) Hating God prompts men to *repel* Him. "*Depart from us.*" You hate a sovereign, and you crave for his dethronement ; you hate a man, and you hunger for his ruin. Men in this "*old way*" hate God, and they would banish Him from the universe if they could. The only place from which they can expel Him is from their hearts, and this they do.

IV. It is a history LIABLE TO MISINTERPRETATION. "*He*

filled their houses with good things.” Eliphaz misapplied it now to Job. He meant to insinuate either that Job was treading the “*old way*” of wickedness, which was not true, or that the ruin that overtook the sinners of ancient times proved that God dealt with men according to their characters here; and that, as Job was a great sufferer, he was therefore a great sinner. Men make misapplication of the history of wickedness. First: When they conclude that God is *indifferent* in relation to the moral character of men. The worldly prosperity of the wicked sometimes leads them to conclude this. Secondly: When they conclude that because God does not punish wicked men at once, He will not *punish them at all*. This they often do. “Because sentence against an evil work is not executed speedily, therefore the heart of the sons of men is fully set in them to do evil.”

Whilst men thus misapply this history, it has nevertheless lessons of great significance. First: It teaches the *vastness of man's power*. All the forces of nature, all the laws and operations of God, all the intuitions of the soul, all the strivings of the spirit, are against wickedness. Yet men sin. Here is power, awful power. Secondly: It teaches the *greatness of God's patience*. Wickedness is to the last degree abhorrent to the nature of the Eternal; and He could by a mere volition annihilate all its workers in an instant. Yet He allows them to continue to tread the “*old way*.” “The Lord is not slack concerning His promise, as some men count slackness,” &c. Thirdly: It teaches the *energy of human influence*. One man at the head of the race broke at first into this “*old way*” of wickedness, and all follow. The one sin of Adam has vibrated through all souls. “As by one man sin entered into the world,” &c. Fourthly: It teaches the *magnitude of Christ's work*. He came to destroy the “*old way*,” by turning it into a way of holiness; in other words, to “put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself.” He came to stem the torrent of human depravity, swollen by the confluent stream of ages, to uproot the seeds of evil imbedded deep in the heart of humanity, to dethrone the principalities and powers of darkness which have held a mastery over the race for ages.

HOMILY No. XLIX.

THE THIRD SPEECH OF ELIPHAZ.

(4.) THE ADMONITORY SECTION.

“*Acquaint now thyself with Him, and be at peace.*” &c.—
 CHAP. XXII. 21-30.

EXEGETICAL REMARKS. *Ver. 21.*—“*Acquaint now thyself with Him, and be at peace: thereby good shall come unto thee.*” “Acquaint now thyself with Him, and thou shalt prosper; therefore by these things good shall come unto thee.”—*Dr. Bernard.* The idea is, Make Him thy Friend, and thou shalt have peace and prosperity.

Ver. 22.—“*Receive, I pray thee, the law from His mouth, and lay up His words in thine heart.*” This translation is so good it scarcely admits of improvement. Receive into thy mind, and entertain in thy heart, His precepts, so that they may rule thee.

Vers. 23-25.—“*If thou return to the Almighty, thou shalt be built up, thou shalt put away iniquity far from thy tabernacles. Then shalt thou lay up gold as dust, and the gold of Ophir as the stones of the brooks. Yea, the Almighty shall be thy defence, and thou shalt have plenty of silver.*” Here Eliphaz states what he considers necessary for Job to do in order to extricate himself from his difficulties and to obtain peace and prosperity. He must return in heart to the Almighty, renounce all iniquity, banish it from his tents, and count worldly wealth as nothing compared with the possession of his Maker's friendship. He should regard gold as dust, and the fine “gold of Ophir” as the pebbles in the “brooks” in

comparison with having the Almighty as his treasure.

Ver. 26.—“*For then shalt thou have thy delight in the Almighty, and shalt lift up thy face unto God.*” Here he begins to state the immense advantages that would recur to him by turning to the Almighty and counting worldly wealth as comparatively worthless. By doing this he would experience a high delight in God, and lift up his face to Him in confidence and love.

Vers. 27, 28.—“*Thou shalt make thy prayer unto Him, and He shall hear thee, and thou shalt pay thy vows. Thou shalt also decree a thing, and it shall be established unto thee: and the light shall shine upon thy ways.*” There are other advantages which he promises Job if he would only follow his advice. His prayers would be answered, his vows be accomplished, his purposes realized and established, and the light of prosperity shine upon his path.

Ver. 29.—“*When men are cast down, then thou shalt say, There is lifting up; and He shall save the humble person.*” Still another advantage, which is that he would become qualified to encourage the sad and the dejected. The rendering of *Elzas* gives the idea of the passage, “When men are cast down thou wilt say, Cheer up, for the dejected He will save.”

Ver. 30.—“*He shall deliver the island of the innocent: and it is delivered by the pureness of thine hands.*” “He shall rescue him who is not guiltless, and he is rescued by the purity of thy hands.”—*Delitzsch.* “Many a man who has deserved to incur the wrath of God shall be delivered by thy intercession and prayer, as soon as by the purity of thy hands thou shalt again be received into the favour and grace of God.”—*Bernard.*

HOMILETICS.—This is what I have called the *admonitory* section of this speech of Eliphaz to Job. The other sections, viz., the theological, recriminatory, and historical, have already been noticed. The great subject which Eliphaz urges on Job here, is *spiritual reformation*, a thorough change in his heart and life in relation to God. Of all reformations this is the greatest; it is vital. All other reformations, political, social, or religious, are worthless to man without this moral reformation of soul. I am far enough from admitting that Eliphaz was right in assuming that Job was not a spiritually renewed man, and that he required such an admonition as this, albeit his ideas of the nature and advantages of spiritual reformation, as set forth in his language, well deserve the attention of all men. Observe then—

I. The NATURE of a true spiritual reformation as here set forth. His language embraces four ideas concerning it.

First: *Reconciliation to God.* “*Acquaint now thyself with Him,*” &c. “*If thou return to the Almighty,*” &c. Men in their unregenerate state are out of sympathy with their Maker. There is an estrangement of soul, a moral distance; this is the guilt, this is the ruin of mankind. The great moral want of the world is friendship with the Creator. This is what Christ came into the world to accomplish; His mission was “to reconcile the world unto Himself.” In reconciliation between man and man there is generally a mutual concession; each acknowledges his fault, and overcomes within him some amount of ill-feeling. But no such mutual concession is connected with the restoration of friendship between man and God. The Almighty has nothing to concede; He has given no offence, and no unkind feeling ever has existed in His mind; He has always been full of love. “We pray you in Christ’s stead, be ye reconciled to God.”

Another idea which his language embraces concerning spiritual reformation is—

Secondly: *Practical regard to the Divine precepts.* “Receive, I pray thee, the law from His mouth, and lay up His words in thine heart.” Shut not up thy soul against His law, but receive it, enshrine and cherish it “in thine heart,” so that thine obedience be not merely outward but inward; not occasional but constant. Put thy being under the reign of heavenly laws. All genuine spiritual reformation implies this; it is virtually seeking the “kingdom of God and His righteousness;” it is coming under His reign, enthroning Him within as the moral Monarch. No man is a really reformed man, who does not feel that the kingdom of God is within him; and the kingdom of God is love, peace, joy, righteousness. Under His reign, and under the reign of no other, the soul advances in liberty and light, power, influence, dignity, and blessedness. Another idea which his language embraces concerning spiritual reformation is—

Thirdly: *Renunciation of all iniquity.* “Thou shalt put away iniquity far from thy tabernacles.” There is no reformation where sin is cherished, or where it is allowed to linger. There must be the denying of ungodliness and worldly lusts, the crucifying of the old man. The work of a truly reformed man is to “put away” sin—to put it away wherever he finds it, not only in his own life but in his circle. Let no man consider himself regenerated or reformed who does not “put away iniquity” from his “tabernacles.” It was to clear the world of sin that Christ came. He “put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself.” This is the great work of all good men; they battle against sin wherever it appears, whether in churches, governments, commerce, or literature. The other idea which his language embraces concerning spiritual reformation is—

Fourthly: *Estimating the best things as worthless in comparison with God.* “Then shalt thou lay up gold as dust, and the gold of Ophir as the stones of the brooks. Yea, the Almighty shall be thy defence, and thou shalt have plenty of silver.” The spiritually reformed man counts all his worldly treasures as worthless; gold to him is mere dust, even the “gold of Ophir” is no more than are the pebbles of the “brooks.” His

“gold” and his “silver” is the Almighty Himself, “*the Almighty shall be thy defence*” (margin, gold). God is the “gold”—the supreme good—of all true souls. Their language is, “Whom have I in heaven but Thee? and there is none on earth that I desire beside Thee.” Though Eliphaz probably missed his mark in urging this spiritual reformation on Job, he evidently had clear conceptions. To him spiritual reformation meant fellowship with God, practical regard for the Divine precepts, renunciation of all evil, and the esteeming of all worldly wealth as worthless in comparison to a loving acquaintance with the Almighty. Observe then—

II. The ADVANTAGES of a true spiritual reformation as here set forth. Eliphaz says, that if Job would only act out his counsel he should enjoy signal advantages. “*Thereby good shall come unto thee.*” What is the “good” he refers to? He specifies several things—

First: *Restoration of lost blessings.* “*Thou shalt be built up.*” All thy losses shall be repaired, and the breaches in thy fortune healed. How much Job had lost! All his property, children, health, social power. He was bereft of everything almost that makes life worth having. Eliphaz here intimates that if he returned to God all these things would be restored, he would be “*built up*” again. Although not often does lost temporal good return to the sinner after his conversion, what Job had lost he more than recovered. He was “*built up.*” He specifies another thing—

Secondly: *Delight in God.* “*For then shalt thou have thy delight in the Almighty, and shalt lift up thy face unto God.*” Job had been complaining of the Almighty; he seems to have lost the enjoyment of His presence, and his face was cast down in sadness. Eliphaz here reminds him that with restoration to His friendship all this would pass away, and in its stead he would look up with joy and confidence to the Almighty, and delight in His fellowship. He specifies another thing—

Thirdly: *Answer to prayer.* “*Thou shalt make thy prayer unto Him, and He shall hear thee, and thou shalt pay thy vows.*” Eliphaz believed in the efficacy of prayer, he believed that

“the effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much.” Prayer is always answered where it leads to a submission to the Divine will ; and true prayer always leads to this. He specifies another thing—

Fourthly : *Realization of purposes.* “*Thou shalt also decree a thing, and it shall be established unto thee.*” Thou shalt form a plan or a purpose, and it shall not be frustrated. Thy purposes shall not be broken, they shall succeed. The idea is, whatever you take in hand shall prosper ; if by prosperity is meant the good of the soul, then everything a godly man aims at and does, subserves his good. He specifies yet another thing—

Fifthly : *Power of usefulness.* “*When men are cast down, then thou shalt say, There is lifting up ; and He shall save the humble person.*” When other men are cast down, thou shalt say, Cheer up, and the dejected thou shalt “*save.*” It is ever true, that a man who is brought into loving sympathy with his Maker is endowed with the qualification to render the highest service to his race.

CONCLUSION.—Though this admonition, urging spiritual reformation, was not exactly suitable for Job,—for he was conscious of no estrangement of heart from the Almighty,—it is suited to the vast majority of men in all communities and lands. Men are away from God, they are gone into the “*far country*” of practical atheism ; and their return to the Almighty is a most urgent necessity and obligation. Whether this Eliphaz was an inspired man or not, he had such a deep insight into man’s spiritual needs and duties as to give him a claim to the study, eye, and even the imitation, of modern ministers. This old preacher was pre-eminently spiritual, pithy, and pointed.

HOMILY No. L.

JOB'S THIRD REPLY TO ELIPHAZ.

(1.) THE STRUGGLES OF A SUFFERING SOUL AFTER GOD.

"Then Job answered and said," &c.—CHAP. XXIII. 1-10.

GENERAL NOTE.—Eliphaz has finished, Zophar speaks no more, and though Bildad speaks once again, he has nothing to add to the argument. Job's opponents seem now to have said all they could say. And now Job once more speaks. He seems utterly wearied of the discussion, and merely repeats the arguments he had before propounded. There is an air of sadness in all he says, a deep wail running through all his utterances. It can scarcely be called a reply, it is rather a spoken monologue.

EXEGETICAL REMARKS. *Ver. 2.*—*"Even to day is my complaint bitter: my stroke is heavier than my groaning."* He begins by declaring that his afflictions were unabated, and though his groanings might appear loud and long they did not fully express his agony. "Our version is quite literal with the exception of 'stroke,' which should be hand. 'Even to-day (after all that has been said), my complaint is held by opponents to be bitter, *i. e.*, rebellious and inexcusable. And yet the hand of God is heavier upon me than my groaning.'"—*Canon Cook.*

Ver. 3.—*"Oh that I knew where I might find Him! that I might come even to His seat!"* Often had he expressed a desire to bring his cause directly under the notice of the Almighty. But he had failed to do it. Finding that all discussion

with his three friends was useless, he seems to feel more intently anxious than ever to appeal to Heaven.

Ver. 4.—*"I would order my cause before Him, and fill my mouth with arguments."* I would lay my case fully before Him; I would declare all that I thought and felt; I would unbosom to Him all my heart; I would endeavour to show to Him that I am wrongly accused, that I am true in heart, and ought not to suffer as I do.

Ver. 5.—*"I would know the words which He would answer me, and understand what He would say unto me."* I do not know His decision concerning me; I am anxious to know His judgment about me. The estimate of others is of little worth; His is everything, I want to know it.

Ver. 6.—*"Will He plead against me with His great power? No; but He would put strength in me."* Would He contend with me with the greatness of His power, and overwhelm me with His almightiness? "I do not wish that, let Him only regard me; I only wish that He would be a righteous Judge, not a Ruler putting forth His almighty power."—*Dr. Samuel Davidson.*

Ver. 7.—*"There the righteous might dispute with Him; so should I be delivered for ever from my judge."* The upright might argue with Him. I am upright, of this

I am conscious; and if I had such an opportunity I should deliver myself from my judge, that is, from the man or men who unrighteously condemn me.

Vers. 8, 9.—“Behold, I go forward, but He is not there; and backward, but I cannot perceive Him: on the left hand, where He doth work, but I cannot behold Him: He hideth Himself on the right hand, that I cannot see Him.”

“Yet I go eastward, He is not there; and westward, but I perceive Him not; northwards, where He worketh, but I behold Him not. He turneth aside southwards, and I see Him not.”—*Delitzsch*. The meaning is, I look in all directions for God, and I cannot find Him. I look to the east, where the sun rises in all its

glory, and He is not there; I turn westward, where the horizon in the evening is made golden and gorgeous with the beams of the sinking sun, but He is not there; I turn to the north, where the Aurora Borealis lights up the heavens, He is not there; I turn to the dark mysterious south, but I cannot trace Him there. All my efforts are fruitless.

Ver. 10.—“But He knoweth the way that I take: when He hath tried me, I shall come forth as gold.” “Surely had He but known the way, which was mine, had He but tried me, I should have come forth as gold.”—*Bernard*. Our version is better than this, it seems more faithful to the original, and conveys a better idea.

HOMILETICS.—Here we have revealed to us the struggles of a suffering soul after God. Such struggles are not uncommon. One of the deepest cries of the race is, “*Oh that I knew where I might find Him!*” Here we have revealed—

I. AN INTENSE DESIRE TO COMMUNE with God. The patriarch indicates several reasons why he desires to commune with God.

First: In order to *speak to Him*. The highest development of man’s social nature is speaking to God. The act implies a settled practical faith in the personality, the nearness, and the accessibility of the Divine Existence. Good men speak to their fellow-creatures, but speak more fully to God. Their souls open to Him as flowers to the sun. In speaking to Him they get the highest spiritual quickening and stimulus, and experience the sublimest social gratification. “*I would fill my mouth with arguments.*” Abraham said, “I have taken upon me to speak unto the Lord.”

Secondly: In order to *learn of Him*. “*I would know the words which He would answer me, and understand what He would say unto me.*” The soul has a natural craving for communications from the great Father. Utterances of men abound;

they din the ear, they crowd our libraries ; but the soul craves for something higher, hungers after thoughts from God—thoughts pure, living, strengthening, ennobling, and satisfying.

Thirdly : In order to *get strength from Him*. “ *Will He plead against me with His great power? No ; but He would put strength in me.*” With His might He could annihilate me in one instant ; but this He will not do. He will strengthen me, for strength I want—strength of body and of mind, strength of intellect and of heart, strength to suffer with magnanimity, to work with heroism, to serve mankind successfully, and to worship the Infinite with acceptance. God will strengthen us, He will perfect strength in our weakness.

Fourthly : In order to *be delivered by Him*. “ *So should I be delivered for ever from my judge.*” Men judge their fellow-creatures uncharitably, unrighteously, severely. Their judgments sometimes fall with crushing weight upon their victims, even where there is no law to enforce them. Job felt this ; it was one of his greatest trials ; and he felt, if he could only speak to God, He would deliver him from the condemnation of men. What good reason this old patriarch had for desiring communion with God ! What confidence in his own uprightness and in the tender mercy of his Maker, are revealed in the objects which he expected to gain by the communion ! All these sublime objects are within our reach. We by communion with God can yet speak to God, learn of Him, get strength from Him, and be delivered by Him. Here we have revealed—

II. FRUITLESS ENDEAVOURS TO MEET with God. “ *Behold, I go forward, but He is not there ; and backward, but I cannot perceive Him : on the left hand, where He doth work, but I cannot behold Him : He hideth Himself on the right hand, that I cannot see Him.*” He sought God in all directions, but he failed to find Him. Why did he fail ? The following reasons may be suggested—

First : Because he sought for *outward* manifestations of Him, rather than *inward*. He looked outside himself for the Deity. He looked to the east, the west, the north, the

south ; but it does not appear that he looked into his own spiritual nature, where God must be seen if seen at all. Unless a man sees God in the moral intuitions of his nature and in the affections of his heart, he will never see Him, either in the heavens above or the earth beneath. He who sees God within him, will see God everywhere outside of him.

Secondly : Because he sought for *extraordinary* manifestations of Him, rather than *regular*. God was in the north, the west, the south, the east, in every part of nature, marching on in stately majesty, working out His grand purposes in the regular operations of nature ; and yet, because Job looked for some striking phenomenon, he perceived Him not. In this respect the patriarch was like the sceptics in every age. Because God in nature proceeds in a path from which He never seems to swerve, they do not recognize Him, and often even deny His existence. "Since the fathers fell asleep, all things continue as they were from the beginning." This is their cry. If He exists, why does He not break the monotony of the universe, write His name on the broad heavens for men of every land to read ?

Thirdly : Because he sought Him with the *intellect* rather than with the *heart*. Man can never with the intellectual eye see the Infinite ; it is only with the eye of the heart. "*He that loveth knoweth God.*" God is seen through faith—the faith of the heart, not through philosophy. "He that cometh to God must believe that He is, and that He is a Rewarder of them that diligently seek Him." When Jacob's heart was touched with sympathy for the Almighty, then he saw Him, and not until then. "Surely God is in this place, and I knew it not." God had always been there, but he had not the heart-eye with which to see Him.

"Oh, tell me, mighty Mind, where art Thou,
 Shall I dive into the deep,
 Call to the sun, or ask the roaring sea
 For the Creator ?
 Shall I question loud the thunder
 If in that the Almighty dwells ?
 Or holds He furious storms
 In straitened reins,
 And bids fierce whirlwinds wheel His rapid car ?
 What mean these questions ?
 Trembling, I retract.
 My prostrate soul adores the present God."—*Dr. Young.*

Here we have revealed—

III. A CONSCIOUSNESS THAT HE WAS KNOWN of God. “*He knoweth the way that I take,*” “*When He hath tried me I shall come forth as gold.*” * It would appear from this that Job had a threefold assurance concerning God—

First : That God was *fully cognizant of his individual trial.* “*He knoweth the way that I take.*” Although I know Him not, He knows me ; although I cannot see Him, I am under His eye ; wherever I am, at home or abroad, He sees me. “*He knoweth the way that I take,*”—the “*way*” my thoughts take, my feelings take, my purposes take, my actions take.

Secondly : That God was *mercifully using his trials as discipline.* “*When He hath tried me.*” He sends afflictions, not for His own gratification, but for the sufferer’s benefit ; “*He doth not willingly afflict the children of men.*” He sends afflictions to humble us, to make us feel our dependence upon Him, and to commit ourselves entirely to His keeping.

Thirdly : That God *would turn the painful discipline to his benefit.* “*I shall come forth as gold.*” The Bible is full of this doctrine. “*Tribulation worketh patience.*” How does affliction benefit ? It serves—(1) to develop the powers of the mind—(2) to quicken the spiritual life—(3) to impress with the sense of personal responsibility—(4) to detach from the world. It gradually breaks down the materialism in which the soul is caged, and lets it free into the open air and light of the spiritual domains where God is seen and enjoyed.

* For a Homily on this text, see *Homilist*, Third Series, vol. i., p. 388.

HOMILY No. LI.

JOB'S THIRD REPLY TO ELIPHAZ.

(2.) A BLESSED CONSCIOUSNESS, A SUBLIME REFLECTION, AND
A MORAL SADNESS.

"My foot hath held His steps," &c.—CHAP. xxiii. 11-17.

EXEGETICAL REMARKS. *Ver. 11.*—"My foot hath held His steps." The law is, in the Old Testament poetry, regarded as a "way" in which God proceeds as a Guide. Hence when Job said he had "held His steps," he means that he had trod in the footsteps of his Guide. Perhaps more than this, for it pictures an animal climbing crags and rocks by firmly fastening its feet as it goes along. "*His way have I kept, and not declined.*" The same idea more fully expressed. He means, I have persevered in obedience. This he more fully expresses in the next verse.

Ver. 12.—"Neither have I gone back from the commandment of His lips; I have esteemed the words of His mouth more than my necessary food." "Esteemed," rather, laid up; viz., as a treasure found (Matt. xiii. 44; Ps. cxix. 11), alluding to the words of Eliphaz (ch. xxii. 22). There was no need to tell me so; I have done so already (Jer. xv. 16). 'Necessary,' the appointed portion of food, as in Prov. xxx. 8. *Umbreit* and *Maurer* translate, 'More than my law; my own will, in antithesis to the words of His mouth' (John vi. 38). How difficult it is for man to prefer God's laws to those of his own will. Probably under the general term 'what is appointed to be' (the same Hebrew is in ver. 14), all that

ministers to the appetites of the body and carnal will is included."—*Faussett*.

Ver. 13.—"But He is in one mind, and who can turn Him? and what His soul desireth, even that He doeth." "Yet He remaineth by one thing, and who can turn Him? and He accomplisheth what His soul desireth."—*Delitzsch*. The idea is, He has a purpose, and that purpose is unchangeable.

Ver. 14.—"For He performeth the thing that is appointed for me: and many such things are with Him." "Surely He will complete what He has decreed for me." Many such afflictions He has proposed for me, and nothing can change that purpose.

Ver. 15.—"Therefore am I troubled at His presence: when I consider, I am afraid of Him." The thought that He has determined to afflict me and His determination cannot be altered, fills me with apprehension, "I am afraid of Him."

Ver. 16.—"For God maketh my heart soft, and the Almighty troubleth me." "But it is God Himself who hath made my heart faint; yea, the Almighty it is who hath confounded me. He it is who, by sending on me calamity after calamity, every one more grievous than the last—by depriving me, first of my property, then of my children, and

finally of my health—has made me so faint-hearted as to dread even greater evils than those I have already seen.”—*Dr. Bernard.*

Ver. 17.—“*Because I was not cut off before the darkness, neither*

hath He covered the darkness from my face.” This clause seems to express Job’s regret that he had not been cut off, taken away from the world, before these dire calamities fell upon him.

HOMILETICS.—These words present three subjects for thought,—a *blessed consciousness*, a *sublime reflection*, and a *moral sadness*. Here we have—

I. A BLESSED CONSCIOUSNESS. Job expresses a consciousness of two things—

First: *Obedience to God’s precepts.* He felt his obedience to have been *unswerving*. “*My foot hath held His steps.*” He had not only pursued the path of duty, but he had done so firmly, he had never turned aside. Every step he took was in the footprints of his Guide. And not only was he conscious of his obedience being unswerving, but also *persevering*. “*His way have I kept, and not declined. Neither have I gone back from the commandment of His lips.*” He did not pause or retrograde, he pursued the path of obedience with all the regularity of daily life. Job expresses a consciousness of—

Secondly: *Appreciation of God’s truth.* “*I have esteemed the words of His mouth more than my necessary food.*” What is more precious to man than his “*necessary food*”? It is the means of his subsistence, it is his life. Yet to a devout soul God’s words are esteemed of greater value, “*sweeter are they than honey and the honeycomb.*” But if instead of the word “*food*” we substitute “*purpose*” or “*determination*” (as some translators do), it may be asked, What is more precious to a man than his own leading determination or purpose? It is the spring of all his activities, his spiritual life. Yet Job felt God’s truth to be more precious even than this. What so valuable as the Divine word!

Such is the consciousness which Job here utters. If it was well founded (as we have reason to believe it was, for the Almighty Himself said he was an “*upright man, one that feared God, and eschewed evil*”), then what a blessed man was he! blessed despite of all the terrible calamities

that befell him. Whatever anguish he experienced from the pangs of bereavement, the deprivations of adversity, the tortures of physical pain, he could experience no moral remorse while he possessed the smiles and succour of a good conscience towards God and man. One replied to unjust accusations thus, "I will rest henceforward in peace, in the house of my own conscience; and if I do any good deeds, it is no matter who knows them; if bad, knowing them myself, it is no matter from whom I hide them: they will be recorded before that Judge from whose presence I cannot flee. If all the world applaud me and He accuse me, their praise is in vain." Here we have—

II. A SUBLIME REFLECTION. "*He is in one mind, and who can turn Him?*" &c. The subject of the patriarch's reflection was the *purpose* of God. The great Maker and Master of the universe has a design. He does not act by necessity or by caprice, but by an intelligent plan. The patriarch seems to have had three ideas concerning this purpose.

First: It is *unalterable*. "*He is in one mind.*" Why does He not change His purpose? Not because He is not *free*, but because it is so perfect as to admit of no possible improvement. Man changes his plan because he discovers it is impracticable, or otherwise defective. God's is absolutely perfect. The unalterableness of the Divine purpose is a theme for the most exultant thought. Any change in it would be to the detriment of the universe.

We would not have Thee change, O Lord,
For kinder never couldst Thou be;
Thy love is one great golden cord,
Binding the universe to Thee.

Another idea the patriarch seems to have concerning this purpose is—

Secondly: It is *efficient*. "*What His soul desireth, even that He doeth.*" God's purpose is not an abstract thought, or a passing sentiment, but an ever operative energy. It is the spring of all the forces and movements of the universe. What He decrees He does. No combination of creature powers can frustrate the Divine plan. "*What His soul*

desireth, even that He doeth." Another idea the patriarch seems to have concerning this purpose is—

Thirdly : It is *personal*. "*For He performeth the thing that is appointed for me : and many such things are with Him.*" He has a purpose, not only in relation to the universe as a whole, but to every part of the whole ; not only to communities, but to individuals. "*Me.*" Wonderful is the thought that God has a plan concerning my little life, conduct, and destiny. Is not this a sublime subject for reflection ; this unalterableness, efficiency, and speciality of the Divine purpose ? Here we have—

III. A MORAL SADNESS. "*Therefore am I troubled at His presence,*" &c. The effect of Job's reflection concerning God was of a painful character. There seems to have come to him—First : The feeling of *awe*. "*I am afraid of Him.*" Not the fear of terror, but of profound veneration. Secondly : The feeling of *weakness*. "*God maketh my heart soft.*" He taketh away my strength. When a man thinks on the greatness of God, what a sense of weakness comes over him ! "*When I consider the heavens, . . . what is man ?*" Thirdly : The feeling of *abnegation*. "*Because I was not cut off before the darkness, neither hath He covered the darkness from my face.*" He would have been contented to have been swept away from the land of the living. He felt his life to be utterly worthless. When the soul has one glimpse of the majesty of God, how profoundly it feels its own utter insignificance ! The man loses all egotism ; the *I* is engulfed in the Infinite.

HOMILY No. LII.

JOB'S THIRD REPLY TO ELIPHAZ.

(3.) GREAT CRIMES NOT ALWAYS FOLLOWED BY GREAT PUNISHMENT IN THIS LIFE.

"*Why, seeing times are not hidden,*" &c.—CHAP. XXIV. 1-25.

EXEGETICAL REMARKS. *Ver. 1.* —"*Why, seeing times are not hidden from the Almighty, do they that know Him not see His days?*" "Why are not the times reserved by God? and why do not His friends see His days?" *i. e.*, why are no times of punishment reserved for the wicked, in the counsel of God? and why should the pious never see the promised days of the Divine judgment?—*Dr. Samuel Davidson.*

Ver. 2.—"Some remove the landmarks; they violently take away flocks, and feed thereof." Job now proceeds to specify some of the flagrant crimes that were perpetrated by men on whom no judgment came. Here is an old form of dishonesty. By changing the landmarks they decreased their neighbour's lands and increased their own. They tempted the herds or the flocks into their own fold.

Ver. 3.—"They drive away the ass of the fatherless, they take the widow's ox for a pledge." They rob the widow and the orphan, by taking away the ox and the ass.

Ver. 4.—"They turn the needy out of the way: the poor of the earth hide themselves together." They oppress the poor to such an extent that they dare not show themselves in the street.

Ver. 5.—"Behold, as wild asses in the desert, go they forth to their

work; rising betimes for a prey: the wilderness yieldeth food for them and for their children." Like wild asses, which are never seen but in the desert, where they seek for pasture, so the poor whom they oppress, not being suffered to abide in the villages and towns, must work in the desert for food for themselves and their children.

Ver. 6.—"They reap every one his corn in the field: and they gather the vintage of the wicked." They break in upon the fields of others, and feed upon their grain, instead of cultivating their fields for themselves.

Vers. 7, 8.—"They cause the naked to lodge without clothing, that they have no covering in the cold. They are wet with the showers of the mountains, and embrace the rock for want of a shelter." "All Bedouins sleep naked at night: when asked why they do this,—since at night they are often attacked by enemies,—their answer is, that it is an old custom. Many of them perish in the cold season."—*Wetzstein.* They deprive the poor of their clothing, so that they are left naked, shivering in the cold nights, seeking shelter only in the crevices of the rocks.

Vers. 9, 10.—"They pluck the fatherless from the breast, and take a pledge of the poor. They cause him to go naked without clothing,

and they take away the sheaf from the hungry." They steal unprotected children and sell them into slavery, and take the very bread out of the mouth of the poor. The meaning seems to be, they take away from the poor all he has for a pledge.—*Canon Cook.*

Ver. 11.—"Which make oil within their walls, and tread their winepresses, and suffer thirst." "They press out oil within their (the wicked men's) walls; they tread their winepresses, and yet suffer thirst."—*Dr. Bernard.*

Ver. 12.—"Men groan from out of the city, and the soul of the wounded crieth out." "Out of the city men groan, and the soul of the wounded crieth. Yet Eloah regardeth not the folly."—*Canon Cook.* Having described the crimes which the wicked perpetrated on the poor in the rural districts, he proceeds to notice the enormities committed in the city. In the city men are groaning under the oppressions of the wicked. God does not punish them; does not regard the anomaly.

Vers. 13, 14.—"They are of those that rebel against the light; they know not the ways thereof, nor abide in the paths thereof. The murderer rising with the light killeth the poor and needy, and in the night is as a thief." "Others are of those who rebel against light; they do not acknowledge its ways, and abide not in its paths. The words imply antagonism and wilful ignorance."—*Canon Cook.*

Ver. 15.—"The eye also of the adulterer waiteth for the twilight, saying, No eye shall see me: and disguiseth his face." The adulterer is ever a sneak and a coward.

Ver. 16.—"In the dark they dig through houses, which they had marked for themselves in the daytime: they know not the light."

Here is a description of a burglar. He hides himself in the day, and goes forth in the night to dig into the houses and to plunder them.

Ver. 17.—"For the morning is to them even as the shadow of death: if one know them, they are in the terrors of the shadow of death." "For the depth of night is to them even as the dawn of the morning, for they know the terrors of the depth of night." The meaning is, that they are familiar with the blackest night and dread it not; but day-light, which may reveal them, they dread.

Ver. 18.—"He is swift as the waters; their portion is cursed in the earth: he beholdeth not the way of the vineyards." This verse is confessedly obscure. The point of comparison seems to be the swiftness of the disappearing criminal. He is carried quickly past as any light substance on the surface of the water. He is hurried along with the swiftness of the current, and can scarcely be seen.

Ver. 19.—"Drought and heat consume the snow waters: so doth the grave those which have sinned." Job means to say, that gently as the sun melts the snow, death bears away those criminals. The afflictions they deserve do not attend their dying hours.

Ver. 20.—"The womb shall forget him; the worm shall feed sweetly on him; he shall be no more remembered; and wickedness shall be broken as a tree." The idea is here further expressed, that no terrible calamity as a rule attends the great criminal's death. He fades away even from the memory of his mother; and the worm feeds sweetly on him as on all men. Nor will he be remembered generally as a great criminal.

Ver. 21.—"He evil entreateth

the barren that beareth not : and doeth not good to the widow." The oppressor is here again expressed. Whilst he renders no service to the widow, he is a curse to the barren woman who has no children to comfort her.

Ver. 22.—“*He draweth also the mighty with His power : He riseth up, and no man is sure of life.*” He, that is, God, prolongeth the life of the wicked. He raises him up from suffering, even after his life had been despaired of.

Ver. 23.—“*Though it be given him to be in safety, whercon he resteth ; yet His eyes are upon their ways.*” “He giveth him rest, and he is sustained, and His eyes are over their ways.”—*Delitzsch*. Job’s idea seems to be, that God, instead of punishing those criminals, blesses them so far as this life is concerned.

Ver. 24.—“*They are exalted for a little while, but are gone and brought low ; they are taken out of the way as all other, and cut off as the tops of the ears of corn.*” “They are exalted, after a little they are gone : they are brought low, like all mankind they are gathered, like the tops of the ears of corn they are cut off. Job thus declares, in direct

opposition to the other speakers, that, so far from living in terror, the evildoer is in perfect security ; instead of being overthrown, he is supported : he is an object of special providential care : he rises to eminence, and when, like all men, he dies, it is by a sudden or a painless death, preceded by no lingering disease, and not until he has reached his full term of life, like corn ripe for the harvest. In all this wild and fearful exaggeration there is an underground of substantial facts.”—*Canon Cook*.

Ver. 25.—“*And if it be not so now, who will make me a liar, and make my speech nothing worth ?*” “This is a challenge to any one to prove the contrary to what he had said. Job had now attacked their main position, and had appealed to facts in defence of what he held. He maintained that, as a matter of fact, the wicked were prosperous, that they often lived to old age, and that they then died a peaceful death without any direct demonstration of the Divine displeasure. He boldly appeals to any one to deny this, or to prove the contrary. The appeal was decisive. The fact was undeniable, and the controversy was closed.”

HOMILETICS.—This chapter brings under our notice two facts—

I. THAT GREAT CRIMES HAVE PREVAILED ON THE EARTH FROM EARLIEST TIMES. Amongst the crimes specified in this chapter there is (1) *Theft*. There were those who stole from others their lands and “*flocks*,” and robbed the “*widow*” and orphan of their food and clothing (verses 2-8). There is (2) *Cruelty*. “*They pluck the fatherless from the breast,*” made “*men groan from out of the city.*” There is (3) *Murder*. “*The murderer, rising with the light, killeth the poor and needy.*” There is (4) *Adultery*. “*The eye of the adulterer waiteth for*

the twilight.” These are amongst the blackest crimes found on the world’s long roll of depravity. The fact that these crimes are deplored as prevailing in Job’s land and times implies—

First: That in those distant scenes and times *the same standard of morals existed that we have.* They esteemed theft, cruelty, murder, and adultery wrong; so do we. Their law condemned these things; so does ours. It is the one law written on all hearts, republished in the Decalogue, and exemplified in Christ. The fact implies—

Secondly: That in those distant scenes and times *men had the same sinful propensities as they have now.* The principles that prompted Job’s contemporaries and countrymen to perpetrate those crimes live and work in all unregenerate hearts to this day. Dishonesty, cruelty, lust, where are they? Everywhere. The chapter brings under our notice another fact—

II. THAT ALTHOUGH THE GREAT GOD IS COGNIZANT OF THOSE CRIMES HE DOES NOT ALWAYS VISIT THEM WITH PUNISHMENT IN THIS LIFE. Job begins with this question, “*Why, seeing times are not hidden from the Almighty, do they that know Him not see His days?*” The meaning is, Why, since crimes are not hidden from the Almighty, do not His friends see His judgments? Job shows that these great criminals fare as well here, both in life and death, as others. They often have an easy death, pass quietly away, as the snow melts in the sunbeam. When they are gone the memory of their crime gradually fades away even from the mind of their mother. In fact, they are often prosperous in life and peaceful in death; “*they have no bands in their death.*” Why is this? Not because the Almighty is ignorant of their crimes, or because their crimes are not abhorrent to His nature. Whatever the cause, the fact is undeniable; and this fact Job brings out here to refute the doctrine of his friends, viz., that great suffering implies great crime. To this Eliphaz and Zophar make no further reply, they are at last silent. Bildad only, in the next chapter, makes one more feeble effort.

CONCLUSION.—Man is the same the world over.

First: The same in *moral instincts*. The same moral truths are inscribed on the tablets of all souls. "As in water face answereth to face, so doth the heart of man to man." Whatever may be the superficial mental peculiarities of man—and they are confessedly numerous, arising often from climate or culture—there are broad, underlying, and unobliterateable features in which they all agree. This uniformity of moral heart contributes an argument in favour of the unity of the human race, and also in favour of the universal spread of the Gospel. Man the world over is—

Secondly: The same in *corrupt propensities*. Just the same crimes as Job specifies here, have been perpetrated in all lands, and are rampant now and everywhere. The same foul passions blaze up from all hearts. Man the world over is—

Thirdly: The same in *moral perplexities*. The same great problem with which Job wrestled in agony: "Why do the wicked prosper, and the good come to nought?" presses on all hearts. Man the world over is—

Fourthly: The same in *moral needs*. The great want of all is some power or system rightly to develop the rudimental powers of good in the soul, and to crush all the latent germs of evil.

HOMILY No. LIII.

BILDAD'S THIRD SPEECH.

EXALTED IDEAS OF GOD AND HUMBLING IDEAS OF MAN.

"Then answered Bildad the Shuhite, and said," &c.—CHAP. XXV. 1-6.

GENERAL NOTE.—Here Bildad appears for the last time, and he has really nothing to say to the point on the debate. He does little more than to repeat two common-

places which have been advanced in the controversy by Eliphaz. "The tone of Bildad's speech, though feeble, and without an attempt to grapple with the real difficulties of

the question, is pleasing in tone, free from Zophar's violence, and from the wordliness of Eliphaz. He does not repeat the old charges and insinuations against Job, but admonishes him to submission on grounds which are not calculated to cause any personal irritation, and which Job himself would be the first to admit. He brings the discussion, so far as his party is concerned, to a close.

EXEGETICAL REMARKS. *Ver. 2.*—"Dominion and fear are with Him." This means that the Almighty is the Universal Ruler, and as such should be regarded with reverence and fear. "*He maketh peace in His high places.*" Up the infinite heights of the universe, amidst revolving worlds and systems He maintains peace. Though immense their magnitude, countless their multitudes, and incalculably swift their velocities, there is no clash or jar, all is harmony.

Ver. 3.—"Is there any number of His armies?" His angels are called the army of heaven (Dan. iv. 35). The stars also are His hosts, which "He bringeth out by number and calleth them all by their names." "*And upon whom doth not His light arise?*" If he refers to stars, there is no constellation or member of a constellation, however

remote, on which His rays do not fall; or if to celestial intelligences, there is not one that lives not in His light.

Ver. 4.—"How then can man be justified with God?" How then can frail man be right with God? How can he think he has a right to find fault with the decrees of the Almighty, or challenge Him to enter into judgment with him, as Job had done? "*Or how can he be clean that is born of a woman?*" Job himself had expressed the sentiment of these words (chap. iv. 17). Did Bildad mean to throw the question back for his own reflection, as if he believed Job maintained himself to be pure and holy?

Ver. 5.—"Behold even to the moon, and it shineth not; yea, the stars are not pure in His sight." Perhaps Bildad spoke these words to Job at night, when the moon shone in her brightness and the stars in their splendour. The idea he wishes to convey is, that the purest objects in the universe are impure as compared with God.

Ver. 6.—"How much less man, that is a worm? and the son of man, which is a worm?" "A worm;" a miserable reptile, bred in and supported by putrescent substances. What is man to God? A mere insect, nothing more.

HOMILETICS.—In this chapter Bildad gives us—

I. MOST EXALTED ideas of GOD. He speaks of Him—

First: As the *Head* of all authority. "*Dominion and fear are with Him.*" There are great authorities, mighty rulers of the universe; but from Him they all derive their power, and compared to Him they are nothing and vanity. "He is the Most High: King of kings, and Lord of lords." He speaks of Him—

Secondly: As the *Maintainer* of all *peace*. “*He maketh peace in His high places.*” Who maintains the order of the stellar universe? Who maintains order amongst celestial intelligences? He is the “*God of peace.*” He is peaceful in His own nature, and peaceful in all His operations. He speaks of Him—

Thirdly: As the *Commander* of all *forces*. “*Is there any number of his armies?*” What forces there are in the universe, material, mental, moral! They are all His hosts, He marshals and commands them all. He speaks of Him—

Fourthly: As the *Fountain* of all *light*. “*Upon whom doth not his light arise?*” All light, in both the physical and spiritual realms of being, streams from Him as from the central fount. He is “*the Father of lights.*” He speaks of Him—

Fifthly: As the *Perfection* of all *holiness*. “*How then can man be justified with God?*” “*Who is like unto Thee, O Lord, among the gods? who is like Thee, glorious in holiness?*” &c. In this chapter Bildad gives—

II. Most HUMBLING ideas of MAN. He represents him—

First: As *morally degenerate*. “*How can he be clean that is born of a woman?*” He seems to have had the idea of the Psalmist, who thought himself born in sin and “*shapen in iniquity.*” We need no Bible to tell us that we are morally degenerate, that man in “*honour abideth not.*” Morally he is in an abnormal state, like a sheep that has wandered from the fold. He represents him—

Secondly: As *essentially insignificant*. He is a “*worm.*” How frail in body! He is crushed before the moth. Aye, and how frail in mind, too! How narrow his range of mental vision! How feeble his intellectual power! How weak in moral faculties—weak to resist the wrong and to pursue the right! Morally he is “*without strength.*”

CONCLUSION. — From this chapter two things are suggested—

First: *The glorious light of nature*. There is no reason to believe that Bildad had any special revelation from God. He was left to the light of nature and reason, albeit how

grand are his conceptions of the Eternal, how true his ideas of man. "There is something truly sublime in this representation of the Supreme Ruler. His splendour darkens all; His radiant hosts are numberless; His light and purity surpass all created excellence; the heavenly bodies are eclipsed and retire before Him. And as for man, his impurity and meanness will not bear His inspection."

Secondly: *The unsatisfactoriness of religious controversy.* Bildad here finishes a long, earnest, and able controversy which he and the other two friends of Job had with him. They have exhausted their argumentative force, they appear no more on the scene. But what has been the effect of the whole on Job? Not correction of mistakes, but great irritation and annoyance. And what was the effect of Job's arguments on them? Equally unsatisfactory. One might have thought that as these honourable men had nothing more to say, in thus closing they would have acknowledged their error, and yielded the palm of victory to the patriarch. But this they did not. They retired from the scene unimproved either, perhaps, in intelligence or in temper; and only mortified, it may be, at their failure.

"Ye powers who rule the tongue, if such there are,
 And make colloquial happiness your care,
 Preserve me from the thing I dread and hate—
 A duel in the form of a debate.
 The clash of arguments and jar of words,
 Worse than the mortal brunt of rival swords,
 Decide no question with their tedious length,
 (For opposition gives opinion strength,)
 Divert the champions prodigal of breath,
 And put the peaceably disposed to death.
 Oh, thwart me not, Sir Soph, at every turn,
 Nor carp at every flaw you may discern;
 Though syllogisms hang not on my tongue,
 I am not surely always in the wrong!
 'Tis hard if all is false that I advance,
 A fool must now and then be right, by chance.
 Not that all freedom of dissent I blame.
 No; there I grant the privilege I claim.
 A disputable point is no man's ground;
 Rove where you please, 'tis common all around.
 Discourse may want an animated 'No!'
 To brush the surface and to make it flow;
 But still remember, if you mean to please,
 To press your point with modesty and ease.
 The mark at which my juster aim I take,
 Is contradiction for its own dear sake.
 Let your opinion, at whatever pitch,
 Knots and impediments make something hitch;

Adopt his own, 'tis equally in vain,
 Your thread of argument is snapped again;
 The wrangler, rather than accord with you,
 Will judge himself deceived, and prove it too.
 Vociferated logic kills me quite;
 A noisy man is always in the right.
 I twirl my thumbs, fall back into my chair,
 Fix on the wainscot a distressful stare;
 And, when I hope his blunders are all out,
 Reply discreetly, 'To be sure!' 'No doubt!'"—*Cowper*.

HOMILY No. LIV.

JOB'S THIRD ANSWER TO BILDAD.

(1.) RIGHTEOUS SARCASM AND THE TRANSCENDENT GREATNESS OF GOD.

“*But Job answered and said,*” &c.—CHAP. XXVI. 1-14.

GENERAL NOTE.—Here Job begins a splendid series of addresses which extend to the close of chapter xxxi. This chapter may be regarded as closing the controversy, inasmuch as neither of the three friends appear again. It is supposed that at its close Job paused, expecting Zophar to re-enter, whose turn it was to speak, but as he did not, he resumes his magnificent discourse.

EXEGETICAL REMARKS. *Ver. 1.* —“*But Job answered and said.*” “Whenever,” says *Dr. Bernard*, “any one of Job’s friends had thought it necessary to remind him of the Omnipotence and Omnipresence of God, the unfortunate man not only immediately takes up these subjects himself, but generally dwells upon them at much greater length than his friend had done, with a view, probably, to make him feel the impropriety of preaching

that to him which he himself, as was well known, had been in the habit of preaching to others during the whole of his life. This custom of his we shall see him follow in the discourse he is about to deliver. Bildad had in his last speech brought forward no argument whatever, contenting himself with setting forth in a few words the unlimited power and profound wisdom of the Almighty: this is felt by Job very keenly, and is looked upon by him as a real insult. He therefore replies.”

Ver. 2.—“*How hast thou helped him that is without power? how savest thou the arm that hath no strength?*” The patriarch here seems to mock Bildad in having said nothing but what was universally known. He means to say, What assistance hast thou given to him that has no strength, what help hast thou given to the arm that has

no might? Job deals frequently in irony (chap. xvi. 21), and there is a breath of irony in these words.

Ver. 3.—“*How hast thou counselled him that hath no wisdom?*” “As he had undertaken to give counsel to another, and to suggest views that might be adapted to elevate his mind in his depression, and to console him in his sorrows, he had a right to expect more than he had found in his speech.” “*And how hast thou plentifully declared the thing as it is?*” Plentifully means abundantly. The meaning is, What a multitude of words thou hast employed to tell me what I know! Thou hast said nothing new, nothing to meet the difficulties of the case.

Ver. 4.—“*To whom hast thou uttered words?*” “The sense is, Do you attempt to teach me in such a manner on such a subject? Do you take it that I am ignorant of the perfections of God, that such remarks about Him would convey any real instruction?” “*And whose spirit came from thee?*” By whose spirit didst thou speak? Dost thou imagine that there is inspiration in thy words? Thy utterance is common-place, nothing more. Have not I myself proclaimed the boundless wisdom of God?

Ver. 5.—“*Dead things are formed from under the waters, and the inhabitants thereof.*” The speaker here enters on a grand representation of God, probably to show that his views of the majesty of the Almighty were not inferior to those propounded by Bildad in the preceding chapter. This verse has been variously translated. “The souls of the dead tremble (the places) under the waters and their inhabitants.”—*Magee*. “The place where the giant monsters of the deep are formed, that which is be-

neath the waters, and the inhabitants thereof.”—*Bernard*. “The abode of departed spirits is always placed beneath the ground.”—*Barnes*. The “dead things” mean the shades of the dead, or departed spirits that dwell in Sheol, the great world of disembodied spirits. This great world is represented as being under the waters. The waters meaning perhaps the subterranean abyss. Who can tell the multitudes that people this unseen world? Conquerors, tyrants, &c., are there. “It should be translated, The shades tremble beneath the waters and their inhabitants.”—*Dr. Samuel Davidson*.

Ver. 6.—“*Hell is naked before Him, and destruction hath no covering.*” “Hell,” Hebrew, Sheol; Greek, ᾠδης, Hades. The idea is, that the mighty world of departed men lies naked to the eye of God. “The eye of God is in every place.”

Ver. 7.—“*He stretcheth out the north over the empty place, and hangeth the earth upon nothing.*” “He stretcheth out the north over a void; He hangeth the earth upon nothing.”—*Dr. Bernard*. Job’s idea seems to have been, that the earth hung in space, and had nothing to support it: as *Milton* expresses it, “The earth, self-balanced, on her centre hung.” Many of the ancients had the same astronomic notion; and modern science could scarcely reject the sublime description here given.

Ver. 8.—“*He bindeth up the waters in His thick clouds; and the cloud is not rent under them.*” “That is, He collecteth the waters into the clouds, as it were, in bottles or vessels, which do not let them fall till He is pleased to send them drop by drop upon the earth.”—*Kitto*. “He hath bound the waters in a garment.”

Ver. 9.—“*He holdeth back the face of His throne, and spreadeth His cloud upon it.*” A similar expression we have to this in (Ps. xviii. 11): “*He made darkness His secret place; His pavilion round about Him were dark waters and thick clouds of the skies.*” “*Clouds and darkness are round about Him,*” &c.

Ver. 10.—“*He hath compassed the waters with bounds, until the day and night come to an end.*” The ancients seemed to have believed that only the northern hemisphere enjoyed the light of the sun, and that all below the horizon was in perpetual darkness. They also supposed that the earth was surrounded by water, upon which the concave of heaven seemed to rest; and hence the idea of a circular bound, drawn as it were by compasses at the extreme verge of the celestial hemisphere, where the light was supposed to end and the darkness to begin.

Ver. 11.—“*The pillars of heaven tremble and are astonished at His reproof.*” This is merely a poetical expression.—*Dr. Samuel Davidson.*

Ver. 12.—“*He divideth the sea with His power, and by His understanding He smiteth through the proud.*” By His power He clothed the sea, and by His understanding smote He its pride.

Ver. 13.—“*By His spirit He hath garnished the heavens; His hand hath formed the crooked serpent.*” Translate, “*By His spirit the heavens become bright; His hand pierced the fleeing serpent;*” *i. e.*, the wind (regarded as God’s breath or spirit) clears up and brightens the heavens; His hand pierced the dragon, or northern constellation called before Leviathan.” —*Dr. Samuel Davidson.*

Ver. 14.—“*Lo, these are parts of His ways: but how little a portion is heard of Him? but the thunder of His power who can understand?*” “*Lo, these are but outlines of His ways, and how small a matter hath here been heard of Him.*”—*Bernard.* (The outskirts of His ways). The idea is, that what is seen of God in nature is wonderful, but what comes not within the range of human vision is unutterably great.

HOMILETICS.—These words suggest two subjects of thought: righteous sarcasm, and the transcendent greatness of God.

I. RIGHTEOUS SARCASM. All expositors discover irony strong and sharp in the first four verses. In other places of the Divine Word irony is discovered: even Christ Himself seemed to deal in sarcasm. When is sarcasm righteous? Not when it is used *haughtily*. It often seems to be the very breath of a haughty spirit. Satire sits on the lip of the arrogant. Not when it is used by *revenge*. The man who uses it, as he would a sword or pistol, to wreak vengeance on an offender, uses it unrighteously, for revenge is a bad passion. Not when it is used by *irreverence*. Irony is the

favourite style of speech with the impious and profane. They sit in the "seat of the scorner;" they sneer at the holy and the good. Not when it is used by the *ill-natured*. There are some whose natures are malign, and whose speech is a snarl. There are journals whose inspiration is ill-nature, and whose speech is satire. When, then, is sarcasm righteous?

First: When it is used as a *chastiser of wrong*. Bildad and his other friends had done Job a wrong in charging him with sentiments he never held, and in speaking to him in a spirit of antagonism, rather than of friendship; and he chastises them, not with a physical instrument but with satiric speech. Man is justified in chastising wrong, and sarcasm is one of the best instruments for the purpose. It is often the most painful. It penetrates where no bullet, spear, or sword can reach. It cuts into the soul, it lacerates the heart, it often makes conscience writhe. Because it is the most painful, it is frequently the most effective. Satire will often strike a man down where physical violence will only rouse him into bold defiance. A poet has represented a satirist as saying—

"I'm one whose whip of steel can with a lash
Imprint the characters of shame so deep,
Even in the brazen forehead of proud sin,
That not eternity shall wear it out."

Sarcasm is righteous—

Secondly: When is it used as a *corrective of error*. There are errors which can stand before the strongest arguments, but will reel and writhe at the breath of sarcasm. What errors in social life, such as snobbery and lacqueyism, have not been grievously wounded, and in some cases crucified, by the manly and mighty sarcasm of such men as Cowper, Thackeray, and Carlyle? And many Puritanic crudities, sickly sentimentalities, and narrow bigotries withered before the breath of South's ironic discourses. Sarcasm is righteous—

Thirdly: When it is used as a *shield of defence*. Self-defence is often justifiable where physical force is unjustifiable; and where the most powerful arguments and appeals

are ineffective, a stroke of sarcasm will do the work and make the coward crouch at your foot. Here we have—

II. THE TRANSCENDENT GREATNESS OF GOD. God's greatness appears—

First: In that portion of the universe that is *revealed*. Job here points to three things. (1) To Sheol. "*Dead things are formed from under the waters,*" &c. A little but not much of Sheol is revealed to us. We are only partially and painfully acquainted with cemeteries and catacombs. But this great world stands naked to His eye, He sees into the depths, and they tremble before Him; "the shades tremble from beneath." Mighty conquerors, ruthless despots, savage tyrants, that kept their generations in awe, here tremble before Him. He sees the ever deepening regions into which all generations are gone. Job here points to—(2) This *terraqeous globe*. "*He stretcheth out the north over the empty place, and hangeth the earth upon nothing.*" "From passages like this," says *Dr. Barnes*, "occurring occasionally in the classic writers, it is evident that the true figure of the earth had early engaged the attention of men, and that occasionally the truth on this subject was before their minds, though it was neither brought into a system nor sustained there by sufficient evidence to make it an article of established belief." This globe, with its circumference of twenty-four thousand miles, and a ponderousness which baffles all human appreciation, He "hangs upon nothing"—nothing but His own will. The oceans of water which seem to encircle it, He bindeth up in "thick clouds," and those clouds seem to conceal the effulgence of His throne. Then the waters that roll over the globe, to them He hath set a limit. To the proud billows He hath said, "Hitherto shalt thou come, and no farther." Milton has indicated the limits that the Infinite has put to all things—

"Then stayed the fervid wheels, and in His hand
He took the golden compasses prepared
In God's eternal store, to circumscribe
This universe and all created things;
One foot He centred, and the other turned
Round through the vast profundity obscure,
And said, 'Thus far extend thy bounds,
This be thy just circumference, O world.'"

Job points to—(3) The *starry universe*. “*By His spirit He hath garnished the heavens.*” *W. Herschell* observed one hundred and sixteen thousand stars pass the feeblest telescope in one quarter of an hour. But what are they? Only a few drops to the ocean. Who moulded and burnished those? Who “*garnished the heavens?*” “*He,*” the Almighty One. This Sheol, this terraqueous globe suspended “*on nothing,*” those oceans of waters that roll around and over its surface, those heavens crowded with innumerable globes of fiery brilliancy—He has to do with them all. He is not like the engineer that has finished the machine and left it, or the architect that has built the edifice and gone. He is in every part of the machinery He has constructed, in every room of the great house He has built. These old Arabians were wiser, more philosophic, than modern scientists. They did not ascribe the phenomena and operations of the universe, as it appeared to them, to laws which are mere abstractions of the brain, but to the force, skill, and goodness of an all-sufficient Personality. God’s greatness appears—

Secondly: In that portion of the universe that is *unrevealed*. “*How little a portion is heard of Him? but the thunder of His power who can understand?*” The great earth hanging on nothing, unfathomable oceans of water sailing in clouds and surging on shores, the spirit-realms of Sheol, and the myriad-starred heavens, are only “*parts of His ways,*” mere outlines, dim sketches, tiny specimens of what lies out of sight, and where the Infinite works as He does here. Here He is only heard as a faint whisper; away through the vast unknown He is heard in thunder. God appears infinitely great to us as He operates in the known. But what is the known to the unknown? What is one atom to all the particles that compose the solar system?

CONCLUSION.—We may conclude with two remarks concerning God’s greatness. First: God’s greatness is not inconsistent with His attention to little things. He “*bindeth up the waters*” as well as garnisheth the heavens, and controls innumerable systems. Even amongst men the ignorance or the neglect of little things is no indication of

greatness. The greater the man, as a rule, the more interested in minor matters. But to the Infinite there is nothing great or small. He is not so absorbed with the immensities as to overlook the infinitesimals, not so baffled with the multiplicity of engagements as to suspend His interest in the minutest part of His universe.—Secondly: God's greatness is a vital subject for human thought. Here, as well as in numerous other parts of the Holy Book, the subject is urged on human attention. Every part of nature, and every paragraph of Holy Writ, ring this subject into the ears of men. Why this? No subject is so soul-quickenng. Thoughts on the Great Living One are life-giving. No subject is so humbling. As we think of Him, our egotism wanes away, we feel morally absorbed in the Infinite.

HOMILY No. LV.

JOB'S THIRD ANSWER TO BILDAD.

(2) A SOLEMN ASSEVERATION, A NOBLE DETERMINATION, AND A WEIGHTY REFLECTION.

“*Moreover Job continued his parable, and said,*” &c.—CHAP. xxvii. 1-10.

EXEGETICAL REMARKS. One might have expected that Zophar would have spoken next. Indeed *Wemyss, Dr. Bernard,* and others assert that he did, and that this whole chapter is his utterance; but by general consent Job now commences a speech which he continues to the close of chapter xxxi. Eliphaz, Bildad, and Zophar have retired from the field of controversy and return no more.

Ver. 1.—“*Moreover Job continued his parable, and said.*” Though the word “parable” properly denotes a comparison, it is used here and elsewhere to denote a sententious discourse; and the

words may be rendered: “Job took up again his impressive discourse, and said.”

Ver. 2.—“*As God liveth.*” A form of solemn adjuration, and means, as certainly as God liveth. Up to this point Job had employed no oath, and this expresses his profound conviction in the existence of a living God. “*Hath taken away my judgment.*” This means perhaps, who hath rejected my cause. “*And the Almighty, who hath vexed my soul.*” Margin, made my soul bitter.

Ver. 3.—“*All the while my breath is in me, and the spirit of God is in my nostrils.*” This means,

as long as I live, and the Spirit of God sustains me. Some regard this expression as parenthetic, and meaning—Even now my breath is in me, *i. e.*, in my living soul, and notwithstanding my sufferings is capable of knowing and appreciating the right.

Ver. 4.—“*My lips shall not speak wickedness, nor my tongue utter deceit.*” He means to say, as certainly as God Almighty liveth, he would not vindicate wickedness, or deal in sophistry. As if he had said, “If I were to confess myself a guilty man and a sinner, my lips would speak iniquity, which they never shall.”

Ver. 5.—“*God forbid that I should justify you.*” That is, admit you to be in the right and allow the accuracy of your charges against me. I cannot concede that I am a great sinner because I am a great sufferer. He was conscious of his integrity. “*Till I die I will not remove mine integrity from me.*” I will not, I cannot admit that I have been insincere or hypocritical. With my last breath I will maintain my sincerity.

Ver. 6.—“*My righteousness I hold fast, and will not let it go: my heart shall not reproach me so long as I live.*” I cleave to my righteousness, and firmly maintain it has ever been with me and never for a moment left me. I have never acted the hypocrite. I have lost much—property, health, friends, &c., but I have never lost my sincerity.

Ver. 7.—“*Let mine enemy be*

as the wicked, and he that riseth up against me as the unrighteous.” This strengthens the preceding. My opponents may be guilty, I at least am not so. Mine enemies may be wicked, I am not.—*Dr. Samuel Davidson.*

Ver. 8.—“*For what is the hope of the hypocrite.*” The hypocrite, or the wicked man, may have, and often has, great gain it is true; but what is the worth of his hope? “*Though he hath gained, when God taketh away his soul,*” when he dies, where is his hope? “This verse, says *Canon Cook*, is perhaps one of the strongest passages which can be adduced to prove Job’s instinctive and ineradicable faith in the immortality of the living principle.”

Vers. 9, 10.—“*Will God hear his cry when trouble cometh upon him? Will he delight himself in the Almighty? will he always call upon God?*” *Dr. Bernard* seems to me to express the real idea of Job here. “Can he delight himself in the Almighty? Can he call on God at all times, as I do? Almost intolerable as are my sufferings, I have yet this great consolation, that I can call upon God, and with confidence declare to Him my readiness to appear at any time before His judgment-seat for the purpose of clearing myself of any charge that may be brought against me, and of fully proving my innocence. Can the wicked man, can the iniquitous man do this? How absurd, then, would it be of you to suppose for one moment that I envy their lot.”

HOMILETICS.—We have in these verses three subjects for useful reflection.

I. A SOLEMN ASSEVERATION. “*As God liveth.*” The words imply a belief,—

First: In the *reality* of the Divine existence. "*As God liveth.*" He lives; this is a fact incontrovertible, eternal, fundamental. It lies at the foundation of all facts; it gives meaning, harmony, unity to all other realities in the universe. The man who denies this lives in the realm of phantasies and contradictions; and he who ignores it is unconscious of the inspiration of true life. "*As God liveth.*" Man, to use the language of *Max Müller*, has a "faculty for the Infinite." In truth, a conception of the finite implies an inborn faith in the Infinite. Alas! whilst some deny this fact, the bulk of the race practically ignore it, and are "without God in the world." The words imply a belief—

Secondly: In the *awfulness* of the Divine existence. There is a sublime awfulness in the words, "*As God liveth.*" Of all solemn facts in the universe, the most solemn is this, "*God liveth.*" He who looks into all hearts, loathes all depravities, supports all existence, and who will in no wise clear the guilty, "*liveth.*" All souls may well stand in trembling awe in the presence of this fact. "How dreadful is this place!" Verily, the place where He is, is dreadful; but the fact that *He* is, is more dreadful still. "The Lord is in His holy temple; let all the earth keep silence before Him." The words imply a belief—

Thirdly: In the *personal agency* of the Divine existence. "*Who hath taken away my judgment; and the Almighty, who hath vexed my soul.*" He has had to do with *me*. I feel that this Infinite One is dealing with *me* personally, and He is dealing *severely*. As nature has winter as well as summer, so God has a severe as well as a benign aspect. Nature has not only its days of sunshine and serenity, when the earth smiles in beauty under genial skies, and all life overflows with joy, but it has, on the other side, its earthquakes, that engulf cities; its vapours and simooms, whose breath is destruction; its furious storms, that spread devastation over sea and land. The words express a belief—

Fourthly: In the *nearness* of the Divine existence. "*The spirit of God is in my nostrils.*" His breath is my life. "He is not far from every one of us." There are those in the ministry who are always speaking of God as a King to their people, and on this remote and metaphorical relationship

they build up their little systems of theology. But God is infinitely nearer to men than a king: He is their *Father*, ever loving and tender; nay, He is nearer than *Father*, He is their *Proprietor*. He owns us body and mind. Aye, and nearer still than this, He is our life. We cannot move, or even sin, without Him. "In Him we live and move and have our being." Oh that men would practically recognize the fact that God is the Great Reality, dealing with us personally and near as life itself. "He that cometh to God must believe that He is, and that He is a rewarder of them that diligently seek Him."

We have in these verses—

II. A NOBLE DETERMINATION. What does he determine First: Never to *swerve from rectitude*. "*Till I die I will not remove mine integrity from me. My righteousness I hold fast, and will not let it go.*" Whatever happens to me I will not play the false, I will not be insincere. I will be real, and ever faithful to my conscience. "*My righteousness*" I will "*hold fast.*" I could not hold my property, it is gone: nor my children, they have been taken from me; nor my health, it has departed; nor my friends, for they have failed me; nor my reputation, slander has stolen it away; but "*my righteousness I hold fast.*" No one can rob me of my integrity, or destroy the consciousness that I am sincere. Alas! many have no righteousness to hold; and some who have it hold it with a feeble grasp, and will give it up for some tempting offer. But to have it and to hold it, this is truly noble; to hold it as a drowning man holds a rope thrown out for his rescue, firmly amidst the furious winds and dashing billows. Thank God! we can hold it if we have it; no power in the universe can take it away without our consent. He determines—

Secondly: Never to *vindicate wickedness*. "*Let mine enemy be as the wicked, and he that riseth up against me as the unrighteous,*" &c. Job has so many times alluded to the prosperity of the wicked that he is apprehensive he may be suspected of envying their lot, and of wishing to be in their place—a suspicion in the highest degree offensive to him. In order therefore to prevent his friends from entertaining

any such erroneous notions, he virtually says, that the utmost he could desire for an enemy would be that he should be treated as he believed the wicked would one day. As if he had said: "So far from envying the wicked on account of their success and prosperity, I would not for the world exchange my condition, miserable and wretched as it is, for theirs, well knowing that the stings of my conscience would be infinitely more painful than these sores with which I am covered from the sole of my foot to the crown of my head." Great is the tendency of some men to vindicate wickedness in connection with wealth and worldly power. Intemperance, debauchery, gambling, laziness, haughtiness, a "fast life;" these, in what are called the nobilities and royalties, are regarded as very venial evils, if indeed evils at all. Let us catch the inspiration of this old Arabian, and determine never to vindicate wickedness at all, not even in the most elevated ranks of social life. On the contrary, to frown at it with honest indignation, and to hurl at it the thunder-bolts of holy reproof.

We have in these verses—

III. A WEIGHTY REFLECTION. "*What is the hope of the hypocrite, though he hath gained, when God taketh away his soul? Will God hear his cry when trouble cometh upon him?*" The writer here reflects upon the wicked men in worldly affluence, and concludes—

First: That in *death* they will have no *hope*. "*What is the hope of the hypocrite, though he hath gained, when God taketh away his soul?*" The "*soul*" here means life; and death is but God taking away the life. A man dies, not mainly because of accident, age, or disease, but chiefly God hath taken away the life. "The Lord gave, the Lord hath taken away." But what *hope* has a wicked man at this period? None. It might have flickered up to this moment, but the cold chill of death puts it out for ever, and his soul gets enshrouded in a starless despair. He concludes moreover—

Secondly: That in *trouble* they will have no *answer* to their prayers nor *delight* in God. "*Will God hear his cry when trouble cometh upon him?*" &c. Trouble will come upon him—that is destiny; he will cry to God when in

trouble—that is instinct. But will he be answered? The interrogative means, NO. He will not hear his “cry.” “He will laugh at their calamities, and mock when their fear cometh.” A good man delights in God; but to a wicked man God is terrific and repugnant.

CONCLUSION.—Learn—

First: The greatest *reality outside* of us. What is that? God. God liveth. All else is shadow. He is the substance. All else is transient as a fragile flower, or a fleeting cloud. He is unaltered, unalterable, and eternal. Realize this; “set the Lord always before you.” Learn—

Secondly: The greatest *worth inside* of us. What is that? Virtue, or what is here called “integrity,” “righteousness.” This is intrinsic and enduring worth—worth recognized throughout all the moral realms of immensity. What are kingdoms to it? “It cannot be gotten for gold, neither shall silver be weighed for the price thereof. It cannot be valued with the gold of Ophir, with the precious onyx, or the sapphire. The gold and the crystal cannot equal it; and the exchange of it shall not be for jewels of fine gold. No mention shall be made of coral or of pearls: for the price of wisdom is above rubies. The topaz of Ethiopia shall not equal it, neither shall it be valued with pure gold.”

“Well may your hearts believe the truths I tell;
’Tis virtue makes the bliss where’er we dwell.”—*Collins*.

HOMILY No. LVI.

JOB'S REPLY TO HIS FRIENDS IN GENERAL.

(2.) JOB'S LECTURE ON GOD'S TREATMENT OF WICKED MEN.

"I will teach you by the hand of God: that which is with the Almighty will I not conceal." &c.—CHAP. XXVII. 11-23.

EXEGETICAL REMARKS. Job continues his reply to Bildad. In these verses he denies that his affliction arose from his wickedness, and shows that wicked men grow rich and prosper in this world, but judgment must at last overtake them.

Ver. 11.—*"I will teach you by the hand of God: that which is with the Almighty will I not conceal."* "I will teach you what is in the power of God, for what is with the Almighty I do not conceal."—*Dr. Bernard*. What the patriarch probably meant was, I will instruct you on the point in question, by a full and candid revelation of God's providential working in human history.

Ver. 12.—*"Behold, all ye yourselves have seen it; why then are ye thus altogether vain?"* "Lo, all of you who have seen it, why then are ye so full of vain babbling?"—*Wemyss*. "Behold, ye have all seen it, why then do ye cherish foolish notions?"—*Delitzsch*. What he means plainly is, The hand of God in Providence, to which I am about pointing you, is manifest to you all. He appeals to their observation in order to confirm what he is about to say.

Ver. 13.—*"This is the portion of a wicked man with God, and the heritage of oppressors, which they shall receive of the Almighty."* Because Zophar had used this language (chap. xx. 29), *Dr. Bernard*

makes this as the commencement of a new chapter, and regards Zophar as the speaker replying to the statements of Job to the end even of the next chapter. Now,—although it is true that Eliphaz and Bildad had spoken three times and Zophar only twice, and that therefore it might be expected that he would make a reply at this point, and that the sentiments here recorded would be very consistent with his former arguments,—there are strong reasons for rejecting the supposition. For a statement of these reasons see *Dr. Barnes in loco*: also *Delitzsch* (vol. ii. pp. 78-86). Some suppose that from ver. 13 to the end of the chapter Job is merely repeating the arguments of his friends.

Ver. 14.—*"If his children be multiplied, it is for the sword: and his offspring shall not be satisfied with bread."* Job's friends had maintained that the wicked, though they prospered for a short time, would ultimately be punished. The patriarch concedes this in these verses, although he does not admit their doctrine that great personal sufferings are proofs of personal guilt. In this verse he implies that the wicked might be blessed with large families, yet visited at times with the afflictions of war and famine.

Ver. 15.—*"Those that remain of him shall be buried in death: and his widows shall not weep."* "His survivors shall be buried by the

pestilence, and his widow shall not weep."—*Delitzsch*.

Vers. 16, 17, 18.—"Though he heap up silver as the dust, and prepare raiment as the clay; he may prepare it, but the just shall put it on, and the innocent shall divide the silver. He buildeth his house as a moth, and as a booth that the keeper maketh." The translation is: "If he heapeth silver together as dust, and prepareth garments for himself as mire; he prepareth it and the righteous clothe themselves, and the innocent divide the silver among themselves. He hath built his house like the moth, as the hut which the watchman makes.—*Dr. Samuel Davidson*.

Ver. 19.—"The rich man shall lie down, but he shall not be gathered; he openeth his eyes, and he is not." Translate: "He layeth him down rich and doth not so again; he openeth his eyes and—he is no more," *i. e.* he lies down in the evening in full possession of his wealth, not thinking that it is the last time; he opens his eyes in

the morning, not thinking that he opens them to close them that same day for ever.—*Dr. Samuel Davidson*.

Vers. 20, 21.—"Terrors take hold on him as waters, a tempest stealeth him away in the night. The east wind carrieth him away, and he departeth; and as a storm hurleth him out of his place." The idea is, that he is carried away as by the violence of a whirlwind or a sudden tempest. He is unprepared, and powerless to resist. Does Job here refer to some well-known events such as the deluge, or the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah?

Ver. 22.—"For God shall cast upon him, and not spare: he would fain flee out of his hand." "God casteth upon him without sparing; before His hand he fleeth utterly away."

Ver. 23.—"Men shall clap their hands at him, and shall hiss him out of his place." Bildad (chap. xviii. 18) expressed a similar sentiment.

HOMILETICS.—These verses may be looked upon as a lecture which Job delivers to his friend on God's treatment of wicked men. "*I will teach you by the hand of God,*" &c. Two things are noteworthy concerning this lecture—

I. ITS INTRODUCTION. The eleventh and twelfth verses may be regarded as an exordium; and they indicate two things—

First: *That his arguments are drawn from the operations of God in human history.* "*I will teach you by the hand of God.*" Or, concerning the acts of God. As if he had said, Hear me, I am now going to state facts, in connection with God's dealings with mankind. Turn from abstract and speculative reasoning to these facts, and ponder them well. Ever should we remember that the "*hand of God*"

is in human history. Our life is not shaped by fate nor directed by chance.

“There’s a divinity that shapes our ends,
Rough hew them how we will.”

God is in all, He originates all that is good in life, and controls all that is evil. What is human history but a *Divine* book, a book crowded with facts that reveal God, illustrate the moral beauty and transcendent advantages of holiness, and the revolting abomination and the inexpressible miseries of sin? In this exordium he indicates—

Secondly: *That the facts of human history are open to the observation of all.* “Behold, all ye yourselves have seen it.” The facts of history, in which God’s hand is seen, are patent, they stand out as clear as the stars of night in the cloudless sky. Every eye may see them, every mind should study them. It is for us evermore not to appeal to men’s prejudices and tastes, but to palpable facts in relation to God. On these our reasons, opinions, speculations, should be founded, and by them ever shaped and ruled. The other noteworthy thing concerning this lecture is—

II. ITS DOCTRINE. The doctrine is this, that punishment will ultimately overtake wicked men, however much, for a time, they may prosper in the world. “He gives back,” says a modern writer, “to his three friends, the doctrine which they had fully imparted to him. They held the lot of the evil-doer before him as a mirror, that he might behold himself in it and be astonished. He holds it before them, that they may perceive how, not only his bearing under suffering, but also the form of his affliction, is of a totally different kind.” His doctrine is—

First: *That great wickedness often prospers for a time in this life.* He speaks of their “children” being “multiplied” (verse 14); and in those times children were considered the greatest blessings a man could have. He speaks of them as possessing an abundance of wealth, as heaping “up silver as the dust” (verse 16), and having raiment as abundant as “the clay.” He had always maintained that wicked men prospered in this life, and this by implication is

his position now; and is not this true? All men in all times have recognized this truth, and the thoughtful have been perplexed thereby. "Wherefore doth the way of the wicked prosper?" &c. His doctrine is—

Secondly: That though great wickedness often prospers for a time in this life, it *must be followed by terrible punishment*. (1) If the wicked man is blessed with children, punishment may come from that quarter. The "*sword*" and famine may deprive him of them; and so desolate will he become that all his surviving friends shall be "*buried in death: and his widows shall not weep*" (verse 15). These words, including (verses 16, 17), present to us, as we have elsewhere seen, two subjects of thought. (α) The wicked hoarding their wealth. They "*heap up silver as the dust.*" As a rule, this is the grand work of wicked men on the earth. On it they concentrate all their energies, to it they devote all their time. (β) The hoarded wealth of the wicked coming into the hands of the good. "*The just shall put it on, and the innocent shall divide the silver.*" This is *partially* taking place now every day. Wicked worldlings die, and the righteous get possession of their wealth. This will be the case *universally* one day. All the wealth amassed by the wicked shall fall into the hands of the Christly. (2) If wicked men are blessed with great riches their wealth shall fall into the hands of the good. "*He may prepare it, but the just shall put it on.*" (3) That if the wicked man is blessed with houses they will not stand. They will be like a mere fragile, temporary "*booth,*" like the dwelling of a "*moth,*" which is soon destroyed. (4) Though he die as a "*rich man,*" he will "*not be gathered;*" that is, he will have no honour shown him in his death. Who really mourns the death of a notoriously wicked man? However rich, his exit is felt to be a relief to society. However strong he may be, or long he may live, a fearful death awaits him—sudden as a whirlwind, terrible as a flood, overwhelming as a resistless storm. "*Terrors take hold on him as waters, a tempest stealeth him away in the night,*" &c. However flattered he may be in life, on account of his worldly wealth and splendour, men at his death will "*clap their hands,*" and "*hiss him out of his place.*"

CONCLUSION.—This address of Job is—

First: *Worthy of the imitation of religious teachers.* The patriarch here appeals to facts—facts in connection with human history, and which come within the common observation of man. He did not speculate, theorize, or go into abstruse reasoning or poetic fancies, but to *facts*. Let all religious teachers imitate him in this, take as their standard, facts, undoubted facts in human history, in the sacred volume, and in universal consciousness. This address of Job—

Secondly: Declares *that worldly prosperity is neither a test of character nor a safeguard against punishment.* Wicked men are in especial moral danger, wealth covers their enormities from the common eye of society and suggests virtues that they have not; hence they are flattered. Sycophancy minifies their vices, and magnifies their virtues if they have any. “Oh, what a world of vile ill-favoured faults look handsome in the rich to sordid minds.”—*Shakspeare.*

Let not the rich man glory in his riches. If in the midst of his wealth and worldly pageantry he is destitute of spiritual excellence, retribution must overtake him. It may move softly and slowly, but irresistibly, and strike with terrible force. “When the wicked spring as the grass, and when all the workers of iniquity do flourish; it is that they shall be destroyed for ever.” “I have seen the wicked in great power, spreading himself like a green bay-tree. Yet he passed away, and, lo, he was not: the end of the wicked shall be cut off.”

HOMILY No. LVII.

JOB'S REPLY TO HIS FRIENDS IN GENERAL.

(3.) MAN'S POWER AND WEAKNESS,—INTELLECTUAL DIFFICULTIES SOLVED BY PIETY.

"Surely there is a vein for the silver, and a place for gold where they fine it." &c.—CHAP. XXVIII. 1-28.

GENERAL NOTE.—Some critics, as we have seen, regard the whole of this chapter, and the last ten verses of the preceding one, as the address of Zophar, but most of the best authorities think Job was the speaker. Whether Zophar or Job, it matters but little. The things spoken are what is important.

"The course of thought," says *Canon Cook*, "seems to be this: Job—for he regards Job as the speaker—has declared his conviction that, notwithstanding apparent irregularities and many exceptions, the justice of God is sooner or later manifested in punishing the wicked; but the mystery is still unsolved; he cannot understand God's ways, he feels Him to be incomprehensible, and comes to one certain conclusion, that, although the faculties of man are marvelously developed in regard to all physical phenomena, he knows nothing of the true essential attributes of God. Wisdom in its essence belongs to God alone, it is incommunicable by its very nature, but in its practical applications man can attain to it by the fear of God, and by departing from evil."

EXEGETICAL REMARKS. *Ver. 1.*—"Surely there is a vein for the silver (margin, mine), and a place for gold where they fine it (or which they fine). It has been said that silver here stands first, because at the time the book was written, it was very scarce and precious.

Ver. 2.—"Iron is taken out of the earth, and brass is molten out of the stone." "Iron is taken out of dust, and He poureth forth stone as copper."—*Delitzsch*. Stone means the ore, and the ore is molten into copper.

Ver. 3.—"He setteth an end to darkness, and searcheth out all perfection: the stones of darkness, and the shadow of death." This seems to describe the work of the miner, who as he penetrates the dark caverns lets in light, either by opening a shaft, or bearing with him a lantern.

Ver. 4.—"The flood breaketh out from the inhabitant; even the waters forgotten of the foot: they are dried up, they are gone away from men." "He breaketh away rivers from him that dwelleth by them, so that they are forgotten of the foot. They are emptied, they are removed by frail man. He can divert rivers from their original course, and taking them away, as it were, from those who dwell upon their banks, make use of their beds as though they had always been dry land; yea, so completely can he turn them from their channels, that they are forgotten by the foot; they have been exhausted, moved away by 'frail man.' Those who tread the ground, thus become dry, altogether forget that it was once covered with water, and that in former times they knew a river flow there; and thus so great a work is effected by the hands of frail man."—*Dr. Bernard*.

Ver. 5.—“*As for the earth, out of it cometh bread : and under it is turned up as it were fire.*” Allusion is probably here made to the work of the farmer on volcanic mountains : while he is cultivating the soil hidden fires are burning beneath him.

Ver. 6.—“*The stones of it are the place of sapphires : and it hath dust of gold.*” The idea is, that “dust of gold” rewards the industrious labourer for his toils.

Vers. 7, 8.—“*There is a path which no fowl knoweth, and which the vulture’s eye hath not seen : the lion’s whelps have not trodden it, nor the fierce lion passed by it.*” “The way that no bird of prey knoweth, and the eye of the hawk hath not gazed at ; which the proud beast of prey hath not trodden ; over which the lion hath not walked.”—*Delitzsch*. Man’s reason excels the sagacity of the animal : his ingenuity is here contrasted with the far-reaching and keen vision of the hawk, and strength and force of the lion.

Ver. 9.—“*He putteth forth his haul upon the rock ; he overturneth the mountains by the roots.*” It means, that where man is engaged in the construction of a road, and stones or “mountains” impede his progress, he cleaves his way.

Ver. 10.—“*He cutteth out rivers among the rocks ; and his eye seeth every precious thing*” (all kind of precious things). When rocks oppose him in his endeavours to change the course of a river, he cuts a channel through them, and thereby discovers many a precious gem.

Ver. 11.—“*He bindeth the floods from overflowing ; and the thing that is hid bringeth he forth to light.*” “This denotes the perfect accomplishment of one of the most difficult works ; the miner not only

turns the course of subterranean rivers which he meets in his excavation, but prevents the least leaking, or ‘weeping,’ a picturesque, and perhaps technical term. It is curious to see the operation of railway tunnelling thus anticipated. ‘*Forth to light.*’ The last grand result, the hidden treasures of darkness are brought into the light for the use and glory of man. What limits can be assigned to powers and capacities which have thus conquered nature?” — *Canon Cook*. The same author says, “These verses are remarkable for the knowledge of mining operations which they indicate in the writer. Commentators are now agreed as to the general meaning, and though many expressions are still obscure, and will probably remain matters of controversy, we find in them singularly accurate and graphic descriptions of the processes of miners. It is an interesting question where the writer could have acquired such minute and accurate knowledge ; certainly not in Palestine, where mining was unknown. But in very remote ages, far more ancient than that assigned to Job, there were gold mines in Egypt ; silver was brought from the far East by Phœnician merchants ; iron was found, and copper-mines were worked in the Sinaitic Peninsula by Egyptians, from the third dynasty, at least some thousand years before Job, until the nineteenth dynasty. The impression made by the whole passage is that the writer and his contemporaries must have been acquainted with these operations, but probably as matters exciting astonishment by their novelty and strangeness. A great chieftain, whose camels were doubtless employed in transporting the productions of various regions, would have had opportunities such

as few Israelites, save in the age of Solomon, could have enjoyed, of exploring the excavations and watching the ingenious processes by which the metals were prepared for the use of man. The local colouring altogether belongs to Idumea, the peninsula of Arabia, or to Egypt, certainly not to Palestine. This may be seen more distinctly when we consider the details." "Modern science, instead of confuting, only confirms, the aphorism of the patriarch Job, who has shadowed forth the downward persistence of the one (silver), and the superficial distribution of the other (gold). 'Surely there is a vein for the silver—the earth hath dust of gold.' The indisputable fact is, that the chief quantities of gold originally imbedded in the upper portions of the vein have been broken up and transported with the *débris* of the mountain-tops, into adjacent slopes and valleys. Silver and argentiferous lead, on the contrary, extended so largely downwards into the bowels of the earth, that they must yield enormous profit to the miner for ages to come." — *Sir Roderick Murchison*.

Ver. 12.—“*But where shall wisdom be found? and where is the place of understanding?*” Man may be able to find out precious stones and gems which the most piercing eye of the bird of prey cannot discover, but “*Where shall wisdom be found?*” which means, I presume, *Where shall that interpreting principle of Providence be found, which shall satisfy the heart with the procedure of God?* In all the discussions of Job and his friends, they had not reached this principle. Hence they were all in mental confusion on the subject.

Ver. 13.—“*Man knoweth not the price thereof; neither is it found in*

the land of the living.” He means to say, that it is priceless and undiscoverable.

Ver. 14.—“*The depth saith, It is not in me: and the sea saith, It is not with me.*” Penetrate the deepest abysses of nature, and it is not there.

Ver. 15.—“*It cannot be gotten for gold, neither shall silver be weighed for the price thereof.*” No money can purchase it.

Vers. 16-19. — “*It cannot be valued with the gold of Ophir.*” The most costly things of the material world are here mentioned as inferior to wisdom, and unable to purchase it. “*Ophir*” (see 2 Chron. ix. 10); “*Omyx*” (Gen. ii. 12); “*Pearls*” (Rev. xxi. 21); “*Rubies*” (Lam. iv. 7); “*Topaz*” (Exodus xxviii. 17); “*Coral*” (Ezekiel xxvii. 16). “*Jewels of fine gold*” or vases of gold. The names of these jewels are not determined with accuracy, nor is this a matter of any moment; it suffices to note the accumulation of wealth at a very remote age, which, vast as it may seem, is fully borne out by the monuments of Egypt.”

Vers. 20, 21.—“*Whence then cometh wisdom? and where is the place of understanding? Seeing it is hid from the eyes of all living, and kept close from the fowls of the air.*” Since the keenest eye of all the keen-eyed creatures of the world cannot discover it, where is it?

Ver. 22. — “*Destruction and death say, We have heard the fame thereof with our ears.*” Striking personification this. “*Destruction and death*” here represent the tenants of the nether world, the dark realm of departed spirits. These had heard of the fame of it, but did not know where it was to be found, could not direct the living to it.

Ver. 23.—“*God understandeth the way thereof, and He knoweth the place thereof.*” The idea is, that the reason of Divine procedure is known to God only. God alone can interpret God.

Ver. 24.—“*For He looketh to the ends of the earth, and seeth under the whole heaven.*” The whole universe is naked to His eye.

Vers. 25-27.—“*To make the weight for the winds; and he weigheth the waters,*” &c.

“When He appointed to the wind its weight,
And weighed the water according to a measure,
When He appointed to the rain its law,
And the course to the lightning of the thunder:

Then He saw it and declared it,
Took it as a pattern, and tested it also.”—*Delitzsch.*

He knows the weight of the atmosphere. Every drop of rain is directed by His law; every flash of lightning runs in the path which He ordains, and strikes at the very point at which He has fixed.

Ver. 28.—“*And unto man He said, Behold, the fear of the Lord, that is wisdom; and to depart from evil is understanding.*” The “fear of the Lord” means piety, a loving reverence which secures unbounded confidence in His procedure, and a hearty submission to His will.

HOMILETICS.—Looking at the whole chapter one subject stands pre-eminent, and forces itself on our attention, namely, *man's power and man's inability*. His power to get out of the earth whatever he requires for his material existence, and his inability to reach that wisdom, that interpreting principle, which shall solve the problems of Divine Providence. Observe—

I. MAN'S POWER. His power is seen in his action upon and under the earth. *The earth has the minerals which he requires.* In it, as in a chest, is locked up the silver, the gold, the iron, the coal, and other substances which he requires for his use and his enjoyment as the citizen of time; and in its soil is the fruit and the clothing necessary to his physical “well-being.” “The earth,” says the Psalmist, “hath He given to the children of men;” not for the children of any particular tribe or class. The man who would monopolize any part of this round earth, and prevent any single acre of this land from being explored or cultivated, if necessary to the general good, outrages the moral ordinances of heaven. As truly as God of old gave the earth to Adam, He gives it to every child that is born. Each one that comes into the world has a right to have that use of it for his own subsistence and development that will

not interfere with the same right of his fellow-man. Now what is to be observed is this,—Man is endowed with power to bring out of the earth what the munificent Creator has there stored up for his use. He has the power of *intelligence* for it. It is here implied that the most sagacious of the other tenants of the globe cannot bring out of the earth its hidden treasures. “*There is a path which no fowl knoweth, and which the vulture’s eye hath not seen : the lion’s whelps have not trodden it, nor the fierce lion passed by it.*” But that path, labyrinthian, deep, dark, perilous, leading to precious ores and gems, man descends, and thus reason transcends instinct. No brute can explore and bring forth the mineral treasures of the earth, nor get out of its soil by cultivation either food or raiment. This man does, and does it because he is endowed with reason. He has the power of *muscle*. He is here represented as cutting his way through subterranean depths ; bringing forth the silver, the iron, the gold, &c. &c. ; cutting channels for the floods ; overturning the mountains and the rocks ; and thus changing, as it were, the whole face of the earth. But if, in the days of Job, man achieved such wonders on, and under, the earth, how much more is his power displayed now ! Now, he rives the mountains with ease, he brings out the treasures of the earth at his pleasure, he reverses the courses of rivers, he cuts canals through rocky acres that divide oceans, he makes the heaving billows the highway of nations, he converts forests into meadows and deserts into gardens, he links his chariot to the fire, and makes the lightning convey his thoughts. But notwithstanding man’s power under, and upon, the earth, observe that he is weak in relation to great moral questions : hence notice—

II. MAN’S INABILITY. “*But where shall wisdom be found ? and where is the place of understanding ?*” He can find out and bring forth pearls from the abysses of ocean, and treasures from the deep caverns of the globe, but he cannot find out wisdom, and he cannot find out the mystery that solves the problem of God’s moral government. There are three great facts here worthy of our profound attention—

First : *That man has great intellectual difficulties concerning*

the works and ways of God. This is implied in the cry, "Where shall wisdom be found?" That is, as I understand it, where shall I get the solvent idea, the idea that shall make all things clear to the understanding?—that shall reconcile apparent discrepancies, that like a key shall unlock the door of mystery—like a sunbeam shall sweep our sky of clouds, and make our life-scenes clear. There are two classes of intellectual difficulties—those connected with the *physical realm of being*, and those connected with the *moral*. The former class is ever pressing upon scientific men. The more they penetrate into the arcana of nature, the more their difficulties multiply. Facts appear, both in matter and mind, which they seek in vain to reconcile, and their cry is for "wisdom,"—for some solvent principle. The other class of difficulties is felt, more or less, by all who think on moral subjects. The birth of sin, the suffering of innocence, the triumph of wickedness, the depression of virtue, are some of the intellectual difficulties which are felt in the moral department. The difficulties in the moral department press far more heavily and fearfully on the heart of man than those in the physical. How anxiously does the thinker in the moral domain, when cloud after cloud of doubt and mystery rolls over his heavens, cry, "Where shall wisdom be found?" Where is the interpreting principle? *Where?* Another fact is—

Secondly: *That the principle which removes those difficulties can neither be purchased by wealth nor obtained by investigation.*

(1) It cannot be purchased by wealth. "Man knoweth not the price thereof." "It cannot be gotten for gold." No wealth is equal to its value. "It cannot be valued with the gold of Ophir"—"the precious onyx"—"the sapphire"—"the gold"—"the crystal"—"jewels of fine gold"—"coral"—"pearls"—"rubies"—"the topaz of Ethiopia." The choicest and largest species of wealth in this world put together is not equal to its value, and cannot procure it. All wealth in comparison with true peace of mind is worthless. Men under the pressure of mental anxieties have often been ready to barter away every fraction of their property for the reconciling principle; but no wealth can purchase it. (2) It cannot be obtained by investigation. A search for it in the

inanimate realm would be useless, for "*The depth saith, It is not in me: and the sea saith, It is not with me.*" A search for it in the *domain of life* would be useless, for "it is hid from the eyes of all living, and kept close from the fowls of the air." The feathered tribes were considered by ancient Orientals as possessing great knowledge, but the principle to remove man's intellectual difficulties is not to be found in them. A search for it in the *domain of departed souls* would also be useless. "*Destruction and death say, We have heard the fame thereof with our ears.*" There may be great souls in Sheol, or Hades, great in native power, and in vastness of experience; but great as they are, they have no clear principle to find out the reason of God's procedure. Intellect cannot solve the difficulties of intellect. Another fact is—

Thirdly: *That in practical piety alone a satisfactory solution can be obtained.* "*Unto man He said, Behold, the fear of the Lord, that is wisdom; and to depart from evil is understanding.*" The "fear of the Lord" means a reverential love for Him who is the Disposer of all human events. It implies a loving submission to, and acquiescence in, the Divine will. In this state of heart, this moral quality of soul, and nowhere else, will you find a satisfactory solution. (1) This is asserted by one who understands the subject. "*God understandeth the way thereof, and He knoweth the place thereof,*" &c. Every part of the universe is both formed and governed by His eternal plan. The material elements are not brought together by chance. They are adjusted by His rule; their proportions are arranged by Him. Even the fleeting winds are weighed; and not a zephyr breathes but by His decree. Those waters, too, which, under the sway of storms, roar and rage in apparent lawlessness, are all measured. Every spray is known, and every drop has been weighed in His unerring balance. All *move*, too, according to His plan. He has a "*decree for the rain.*" He has cut out a path for the lightning, and every part of the great universe is both formed and directed according to His all-embracing law. Now it is He who thus "looks under the whole heaven," and knows every part of the creation; that says, "*Behold, the fear of the Lord, that is wisdom.*" (2) This is proved by the nature of the case. Inspire a moral intelligence with

reverence to God, which means a loving submission to His will, and speculative difficulties would lose their painful pressure on the heart. "He that doeth the will of God shall know of the doctrine." This "fear of the Lord," this "wisdom," will remove the pressure of all intellectual difficulties connected with God's government. How? By the exercise of a cheerful trust in His wisdom as the Great Disposer of all events. A loving, trusting heart can afford to wait patiently for explanations. How? By turning the soul to the great future, where we shall see not "through a glass darkly, but face to face." How? By dispelling from the heart those feelings which cloud the understanding. Emotions are the medium, the atmosphere, through which the intellect looks at all moral questions. Piety makes this atmosphere clear. How? By endowing the soul with a ruling sentiment, kindred to that which is the spring of all Divine operations—love. There is a much shorter way of knowing men than of studying them. If A's ruling sentiment is identical with that of B, A will have an instinctive knowledge of B,—of the sources and reasons of his conduct. A kindredness of leading sympathies with a man lets you into the "secrets" of his life. For the want of this, the selfish understand not the benevolent. "The world knoweth us not," says John. We, if Christians, are ruled by a principle which can only be understood by consciousness. The heart is the source of conduct, and the heart only can read the heart. Piety gives us a fellow-feeling, an identity of sentiment, with the Infinite; and hence the secrets of the Lord are with them that fear Him; and Christ's sheep "know His voice." Love alone can interpret the history of love—love alone can receive the revelations of love. Love is the "unction from the Holy One," enabling us to understand all things. "He that dwelleth in love dwelleth in God, and God in him."

CONCLUSION.—Mark well, then, the cry of the race, and the response of Heaven. The *cry* of humanity is for that wisdom that shall make it content and happy under the government of God; and the *response* of Heaven is, that this shall be found nowhere but in moral goodness of soul.

Human discussions, like that which Job had carried on with his friends, will only deepen the darkness, and multiply and intensify the perplexities. But this moral goodness will turn discord into music, darkness into sunshine. Let it grow within us, and all intellectual difficulties will only be as silvery clouds upon the face of day: they will rather charm with their fantastic forms than depress us with their gloom. Love is the sun of the soul. The man who has it will move through all the intellectual difficulties of his life as a vessel glides over some winding river on a bright and genial day. He may meet with many things he does not understand. He may not know the geography of the country through which he is passing, nor anything about the geology of the hills or the botany of the forests, but he still is happy. The waters are smooth, the sky is clear, and the winds are fresh and fair. The universe is loveliness to a loving heart. The pure in heart see God, and in His light all things are plain.

HOMILY No. LVIII.

JOB'S REPLY TO HIS FRIENDS IN GENERAL.

(4.) SAD MEMORIES OF YEARS THAT ARE GONE.

“*Moreover Job continued his parable, and said,*” &c.—CHAP. XXIX. 1-25.

GENERAL NOTE. — “Job having thus declared fully the principles by which he is guided in his consideration of God’s government, reverts to a pathetic description of his present misery contrasted with his former happiness. The style of the rest of his discourse differs somewhat from that of the preceding portions. While it is equally conspicuous for power, conciseness, beauty, and copiousness of illustration, it is clearer, and flows in a more equable and limpid current: it is as though the storm-clouds are broken, and things stand out in their true light and just proportions, now that the struggles of

contending emotions are passing away. Job does not, indeed, and cannot, comprehend the causes of his calamities, or reconcile them with what he could conjecture of the Almighty, by Whose hand they are inflicted; but he sees them as they are. The present and the past are before him; and though he cannot formally express a hope, for which he has no sure objective grounds, yet the tone of his pleading with God indicates a deep undercurrent of pious feeling, while the complete and exhaustive examination of a life, which has been in the faithful discharge of duty, and in abstinence of all forms of wilful

sin, cannot but impart some comfort and suggest some hope, or at least some preparation for hope, to a conscience singularly free from offences. In this chapter we have the description of the life of a great chieftain, no mere sheik of a nomad tribe, but the prince of a state in which civilization had made considerable progress, and laws were administered with intelligence and care. The points which he enumerates are important for their bearing on the date of the work; they belong to an early age, and are entirely free from allusions to habits or institutions of later origin; from aught that can remind us of Judah under the successors of David."—*Canon Cook.*

EXEGETICAL REMARKS. *Ver. 1.* —“*Moreover Job continued his parable,*” &c. A parable means proverb, or discourse.

Ver. 2.—“*Oh that I were as in months past, as in the days when God preserved me.*” In this chapter Job sketches the happiness that he had enjoyed in the times of yore, the good he had done, the services he had rendered to his neighbours, and the high veneration with which he was held by his contemporaries. His memory lingers over those bright periods of the past, and he longs for their return. He goes on to sketch his great blessedness in those days.

Ver. 3. — “*When His candle shined upon my head, and when by His light I walked through darkness.*” “Candle” is “lamp” in the margin. The allusion is probably to the custom which prevailed amongst the wealthy Arabs of suspending lamps from the ceilings of their rooms. All that he means perhaps is, that his days were bright and cheerful.

Ver. 4.—“*As I was in the days of my youth, when the secret of God was upon my tabernacle.*” For youth some say “strength,” some “vintage,” and some “prime of my life.” The idea is, When I was in the midst of enjoyment, and when God guarded my tabernacle.

Ver. 5.—“*When the Almighty was yet with me, when my children were about me.*” When he felt that the Almighty Himself dwelt in his tabernacles as a Friend, and all his children, bright and beautiful, clustered around him.

Ver. 6.—“*When I washed my steps with butter, and the rock poured me out rivers of oil.*” For “butter” some read “cream.” The language indicates luxuriousness. The cream was so plentiful with him that he used it for the commonest purposes. And oil, so valuable for food, medicine, light, and anointing, seemed to break forth out of flinty rocks.

Ver. 7.—“*When I went out to the gate through the city, when I prepared my seat in the street!*” The “gate” of a city was a place of public concourse, where magistrates sat, disputes were settled, and justice administered. To this day, we are told, the Arabs hold their courts of justice under the open heaven, in a field or in the market-place.

Ver. 8.—“*The young men saw me, and hid themselves: and the aged arose, and stood up.*” The young men were struck with such reverence at his appearance, that they withdrew from the street, so as not to impede his progress; and the old men were so impressed with his presence that they rose up, in order to testify to their respect.

Vers. 9, 10.—“*The princes refrained talking, and laid their hand on their mouth. The nobles held their peace, and their tongue cleaved*

to the roof of their mouth." Princes and nobles, the magnates of his country, however busily engaged in conversation, were struck with mute reverence when they saw him. They felt that their words were too contemptible to fall on the ear of such an illustrious man.

Ver. 11.—"When the ear heard me, then it blessed me; and when the eye saw me, it gave witness to me." His presence and his voice charmed the eyes and ears of the men about him.

Ver. 12.—"Because I delivered the poor that cried, and the fatherless, and him that had none to help him." Here is the secret of the reverence with which he was held, the enormous social influence he enjoyed.

Ver. 13.—"The blessing of him that was ready to perish came upon me: and I caused the widow's heart to sing for joy." Men who were perishing under oppression and cruelty he rescued, and widows in their sadness he relieved; and this thrilled their hearts with joy.

Ver. 14.—"I put on righteousness, and it clothed me: my judgment was as a robe and a diadem." "I put on equity, and clothed myself with it, my justice was a robe and a diadem." — *Wemyss*. For "diadem" some read "turban." The idea is, that justice was to him as his apparel, by which he was known and distinguished.

Ver. 15.—"I was eyes to the blind, and feet was I to the lame." An exquisitely beautiful utterance this, meaning that he counselled the ignorant and strengthened the feeble.

Ver. 16.—"I was a father to the poor: and the cause which I knew not I searched out." I treated the poor as if they were my own

children; and hidden cases of distress I searched out in order to relieve.

Ver. 17.—"And I brake the jaws of the wicked, and plucked the spoil out of his teeth." Margin has "jaw teeth of the wicked," and "cast" for the word "plucked." The image here is taken from wild beasts, with whom Job compares the wicked; and he says he rescued the helpless from their grasp, as he would a lamb from the fangs of a ferocious beast.

Ver. 18.—"Then I said, I shall die in my nest, and I shall multiply my days as the sand." "This is the only true rendering." — *Dr. Samuel Davidson*. But different renderings have been given to these words, for example, "Then I thought, in my nest shall I expire, and like a phoenix have a long life." — *Delitzsch*.

Vers. 19, 20.—"My root was spread out by the waters, and the dew lay all night upon my branch. My glory was fresh in me, and my bow was renewed in my hand." The future tense should be continued through these verses." — *Canon Barry*. I thought I was like a healthy and vigorous tree, abundantly supplied with nourishment by water below and dew from above.

Vers. 21-23.—"Unto me men gave ear, and waited, and kept silence at my counsel. After my words they spake not again; and my speech dropped upon them. And they waited for me as for the rain; and they opened their mouth wide as for the latter rain." He returns to the subject of his social influence, which he had touched in the preceding verses. They listened to his words with profound silence, they received them as the thirsty earth receives the genial showers.

Ver. 24.—“*If I laughed on them, they believed it not; and the light of my countenance they cast not down.*” His very laugh was powerful amongst them. If my laugh was that of derision on account of the unwisdom of their plans, their plans would be relinquished; if of approbation, they would be nerved with new power to go on. “If I smiled on them, they were gay, and

rejoiced at my benignant aspect.”—*Wemyss.*

Ver. 25.—“*I chose out their way, and sat chief, and dwelt as a king in the army, as one that comforteth the mourners.*” He means to say that he became their guide and counsellor, and that when he went amongst them in that capacity, his authority was recognized as that of a king.

HOMILETICS.—Here is an autobiographical sketch, sublime in expression, but somewhat egotistic, as well as sad in spirit. Yet its egotism admits of justification. Job was on his defence, charged with being a hypocrite; and a reference to facts in his past life, with which he only was acquainted, seemed necessary to repel the accusations and to vindicate his character. There are times when a man is justified in speaking of himself, speaking even of all the good things he has done, in language as strong as is consistent with truthfulness. Paul did this on more occasions than one. And then, moreover, it should be borne in mind that Job’s self-representations are those of an old man who had passed from the sunniest to the darkest scenes in life. Age should speak. The *bright* days Job refers to as for ever gone were—

I. Days of DISTINGUISHED BLESSINGS. In what glowing terms he speaks of his happy past! They were days when God was his Guardian, when light shone all about his path, when the “*secret of God*” was in his “*tabernacle*,” when his children, buoyant and bright, were all about him, when Providence was so lavish in its kindness towards him that the very rocks seemed to pour out oil for him. Days when, as a man, he had a healthy body and a cheerful heart; as a father, he had loving children and a delightful home; as a citizen, he had enormous wealth and immense social influence. Happy days indeed were those days of his that were past. And he looked upon them with a saddened heart, and seemed to sigh for their return; but they were gone—gone for ever. Observe—

First: *Life has its happy days.* Few have ever lived on this earth, however great their trials, who cannot look back upon some, if not many, happy days that are gone. In most cases childhood, youth, and young manhood have the bright lamp of gladness shining over and around them. Days of buoyant health, days of glowing imagination, days of temporal plentifulness, days of happy love and joyous friendship, days of high hopes and inspiring enterprises. Most of us have had such days. Observe—

Secondly: These happy days *come to a close.* Though they close sooner with some than with others, yet with all, their duration is comparatively short. They give way to days of weakness, days of depression, days of bereavement, days of weeping and of dying. Observe—

Thirdly: When they close, *their memory saddens.* Men talk of the pleasures of memory; but these are mere fancies of the brain, not facts of consciousness. There is nothing in the memory of the painful to give pleasure; and the recollection of joys that are gone for ever cannot fail to sadden. The patriarch felt this now when he said, "*Oh that I were as in months past, as in the days when God preserved me.*" Ah, you may wail over those bright days that are gone, but they will never come back again.

“ Oft in the stilly night,
Ere slumber’s chain has bound me,
Fond memory brings the light
Of other days around me ;
 The smiles, the tears
 Of boyhood’s years,
The words of love then spoken,
 The eye that shone,
 Now dimmed and gone,
The cheerful hearts now broken.

When I remember all
The friends so linked together
I’ve seen around me fall
Like leaves in wintry weather,
 I feel like one
 Who treads alone
Some banquet hall deserted,
 Whose lights are fled,
 Whose garlands dead,
And all but he departed !”—*Thomas Moore.*

The *bright* days Job here refers to were—

II. Days of PHILANTHROPIC MINISTRIES. He was not only the *recipient* of distinguished blessings, but became the *distributor* of blessings amongst his fellow-men. The kindness of Heaven, which showered blessings on his path, so inspired his heart that he became the organ and the minister of kindness to others. Hear an account of his own philanthropic ministry. “*I delivered the poor that cried, the fatherless, and him that had none to help him.*” “*I caused the widow’s heart to sing for joy.*” “*I was eyes to the blind, and feet was I to the lame.*” “*I was a father to the poor : and the cause that I knew not I searched out.*” “*I brake the jaws of the wicked, and plucked the spoil out of his teeth.*” From his own account, here given of himself (and we have no reason to doubt its truth), it would seem that, in those sunny days of prosperity, he laid himself out for usefulness ; that, like the Model Philanthropist, “*He went about doing good.*” And this is just what it ever ought to be : the greater kindness we receive from Heaven, the greater kindness we should show to men. What we receive, we should give. The greater our mercies, the more earnest and affluent our philanthropy. “*Freely have ye received, freely give.*” We offer two remarks.

First : That a philanthropic ministry is necessary to the *personal enjoyment* of Divine mercies. Who is the man who enjoys most of the blessings of Providence and the favours of Heaven ? The man who uses them solely for his personal gratification or aggrandisement ? No ; such a man is likely to grow either into a gross animal or a miserable grub. The smiles of conscience, the glowings of social love, disinterested aims, thoughts fresh and free, self-respect, sense of Divine favour—these things, which enter into the essence of human happiness, he has not, and never can have, so long as he receives all and gives nothing. There is no doctrine more true to human experience, more in accordance with the moral constitution of man, than this : “*It is more blessed to give than to receive.*” This old patriarch not only became the recipient of Divine kindness, but the organ and the minister of the same. We remark—

Secondly : The philanthropic ministry is necessary to the *fulfilment of the design* of Divine mercies. Why does God

bestow on us favours? That we may monopolize them? No; but that we may distribute them. He who receives all, and gives nothing, sins against the design of Divine benevolence. Why do the clouds drink up water from the earth? That they may pour it down upon the thirsty soil. Why does the sun throw its rays on distant planets? That these planets may reflect the light on the orbs through which they move. Why does God show favour to us? That we may minister favour to others. Philanthropy is at once the effect, the evidence, and the ritualism of true religion. "Pure religion and undefiled before God and the Father is this, to visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction, and to keep himself unspotted from the world." The *bright* days Job here refers to as for ever gone, were—

III. Days of SOCIAL SOVEREIGNTY. The kindness he received he distributed; and the kindness he distributed gave him enormous power among his contemporaries. Hear the description of his power: "*The young men saw me, and hid themselves: and the aged arose, and stood up. The princes refrained talking, and laid their hand on their mouth. The nobles held their peace, and their tongue cleaved to the roof of their mouth. When the ear heard me, then it blessed me; and when the eye saw me, it gave witness to me. . . . Unto me men gave ear, and waited, and kept silence at my counsel. After my words they spake not again; and my speech dropped upon them. And they waited for me as for the rain; and they opened their mouth wide as for the latter rain.*"

Here is social power, *social sovereignty*, if you like; a sovereignty that moved and swayed the souls of men. How did he get it? By the pomp and pageantry of his wealth? Base natures may bow to this, but human souls cannot be won by it. How? By force? No: force may crush the body, and depress the hearts of men with fear, but it cannot win or govern the soul. How did Job get this sovereignty over the souls of his contemporaries? Here is the cause: "*Because I delivered the poor that cried, and the fatherless, and him that had none to help him.*" His philanthropy made him a *moral potentate*. What is *political* sovereignty to *intellectual*? The sovereignty of the Georges

to that of Shakspeare? A miserable sham, a passing shadow. But what is *intellectual* sovereignty to *moral*? Scarcely worth the comparison. The more kindness a man shows to his age, the more firmly he enthrones himself in the hearts of men. Kindness wins the true kingdoms and crowns the true kings. This is the sovereignty of Christ. His universal kindness has won for Him a large empire in the world, and will one day make Him the Moral Monarch of humanity. "To Him every knee shall bow."

HOMILY No. LIX.

JOB'S REPLY TO HIS FRIENDS IN GENERAL.

(5.) JOB'S SUFFERINGS.

(1.) SOCIAL.

"*But now they that are younger than I have me in derision,*" &c.—CHAP. xxx. 1-15.

EXEGETICAL REMARKS. In these verses Job brings into striking contrast his present condition with that of former days, as sketched by his own hand in the preceding chapter. In glowing colours he had set forth the bright days of his prosperity, and now, with a saddened heart and in sombre tones, speaks of his present social circumstances.

Ver. 1.—"*But now they that are younger than I have me in derision.*" It is not necessary to suppose that by the "*younger*" the patriarch means the three friends with whom he had been holding this long discussion. He speaks of his juniors about him as holding him in derision, and in no measured terms does he express his contempt for them. "*Whose fathers I would have disdained to have set with the*

dogs of my flock." As if he had said, "In my prosperous days princes and nobles paid me homage; but now, in the dark hour of my adversity, the miserable outcasts of society treat me with insolence—creatures whose parents in my palmy days offered their dogs to guard my flocks, but their offers I scorned as beneath my notice.

Ver. 2.—"*Yea, whereto might the strength of their hands profit me, in whom old age (or manly vigour) was perished?*" "Of what use was the strength of their hands to me; with them maturer age was lost." He means that the fathers of those juniors who held him in derision were creatures so weak and base that their services he disdained.

Ver. 3.—"*For want and famine they were solitary; fleeing into the wilderness in former time desolate*

and waste." Some render this verse, Who for want or famine are shrivelled up, which gnaw the desert: upon the eve of ruin and destruction. A still further description of those who treated him with insolence; he speaks of them hardened with hunger and wretchedness, retiring to the desert, there dwelling in the darkness of desolation.

Ver. 4.—“*Who cut up mallows by the bushes, and juniper roots for their meat.*” Like brutes, they ate herbage and weeds. What vegetable is referred to here is not known, nor does it matter,

Ver. 5.—“*They were driven forth from among men, (they cried after them as after a thief.)*” This is the reason why they feed in the desert, they have been driven forth from the city, and men cry after them as after a thief.

Ver. 6.—“*To dwell in the cliffs of the valleys, in caves of the earth, and in the rocks.*” Caves furnished a natural dwelling for the poor and the outcasts in ancient times; and vagrants and beggars were *Troglodites*. Hordes of *Troglodites* lived in the districts adjoining the Hauran.

Ver. 7.—“*Among the bushes they brayed; under the nettles they were gathered together.*” “*Brayed*” like the wild ass.

Ver. 8.—“*They were children of fools, yea, they were children of base men.*” The margin is, “men of no name;” that is, men of no reputation, most base and degraded. “*They were viler than the earth.*” They were driven out of the land. They rendered themselves so notorious by their crimes that they were ignominiously chased out of the country.

Ver. 9.—“*And now am I their song, yea, I am their byword.*” Job having given, with a kind of

Oriental extravagance, a description of the wretched condition of those who derided him, proceeds to narrate the sufferings he endured at their hands. He says, I have become their “*song*,” I am the subject of their satiric songs and ribald railery.

Ver. 10.—“*They abhor me, they flee far from me.*” They hate me, they shun me. “*And spare not to spit in my face.*” To spit at all in the presence of another, is in the East considered a mark of disrespect, and much more when in the face, is regarded as a mark of abhorrence.

Ver. 11.—“*Because He hath loosed my cord, and afflicted me, they have also let loose the bridle before me.*” “*Because He (God) hath loosed my string,—the string of my bow,—and afflicted me.*” “*Job had said in the preceding chapter (verse 20), that he thought the bow in his hand would renew its strength, i. e. that his authority would become more and more assured; but now he tells us that, so far from this expectation of his being realized, God has on the contrary loosened the string of his bow, i. e. has taken away his authority from him. Therefore they, those wretched men, have let loose their bridle before me. As long as I retained my authority, they were restrained by fear and awe, like horses and mules which are bridled; but now that they can insult me with impunity, they shake off all restraint, they cast away their bridle. But not only they themselves, their children also are a source of great annoyance to me.*”—*Dr. Bernard.* This is scarcely correct, though in harmony with the Septuagint and Jerome. Rather should it be rendered, “*For one looses his rope and humbles me, and they cast off the bridle before me, i. e. they allow*

themselves to beat me with the rope (that serves them for a girdle), and they take unbridled liberties against me."—*Dr. Samuel Davidson*.

Ver. 12.—"Upon my right hand rise the youth." The young brood, some read it, "the rabble presses upon my right hand!" "This rabble, constitutionally as well as morally degraded, when it comes upon Job's domain in its marauding expeditions, makes sport of the sufferer, whose former earnest admonitions, given from sympathizing anxiety for them, seemed to them as insults, for which they revenge themselves."—*Delitzsch*. "They push away my feet." Instead of making room for me in the way, they jostle against me, push against me, on the path. "And they raise up against me the ways of their destruction." "They come upon me like a wide breach, they roll upon me like a desolation."—*Wemyss*. "The figure is taken from an advancing army, that casts up ramparts and other means of attack, designed for the destruction of a besieged city. They were in like manner constantly making advances against Job, and pressing on him in a manner that was designed to destroy him."

Ver. 13.—"They mar my path." Some think there is a reference here again to war, and that the patriarch represents himself as in a line of march; the rabble comes, breaks down the hedges and tears up the

way, so that it is impossible to pass along. "They set forward my calamity, they have no helper." "They contribute to my calamity, although they gain no help from it."—*Dr. Bernard*.

Ver. 14.—"They came upon me as a wide breaking in of waters: in the desolation they rolled themselves upon me." "They come upon me as through a wide breach. That is, in great numbers, inasmuch as, in the case of a besieged city, from which the metaphor is taken, the wider the breach in its walls, the more soldiers can rush in at the same time. They roll themselves instead of a tempest. When there is a wide breach in a house, the inmates have reason to be afraid of a tempest bursting in and carrying everything away; but instead of a tempest the poet says these mischievous and malicious men rushed violently in."—*Bernard*.

Ver. 15.—"Terrors are turned upon me: they pursue my soul (my dignity) as the wind: and my welfare passeth away as a cloud." "Terrors are turned against me, are levelled against, brought to bear upon me. Every one of them (the terrors) pursueth my soul like the wind, with the violence of a raging wind. So that my safety passeth away as a cloud. Just as a raging wind makes the clouds to scud before it, so do these terrors chase away my safety."—*Bernard*.

HOMILETICS.—The subject of this chapter is again Job's sufferings, and the sufferings are described as *social*, *corporeal*, and *mental*. In these verses he gives a graphic and exciting sketch of his *social* sufferings, the sufferings that came upon him through the insolence of the base people around. Man's happiness as a social being is greatly dependent upon the kind feeling and respect which are shown to him by his contemporaries and neighbours. There are few conditions

more miserable for a man of sensitive heart than that of being placed in a neighbourhood populated only by the mean, the base, and the insolent: a neighbourhood in which, through whatever street he walked, whatever house he passed, he would meet with none but those who were morally disgusting, and who would treat him with insolence and derision. This was now the condition of Job. Of them he says: "*Now am I their song, yea, I am their byword. They abhor me, they flee far from me, and spare not to spit in my face.*"

The social insolence from which he suffers and of which he complains was marked by the following circumstances—

I. It came from the MOST CONTEMPTIBLE CHARACTERS. He regarded them as despicable in their ancestry. "*Whose fathers I would have disdained to have set with the dogs of my flock.*" They were base born. He knew their fathers, and they were to him as dogs, morally disgusting and base, utterly impotent to render him any help, so degraded that he would disdain any offer of their service. "*Yea, whereto might the strength of their hands profit me, in whom old age was perished?*" So abject that they had no home, they were solitary; so vile and wicked that they were driven from the habitations of men. "*They were driven forth from among men, (they cried after them as after a thief).*" They lived on herbs in the wilderness, and their only shelter was in the caves of the earth. They were fools, base men, viler than the earth. Such were the fathers of the mean creatures who now insulted him on all hands. Nor were they themselves less despicable than their fathers. Wretched Troglodites, uncivilized rabbles, whose talk was like the braying of the ass. "*Among the bushes they brayed.*" These were the creatures amongst whom the patriarch now lived, and whose insolence he had to endure. They had no faculty to discern or appreciate his moral worth, and were so utterly destitute of any power to compassionate distress that they treated him with a heartless cruelty and revolting insolence. Men may say that a man of his high character ought not to have allowed himself to have been pained with the conduct of such wretches, that he ought to have looked down upon

them with a stoical indifference and moral contempt, that he should have treated all their derisive speeches as the idle wind. But who has ever done so? Even Christ Himself felt the reproaches of sinners, and was not indifferent to their revilings and their sneers. "He endured their contradictions." As to their insolence—

II. It was manifested in PERSONAL ANNOYANCES. "*Now am I their song,*" he says, "*I am their byword.*" They compose satiric ballads and scream them out in his ear. Like Jeremiah, he felt that he was a "derision to all his people, and their song all the day." They shunned him, they abhorred him, they fled from him, rushed away from him as from a leper, they spat in his face—the most abhorrent insult one could offer to another. "*They push away my feet,*" they jostle against me, and by coarse violence thrust me from my pathway. "*They raise up against me the ways of their destruction. They mar my path, they set forward my calamity.*" In mobs they rushed upon him as if a breach was made in the wall, or as if a rushing flood flowed in upon him. He had not merely to endure their jibes, satiric songs, and derisive words, but acts of violence as well. What a wretched social state for a man to live in! As to their insolence, further—

III. It was shown to him on account of his PROVIDENTIAL REVERSES. Why did they treat him thus? Because he had become contemptible in character; because he had become morally base and degraded? No, if so they might have been excused, for a bad character merits contempt. But the reason was, his circumstances were changed, great prosperity had given way to overwhelming adversity. "*Because He (that is, God) hath loosed my cord, and afflicted me.*" The meaning is, that "the worthless rabble that now treated him with so much contempt, had relaxed all restraint, and they who had hitherto been under some *curb* now rushed upon him in the most unbridled manner. They had cast off all restraint arising from respect to his rank, standing, moral worth, and the dread of his power, and now treated him with every kind of indignity."

CONCLUSION.—Learn—

First: *The worthlessness of mere social fame.* Here is a man who in his prosperity was universally honoured, by the princes and nobles, the young and the old, the rich and the poor. His praises were on the lips of all. Hosanna sounded everywhere on his ears as he moved amongst men. But now that he has fallen from his high secular position, sunk down into the realm of deep poverty and sore suffering, he becomes an object of social derision. “*He is a byword and a song.*” Social fame! what is it worth? Nothing. Its breath of favour is more fickle than the wind. The social magnate at whose feet the rabble cringe and fawn to-day, will to-morrow, if adversity strike him down into the cold regions of want and obscurity, hoot at him with derision, or treat him with a heartless indifference.

“Fame! What is that, if courted for herself?
 Less than a vision; a mere sound, an echo
 That calls with mimic voice, through woods and labyrinths,
 Her cheated lovers, lost and heard by fits,
 But never fixed: a sunny nymph, yet nothing.”

Learn—

Secondly: *The moral heroism of the world's Redeemer.* Christ came into a social position far more heartless and insolent than that which the patriarch here describes. “Of the people there was none with Him, He was despised and rejected of men.” Social insolence spat in His face, mocked Him with a crown and a purple robe, wagged their heads at Him, and in derision hooted out, “Hail, King of the Jews.” Yet how did He endure it? “When He was reviled, He reviled not again.” Nay, with the insolent rabble shouting in derision around His cross, He said, “Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do.” Thus He endured the contradiction of sinners against Himself. This is heroism indeed! Such heroism as the world had never seen before, and such that the world wants in order that it may be raised and ennobled. Learn—

Thirdly: *The importance of habitual reliance on the Absolute.* Do not trust in man. Court not public favour. “Cursed is the man that trusteth in man.” Let the soul rely habitually upon those eternal principles of truth which are the foundations of that kingdom that cannot be moved; above

all, upon that God which is an immovable rock, amidst all the surging seas of change. Such habitual reliance as this is at once the imperial duty and urgent necessity for every man to cultivate. With this a man can treat all the insolence of the world as the lark in high heaven treats the barking of the miserable cur that has roused it from its little nest.

HOMILY No. LX.

JOB'S REPLY TO HIS FRIENDS IN GENERAL.

JOB'S SUFFERINGS (*Continued*).

(2.) PHYSICAL.

“*And now my soul is poured out upon me ;*” &c.—CHAP. XXX. 16-19.

EXEGETICAL REMARKS. Job, having given a sad description of the social sufferings he endured from the most contemptible creatures of his times, recommences further details of his personal afflictions.

Ver. 16.—“*And now my soul is poured out upon me.*” “Poured out within me.” Noyes tells us that the Arabs style a fearful person as one who has a watery heart, or one whose heart melts away like water. Job means, My sufferings exhaust me, my life is ebbing away. “*The days of affliction have taken hold upon me.*” The days of suffering hold me fast.

Ver. 17.—“*My bones are pierced in me in the night season.*” Translate: “The night has pierced my bones, so that they are no more in me,” *i. e.* they are dissolved, fall away from me. “And those that

gnaw upon me rest not;” the gnawing pains are incessant. — *Dr. Samuel Davidson.*

Ver. 18.—“*By the great force of my disease is my garment changed.*” Perhaps he means, that numberless ulcers, with which he was covered from head to foot, made his garments stick so firmly to his body that their removal was effected with difficulty and excruciating pain.

Ver. 19.—“*He hath cast me into the mire.*” He, that is, God, who is here poetically represented as doing that which the mourner had done to himself. “He took him a potsherd to scrape himself withal; and he sat down among the ashes” (chap. ii. 8). “*I am become like dust and ashes.*” I am in appearance become like dust and ashes.

HOMILETICS.—In these verses the patriarch sketches his great corporeal sufferings, his physical anguish. Probably man's capability of bodily suffering is greater than that of

any other animal existence. His nerves are more tender, his organization is more exquisite and complicated. Strange, that a creature made in the image of God, the spiritual offspring of the eternal Father of love, should be, of all suffering creatures of the earth, the greatest sufferer! And yet not strange; for it should be remembered that his sufferings are not ends, but means, and designed and fitted for his moral improvement and ultimate perfection. We may offer the following remarks on man's physical suffering—

I. It tends to stimulate INTELLECTUAL RESEARCH. "Pain," says a modern author, "has been the means of increasing our knowledge, our skill, and our comforts. Look to the discoveries made in science—in botany, in chemistry, in anatomy: what a knowledge have we gained of the structures and uses of plants, while we were seeking some herb to soothe pain or cure disease! What a knowledge have we gained of drugs, and salts, and earths, useful for agriculture or for the fine arts, while we have been seeking only to find an ointment or a medicine! We have sought a draught to allay the burning thirst of a fever, and we have found a dozen delicious beverages to drink for our pleasure or relief. We studied anatomy to find out the seat of disease, and how to attack it, and we found what we did not seek—a thousand wonderful works of God, a thousand most curious contrivances, most admirable delights! We found a model for the ribs of a ship; we found a pattern of a telescope in the eye; we found joints and straps, knittings and valves, which have been copied into the workshop of the mechanic and the study of the philosopher. Yes, we may thank our liability to pain for this—for if pain had not existed, who can tell whether these things would have been so soon, if at all, discovered." Pain whips the intellect into action, sends it abroad to explore the fields of natural history, botany, chemistry, &c. Suffering is advantageous to man as an intellectual being. We know of no service which it can render to the brute. It does not whet the instincts or make the faculties of its animal soul more active or vigorous.

II. It tends to heighten man's ESTIMATE OF DIVINE GOODNESS. The physical sufferings of men, however aggravated and extensive, are not the law of human life, but the exception. They are but a few discordant notes in the general harmony of his existence, a few stormy days and nights in his voyage through life. Suffering being the exception in human life, it brings out more prominently and impressively God's goodness in the general health and happiness of mankind. As the deformities in nature set off its beauties and sublimities in more striking aspects, so the evils which men endure manifest more gloriously the abundant blessings they enjoy. When we visit the asylums of the blind, are we not impressed with the wonderful goodness of God in giving sight to the millions? Or when we visit the asylums of the maniacs, are we not impressed with the goodness of God in favouring the teeming myriads of mankind with the glorious light of intelligence? We appreciate the dawning of the morning because we have struggled fiercely with difficulties in the night. We appreciate the full flow of health because we have felt the torture of disease. Inasmuch, therefore, as human suffering, which is an exception in the general life of mankind, helps to heighten our estimate of God's goodness to our race, it is anything but an unmitigated evil. Nay, it is a blessing in disguise.

III. It tends to IMPROVE OUR SPIRITUAL NATURE. Physical sufferings have led many a man to a train of spiritual reflections that have resulted in the moral salvation of the soul. Physical blindness has often led to spiritual vision, physical suffering to spiritual health. Physical suffering has called many a prodigal home from the far country to his Father's house. Sir Walter Scott has well said, that "There are those to whom a sense of religion has come in storm and tempest; and there are those whom it has summoned amid scenes of revelry and idle vanity; there are those who have heard its 'still, small voice' amid rural leisure and placid contentment. But perhaps the knowledge which cometh not to err, is most frequently impressed upon the mind during seasons of affliction; and tears are the softening showers which cause the seed of

heaven to spring and take root in the human heart." As by the chisel the sculptor brings beauty out of the marble block; as by the pruning-knife the gardener brings rich clusters from the vine; as by the bitter drug the physician brings health to his patient; as by the fire the refiner brings pure gold out of the rough ore—so by suffering, the great Father brings spiritual life, beauty, and perfection out of the soul. "Affliction," says quaint old Adams, "is a winged chariot, that mounts up the soul toward heaven."

"Each care, each ill of mortal birth,
Is sent in pitying love,
To lift the lingering heart from earth,
And speed its flight above.
And every pang that wring the breast,
And every joy that dies,
Tell us to seek a purer rest,
And trust to holier ties."—*J. Montgomery.*

HOMILY No. LXI.

JOB'S REPLY TO HIS FRIENDS IN GENERAL.

JOB'S SUFFERINGS (*Continued*).

(3.) MENTAL.

"*I cry unto Thee, and Thou dost not hear me.*" &c.—CHAP. XXX. 20-31.

GENERAL NOTE.—"This long and painful enumeration of Job's miseries comes in the right place: *after* the declaration which shows the unshaken firmness of his convictions, and his deep sense of the absolute, though unsearchable, wisdom of Him by Whom he was afflicted; and *before* his last complete vindication of his integrity. The outer gloom goes on increasing to the very end of his trial; the exposure to shame and ignominy, inward terrors, loathsome disease, unanswered prayer, certainty of near death, the

nervous system wholly prostrate; all these in their combination give him not a momentary repose, and draw from his heart reluctant, but unrestrained, complainings. Satan has had his will, he has reached within the skin (*intus et in cute*, see ch. ii. 4); and though forbidden to take the life, he has done that which was sufficient to prove the result of a mortal trial, he has made Job feel that life was gone; but with all that he has not advanced one step towards real success: the deeper the sense of God's alienation

the more earnest are Job's pleadings for a hearing: he holds fast his integrity, and far from renouncing God, only seeks His presence."—*Canon Cook*.

EXEGETICAL REMARKS. *Ver. 20.*—"I cry unto Thee, and Thou dost not hear me: I stand up, and Thou regardest me not." Standing is the reverential attitude of a suppliant before a king. Loud, earnest, and reverential as my cry is to Thee, I receive no answer. Job represents the Almighty as looking on calm and pitiless, when he stands holding out his hands in prayer.

Ver. 21.—"Thou art become cruel to me: with thy strong hand thou opposeth thyself against me." "Thou changest Thyself into a cruel being towards me: with the strength of Thy hand Thou makest war upon me."—*Delitzsch*. He considered that God had become his adversary, and set Himself against him.

Ver. 22.—"Thou liftest me up to the wind; thou causest me to ride upon it, and dissolvest my substance." The moving pillars of sand borne by the wind to the clouds, as described by travellers, perhaps Job refers to, as representing his sufferings. He is driven as a leaf before the storm.

Ver. 23.—"For I know that Thou wilt bring me to death, and to the house appointed for all living." Job speaks of the grave as the house "appointed for all living;" and so it verily is. The language seems to be that of despair.

Ver. 24.—"Howbeit He will not stretch out His hand to the grave, though they cry in His destruction." Translate: "Only,—does not one stretch out the hand in the ruin? When in ruins, does he not cry on that account?" *i. e.* when one is in

such distress of body does he not reach out his hand for help, and raise a cry for assistance.—*Dr. Samuel Davidson*.

Ver. 25.—"Did not I weep for him that was in trouble? was not my soul grieved for the poor?" "Had I been unfeeling and callous to the sufferings of others, I should have deserved all the sufferings I now endure; but it is otherwise, I have always sympathized with the sufferings of others. Have not I wept for him that was in trouble? hath not my soul wept for the needy?"—*Delitzsch*.

Ver. 26.—"When I looked for good, then evil came unto me: and when I waited for light, there came darkness." I had every reason to suppose that God would bestow His blessing upon me, and yet evil came; yet I hoped for light, and deep darkness came.

Ver. 27.—"My bowels boiled, and rested not: the days of affliction preented me." "Bowels" means the seat of emotion. His feelings were in a state of hot fermentation. The word "preented" means "going before." The day of my affliction anticipated me.

Ver. 28.—"I went mourning without the sun: I stood up, and I cried in the congregation." *Barnes* renders the verse thus: "I am black but not by the sun. I stand up and weep in the congregation." The reference is to the black state of his body, by reason of his disease, and the ashes in which he sat.

Ver. 29.—"I am a brother to dragons, and a companion to owls." Most render "dragons" and "owls" here "jackals and ostriches." "I am become a brother to jackals, and a companion of ostriches."—*Wemyss*.

Ver. 30.—"My skin is black upon me, and my bones are burned

with heat" (and falleth off me), that is, it falls from me in blackened shreds.

Ver. 31. — "My harp also is

turned to mourning, and my organ [lute] into the voice of them that weep." Cries and groans are my only music.

HOMILETICS.—Here Job depicts in bold and terrible colours his great MENTAL ANGUISH. Mental suffering is greater than bodily. The former is but the suffering of the animal; the latter is the suffering of a man. "A wounded spirit, who can bear?" The greatest bodily pains may be deadened, relieved, and all but borne away entirely by the mind, if the mind pursues a high train of thought, and feels the inspiration of holy love and celestial hope. But the body has scarcely power to relieve the mind. If the mind is smitten the man is down, and there is no human force to lift him up. We think that we can discover in these verses four elements of *mental distress*.

I. A sense of DIVINE SEVERITY. "*I cry unto Thee, and Thou dost not hear me: I stand up, and Thou regardest me not. Thou art become cruel to me: with Thy strong hand Thou opposest Thyself against me. Thou liftest me up to the wind; Thou causest me to ride upon it, and dissolvest my substance.*" As if he had said: I feel that Thou art not only indifferent to me, and hearest me not when I cry unto Thee in my anguish, but that Thou art cruel. Thy strong hand is against me; Thou dashest me about as chaff in the whirlwind. What state of mind can be more distressing than this? What feeling can carry greater anguish into the centre of the soul than the feeling that God is against it? "If God be for us, who can be against us?" But, if He is against us, who can be for us? We offer two remarks on this state of mind—

First: *It is a delusion of sin.* The Great Father of humanity is not indifferent to His children, still less cruel. Never does He lift up His hand against them, but the reverse. He is always *for* them in His sympathies, purposes, and works. He loved them with an everlasting love. He watches over them with a tenderness that is infinite, and a love that is unbounded and unconquerable. The feeling that He is against us is a delusion of sin. The truth is

the soul is against Him, not He against it. A consciousness of guilt invests the Infinite Father with the attributes of a tyrant and a foe, attributes that are foreign to His nature. The man whom you have regarded as a friend up to the present moment, you will deem an enemy to-morrow if you commit a crime against him; though he may remain unchanged, having towards you the same loving heart as ever. It is your mind that has changed towards him. So with God. It was the man who buried his one talent, and thus violated his responsibility, that said to his lord: "I knew thee that thou art an hard man, reaping where thou hast not sown, and gathering where thou hast not strawed." The man whose optic nerve is intensely inflamed, calls the sunbeam agony. The man whose brain is in a state of high irritation denounces the waves of sweetest music floating around him as torturing sounds. So the man with the guilty conscience regards Infinite Love as wrath. Another remark we offer is—

Secondly: *That it is a state to which every impenitent sinner must be reduced.* All the souls that populate hell, feel that God is against them. The smiles of His countenance are to them like scorching fire: the tones of His love are to them terrific thunder. They feel that He is against them and the universe is against them, and thus they are friendless and lost. Oh terrible delusion, this delusion of sin! God deliver us from this state of mind! Another element of *mental distress* which we discover in these verses, is—

II. A sense of HOPELESSNESS. "*For I know that Thou wilt bring me to death, and to the house appointed for all living. Howbeit He will not stretch out His hand to the grave, though they cry in His destruction.*" His feeling seems to have been, I shall never find relief, but go down to the common grave of all mankind, from whose terrible abyss God would not "*stretch out His hand*" to deliver me. When the soul loses hope, all its light goes out, its powers collapse, it sinks into midnight. Despair is misery. The loss of hope is as the giving up of the ghost. It is the separation of the soul from all in existence that is worth having. To such despair sin reduces the soul. Without hope! Is there

a greater calamity than this? Sooner let me be without property, health, friends, life itself, than without hope.

“It is sad
To see the light of beauty wane away ;
Know eyes are dimming, bosom shrivelling, feet
Losing their spring, and limbs their lily roundness.
But it is worse to feel one heart-spring gone ;
To lose hope, care not for the coming thing,
And feel all things go to decay with us,
As 'twere our life's eleventh month.”—*Bailey.*

Another element of *mental distress* which we discover in these verses is—

III. A sense of DISAPPOINTMENT. “*Did not I weep for him that was in trouble? was not my soul grieved for the poor? When I looked for good, then evil came unto me: and when I waited for light, then came darkness.*” The idea here is, that the compassion which was always paid towards the poor and distressed, led him to expect different treatment. He looked for good and waited for light, instead of which there came evil and darkness. Whilst a man should never do good from the hope of reward, it is quite natural to expect good as the result of a useful life. Job had been so generous in his dealings with mankind, so tender in his sympathies for the distressed, so ready at all times to render help to the needy and the destitute, that he was warranted in expecting a future more free from adversity and more full of enjoyment than those who lived regardless alike of the needs of men and the claims of God. But here he was sadly disappointed. Sufferings came upon him more severe, overwhelming, and crushing than perhaps upon any of his contemporaries. He was bereft of his property, his children, his health, his social status and influence, and reduced to the utmost destitution and distress. Here was disappointment. And disappointment is a leading element in mental distress. It breaks many hearts; as in the case of Job, makes the “*bowels*” boil; that is, all the fountains of sensibilities surge and scald like boiling waters. It is the tendency of sin to disappoint men, to break their purposes and frustrate their hopes. The sinner is ever expecting what he will never have. He looks for good, but evil

comes; he waits for light, but dense darkness spreads over him. He will be compelled to say with *Goldsmith*—

“Impelled with steps unceasing to pursue
Some fleeting good, that mocks me with the view,
That, like the circle bounding earth and skies,
Allures from far, yet, as I follow, flies.”

Another element of *mental distress* which we discover in these verses is—

IV. A sense of DESOLATION. “*I am a brother to dragons, and a companion to owls. My skin is black upon me, and my bones are burned with heat. My harp also is turned to mourning, and my organ into the voice of them that weep.*” He felt himself like the jackal and the ostrich in the wilderness, utterly desolate, and with his desolation his “*harp turned to mourning,*” and his “*organ into the voice of them that weep.*” “All that had been joyous with him had fled. His honour was taken away; his friends were gone; they who had treated him with reverence now stood at a distance, or treated him with contempt; his health was departed, and his former appearance, indicating a state of affluence, was changed for the dark complexion produced by disease; and the instruments of joyfulness now gave forth only notes of sorrow.”

CONCLUSION.—How can the mind be freed from these elements of distress? This is one of the great problems of the world. How can it be relieved from the sense of Divine severity, hopelessness, disappointment, desolation? There is one way, and only one, that is, *deliverance from sin*. Sin is the cause of all mental misery. It is the root of that upas tree, the taste of whose fruit is a rankling virus; the fountain of all the bitter streams that flow through human hearts. But who shall free humanity from sin? There is One, and but One—the man Christ Jesus. “He came to put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself.”

HOMILY No. LXII.

JOB'S CONCLUDING DISCOURSE.

HIS SELF-VINDICATION.

"*I made a covenant with mine eyes;*" &c.—CHAP. xxxi. 1-40.

EXEGETICAL REMARKS. In this chapter the argument, so far as Job is concerned, is closed. He speaks no more; nor do either of his three friends appear again in discussion. The patriarch here refers to his private life, and he vindicates it modestly and minutely. In (chap. xxix.) he had asserted his official virtues as emir, or magistrate; here he declares his virtues in private life. He concludes the whole series of discourses with a solemn protestation of his integrity in all relative duties. This whole discourse may be regarded as containing a complete code of patriarchal duty. It is worthy of note that no reference whatever is made to any of the religious or ethical institutions of Israel. Here he anticipates the language of Christ (Matt. xxv. 5-28).

Ver. 1.—"I made a covenant with mine eyes; why then should I think upon a maid?" Here he asserts that chastity was with him a fixed purpose.

Ver. 2.—"For what portion of God is there from above? and what inheritance of the Almighty from on high?" This verse implies his belief that had he not been pure and unclavious in purpose he could have no hope from his Maker.

Ver. 3.—"Is not destruction to the wicked? and a strange punishment to the workers of iniquity?" He means, Is there not Divine punishment for the incontinent?

Is not unchastity a sin which the Almighty will visit with sore displeasure? There is in all probability a spirit of complaint here against the Almighty. He seems to say, Though I am free from the taint of unchastity, yet the Almighty afflicts me; that has come to me which properly should have fallen on the wicked only. He avows an absolute mastery over concupiscence.

Ver. 4.—"Doth not He see my ways, and count all my steps?" It cannot be that I suffer because He does not know the purity of my life. He knows me thoroughly, sees my ways, counts my steps.

Vers. 5, 6.—"If I have walked with vanity, or if my foot hath hasted to deceit; let me be weighed in an even balance, that God may know mine integrity." Have I followed after vanity, or hath my foot hasted after deceit, let Him weigh me in just balances, and then will He know my integrity. He means perhaps this, Let God ascertain exactly my character and treat me accordingly. The language is a powerful expression of his conscious purity.

Vers. 7, 8.—"If my step hath turned out of the way, and mine heart walked after mine eyes, and if any blot hath cleaved to mine hands; then let me sow, and let another eat; yea, let my offspring be rooted out." If I had not restrained, but yielded to the lustfulness of my eyes, and any blot had

cleaved to mine hands. Then whatever I sowed another ought to have eaten. My harvest and all my produce ought to have been uprooted. How then was it, that I was blessed with such rich and abundant harvests year after year? He means to say, If I have been guilty of fraud or dishonesty in any of my dealings, let all my efforts be fruitless, all that I have sowed be rooted up.

Vers. 9, 10.—“*If mine heart have been deceived by a woman, or if I have laid wait at my neighbour's door; then let my wife grind unto another, and let others bow down upon her.*” What he means here, seems to be, If I have ever been guilty of adultery, then let mine own wife become an abject concubine. Let the same injury I have inflicted upon another man be dealt out to me.

Ver. 11.—“*For this is an heinous crime; yea, it is an iniquity to be punished by the judges.*” He regarded adultery as a most flagitious crime; and so does the word of God everywhere. In the earliest times it was a crime punished with death (Gen. xxxviii. 24).

Ver. 12.—“*For it is a fire that consumeth to destruction, and would root out all mine increase.*” This may mean that such an offence would be a crime that would provoke God to send destruction like a consuming fire upon the offender.

Vers. 13, 14.—“*If I did despise the cause of my manservant or of my maidservant, when they contended with me; what then shall I do when God riseth up? and when He visiteth, what shall I answer Him?*” That is, If I refused justice to any of my servants, what will be done to me when God appears in judgment? Here the patriarch turns from chastity and conjugal fidelity

to his conduct in relation to his servants; and by implication he declares that he had always done his domestics justice—that had he not done so he would have reason to dread the retribution of his Maker.

Ver. 15.—“*Did not He that made me in the womb make him? and did not one fashion us in the womb?*” Probably he has here an eye to what Eliphaz had said (chap. xxii. 8), “*But as for the mighty man, he had the earth; and the honourable man dwelt in it;*” implying that Job, in his prosperous days, had been haughty, selfish, and oppressive towards his inferiors.

Vers. 16-18.—“*If I have withheld the poor from their desire, or have caused the eyes of the widow to fail; or have eaten my morsel myself alone, and the fatherless hath not eaten thereof; (for from my youth he was brought up with me, as with a father, and I have guided her from my mother's womb:)*” “*If I held back the poor from what they desired, and caused the eyes of the widow to languish, and ate my morsel alone without letting the fatherless eat thereof. No, indeed, from my youth he grew up to me as to a father, and from my mother's womb I guided her.*”—*Delitzsch.* Eliphaz had charged him (chap. xxii. 6-9) with an utter disregard in the days of his prosperity of the hungry and the naked, the widow and the orphan. Against such an allegation Job here utters his strong protest.

Vers. 19-23.—“*If I have seen any perish for want of clothing, or any poor without covering; if his loins have not blessed me, and if he were not warmed with the fleece of my sheep; if I have lifted up my hand against the fatherless, when I saw my help in the gate: then let*

mine arm fall from my shoulder blade, and mine arm be broken from the bone. For destruction from God was a terror to me, and by reason of his highness I could not endure."

Dr. Bernard's rendering of this passage, and his remarks thereon, seem to me most excellent, and in every way satisfactory. "Job, having been taxed by Eliphaz with the cruel act of stripping the poor of their clothing and leaving them naked, now repels the accusation, declaring that he had ever done the contrary. He says,—*'Could I bear any one perishing without clothing, or the needy man without covering?'* (ver. 20) *'Did not his loins rather bless me, seeing that he kept himself warm with the fleece of my lambs?'* (ver. 21) *'If I had shaken mine hand against the fatherless,'*—if I had threatened him with uplifted arm,—*'because I saw my help in the gate,'*—because I was convinced the judges in the forum would side with me if any charge were brought against me, (ver. 22) *'then ought my shoulder to have fallen from my shoulder-blade, and mine arm ought to have been broken from its bone.'*—My forearm should have been severed from my upper arm. So cruel did it appear to Job even to menace a fatherless child with a blow, that he thinks the member employed in the act should at once, and without delay, by the miraculous interposition of Providence, have dropped from its body. But, if it had entered my mind to behave so cruelly towards an orphan, it would not have been the fear of punishment that the judges who sit in the gate could have assigned me, that would have deterred me, but the dread of punishment of Him who sits a Judge on high.—(ver. 23) *'Surely calamity from God was terror to me.'* The penalty

which He most certainly and most deservedly would have exacted from me—that was what deterred me,—*'And on account of His majesty I could not act so.'* I could not possibly bring myself to commit such a cowardly and dastardly act in the presence of so majestic a Being as God."

Vers. 24, 25.—*"If I have made gold my hope, or have said to the fine gold, Thou art my confidence; if I rejoiced because my wealth was great, and because mine hand had gotten much."* Eliphaz (chap. xxii. 23) had admonished Job to despise riches, and to treat gold as he would dust and pebbles. In these words the patriarch shows that such an admonition was uncalled for; he had never made gold his trust, never boasted of his possessions.

Vers 26-28. — *"If I beheld the sun when it shined, or the moon walking in brightness; and my heart hath been secretly enticed, or my mouth hath kissed my hand: this also were an iniquity to be punished by the judge: for I should have denied the God that is above."* This means, If I have worshipped the heavenly luminaries, the sun in his splendour, the moon walking in its brightness, I should have been guilty of a crime, exposing me to the punishment of the judge, "for I should have denied the God of heaven." "Sabaism (from *tsaba*, the heavenly hosts,) was the earliest form of false worship. God is hence called, in contradistinction, 'Lord of Sabaoth.' The sun, moon, and stars, the brightest objects in nature, and seen everywhere, were supposed to be visible representatives of the invisible God. They had no temples, but were worshipped on high places and roofs of houses (Ezek. viii. 16; Deut. iv. 19; 2 Kings xxiii. 5-11). The Hebrew

(שֶׁן) here for 'sun' is *light*, which was worshipped as the emanation from God before its embodiments, the sun, &c. This worship prevailed in Chaldea; wherefore Job's exemption from the idolatry of his neighbours was the more exemplary. Our 'Sunday, Monday,' or 'Monday,' bear traces of Sabaism."—*Faussett*. See also some excellent remarks on idolatrous practices in Job's day by *Wemyss*.

Vers. 29-31.—"If I rejoiced at the destruction of him that hated me, or lifted up myself when evil found him: neither have I suffered my mouth to sin by wishing a curse to his soul. If the men of my tabernacle said not, Oh that we had of his flesh! we cannot be satisfied." In chapter viii. 22, Bildad, in offering consolation, had held out to Job the hope that he would see his enemies reduced to shame and confusion. Perhaps the patriarch alludes to this now, in asserting that he had never rejoiced in the destruction of his enemies. Nay, had never even suffered his mouth to sin by imprecating a curse on them. And all this notwithstanding the wish of his domestics,—the men of my tabernacle,—who said, "Oh that we had of his flesh!" that is, the flesh of his enemy, "we cannot be satisfied." "Did not the inmates of my tent say, 'All that we had of his'—that is, the enemy's—the flesh, 'we could not be satisfied with it'?" Our hatred of him is so great, that we could never tire of eating his flesh."—*Dr. Bernard*.

Ver. 32.—"The stranger did not lodge in the street: but I opened my doors to the traveller." Here again he avows his hospitality even to strangers. "My doors I open to the traveller."

Vers. 33, 34.—"If I covered my transgressions as Adam [margin

"after the manner of men"], by hiding mine iniquity in my bosom: did I fear a great multitude, or did the contempt of families terrify me, that I kept silence, and went not out of the door?" *Noyes, Bernard*, and others adopt the marginal rendering, meaning, "as men are generally wont to do."—*Dr. Samuel Davidson*. Eliphaz (chap. xv. 5) had charged Job with insincerity; and probably the language here is intended as a protest against this allegation. Job means to say, that he could not be a hypocrite, that his nature was to be frank and open; that neither the manner of men, the dread of the multitude, nor the contempt of families, could, induce him to be anything but frank and open.

Vers. 35, 36.—"Oh that one would hear me! behold, my desire is, that the Almighty would answer me, and that mine adversary had written a book. Surely I would take it upon my shoulder, and bind it as a crown to me." "Oh that I had one who would hear me, behold my signature, the Almighty would answer me and the writing which my opponent hath written."—*Delitzsch*. The wish here Job had already frequently expressed; so profoundly conscious was he of his innocence, that he earnestly desired the Almighty to write down all the charges that were brought against him, and to have the matter settled. If he had those charges written down, he would so value the document that he would carry it on his shoulders and bind it as a diadem. "So confident am I that the history of my life, even though written by my adversary himself, would prove me innocent, that I will on no account let the book go. Nay, I will carry it about with me, and make it my glory and my boast."

Ver. 37.—“*I would declare unto him the number of my steps; as a prince would I go near unto him.*” So conscious am I of my integrity, that I will appear before my judge in no cringing, crouching spirit, but in the calm dignity of a prince.

Vers. 38-40.—“*If my land cry against me, or that the furrows likewise thereof complain* [margin, “weep”]; *if I have eaten the fruits* [margin, “strength”] *thereof without money, or have caused the owners thereof to lose their life* [margin, “caused the soul of the owners thereof to expire, or breathe

out”]; *let thistles grow instead of wheat, and cockle* [margin, “noisome weeds”] *instead of barley.* *The words of Job are ended.*” What the patriarch seems to mean here is this,—his dealings would bear the strictest scrutiny, that all his possessions had been lawfully and honourably acquired, that he had never injured any man. “*The words of Job are ended.*” That is, the words he addressed to his friends, his controversy with them, was over. When we find him speaking again, it will not be to men, but to God.

HOMILETICS.—In this chapter, in which “*the words of Job are ended,*” the patriarch labours earnestly and hard, and we think with success, to vindicate his character against all the allegations that had been brought against him. And in his vindications he gives us a further insight into his morality and theology.

This chapter gives an insight into the patriarch’s MORALITY. We learn from it—

I. His THEORY of morality. We observe that his theory implies three great facts—

First: That all moral conduct, whether good or bad, is to be determined by the *will of God*. Throughout the whole of this discourse he describes his own conduct, deprecates vices, and claims virtues, all with an eye to the Supreme. He says, “*What portion of God is there from above?*” &c. “*Doth not He see my ways, and count all my steps?*” &c. “*What then shall I do when God riseth up?*” &c. Such utterances show how profoundly he felt that God was the Judge of moral character. Herein he was both scientific and evangelical. Moral character apart from God can have no existence, for His being is at once the foundation, and His will the standard, of all moral actions. His theory of morality implies—

Secondly: That moral conduct includes *states of mind* as well as *overt acts*. “*Why then should I think upon a maid?*”

&c. "If my foot hath hasted to deceit," &c. "If mine heart walked after mine eyes," &c. "If I did despise the cause of my manservant," &c. "If I have made gold my hope," &c. "If I rejoiced because my wealth was great," &c. "If mine heart hath been secretly enticed," &c. "If I rejoiced at the destruction of him that hated me," &c. Here are *mental* states, and to these states he attached a moral quality. Herein, his theory of morality agrees with the conclusions of reason and the teachings of Christ, Who traced both vice and virtue to states of mind as their root and fount. God holds a man responsible, not only for what he does *by* the body, but what he does *in* the body as well. All the elements of moral character are generated silently and unseen in the heart. His theory of morality implies—

Thirdly: That all moral conduct must be *followed by retribution*. "Is not destruction to the wicked?" &c. "What then shall I do when God riseth up?" Retribution follows all moral conduct as the tides follow the moon. "Be sure your sin will find you out." Where did he get this *theory* of morality, so true, so rational, so Divine? Christ had not come: the sermon on the Mount had not been preached, nor had the law gone forth in thunder from Sinai, and he lived outside, both as regards space and time, of that Hebrew sphere where kind Heaven gave its special revelations both of duty and doctrine. There is a light of nature by which men can learn their obligations, and in which some have learnt them and discharged them too. Ignorance and its sister bigotry damn the millions who have not a special revelation from God, as morally benighted and lost. Plato, Confucius, Socrates, Seneca, &c., are all accursed. We learn from this chapter—

II. His PRACTICE of morality. Most solemnly does he deprecate and deny on his own behalf any immorality in relation to several things—

First: In relation to *women*. "I made a covenant with mine eyes; why then should I think upon a maid?" Again, "If mine heart have been deceived by a woman, or if I have laid wait at my neighbour's door; then let my wife grind unto another, and let others bow down upon her." How he

denounces all unchaste feeling, and adulterous desires as well as acts. He pronounces such to be an "*iniquity to be punished by the judges*," and declares that all such conduct is "*a fire that consumeth to destruction*." Lasciviousness is ruinous both to the mental and physical constitution.

Most solemnly does he deprecate and deny on his own behalf any immorality—

Secondly : In relation to *his servants*. "*If I did despise the cause of my manservant or of my maidservant, when they contended with me ; what then shall I do when God riseth up ? . . . Did not He that made me in the womb make him ? and did not one fashion us in the womb ?*" Here he declares—(1) That he always dealt fairly with his servants. Never despised their just claims, but listened with candour to their grievances, allowed them to contend with him when they had a case, or thought they had one. (2) He regarded them as having the same nature as himself. "*Did not He that made me in the womb make him ? and did not one fashion us in the womb ?*" "God hath made of one blood all nations of men." The haughty aristocrat and the imperial despot treat menials as if they were of a lower origin and inferior mould : hence slavery. But Job belonged to that high race of humanity which honour all men as the offspring of a common Father, and partakers of a common nature. Most solemnly does he deprecate and deny on his own behalf any immorality—

Thirdly : In relation to *the poor*. "*If I have withheld the poor from their desire, or have caused the eyes of the widow to fail ; or have eaten my morsel myself alone, and the fatherless hath not eaten thereof,*" &c. Job regarded practical commiseration for the poor as a moral obligation, not as a mere question of option, as Christians too often do. He regarded the neglect of the claims of the poor as one of the foulest crimes, hence he says, "*If I have not done so, let mine arm fall from my shoulder blade, and mine arm be broken from the bone.*" God says, "Thou shalt open thine hand wide to thy brethren, to the poor and the needy in the land." How few in Christian England obey this command ! Were our landlords, our nobles, our rulers to attend to this, how little pauperism there would be ! Its very existence in our land

demonstrates that our Christianity to a great extent is but an empty profession, an impious sham. Most solemnly does he deprecate and deny on his own behalf any immorality—

Fourthly : In relation to *objects of worship*. He disclaims any worship of—(1) His *property*. “*If I have made gold my hope, or have said to the fine gold, Thou art my confidence ; if I rejoiced because my wealth was great, and because mine hand hath gotten much.*” He had no mercenary feeling, no sordid love. Wealth was no idol of his, he was no worshipper of mammon. Is not the god that this old patriarch disclaims the popular god of Christendom ? Do not the majority of Englishmen kneel at the altar of, and pour out their souls before, mammon ? He disclaims any worship of—(2) *Natural objects*. “*If I beheld the sun when it shined, or the moon walking in brightness ; and my heart hath been secretly enticed, or my mouth hath kissed my hand.*” If a man could be justified for worshipping any material object in the universe short of God, it would be the sun—central, mighty, imperial, refulgent, the life-generator of worlds. But Job deprecates such worship, and denies that he had ever been guilty of it. His heart was never “*enticed*” to it in worship, neither did he kiss his hand to it in homage. Most solemnly does he deprecate and deny on his own behalf any immorality—

Fifthly : In relation to his *enemies*. “*If I rejoiced at the destruction of him that hated me, or lifted up myself when evil found him : neither have I suffered my mouth to sin by wishing a curse to his soul. If the men of my tabernacle said not, Oh that we had of his flesh ! we cannot be satisfied.*” He had no revenge, he did not return evil for evil, he did not curse his enemies. How far professed Christians fall below the old patriarch in this respect ! They shun their enemies, often treat them with contempt, and sometimes wreak vengeance on their heads. They have no sense of the obligation to bless them. This is the “*new commandment*” which they outrage, but which this old patriarch, who lived 5000 years ago, in a land without any special revelation, practically recognized as binding. Most solemnly does he deprecate and deny on his own behalf any immorality—

Sixthly : In relation to *strangers*. “*The stranger did not*

lodge in the street: but I opened my doors to the traveller." He recognizes the obligation of being kind and hospitable to men from other regions, and with whom he had no acquaintance—the strange wayfarer. He felt it his duty to supply their necessities to the extent of his ability; hospitality to strangers he practised, in common with all the good men of patriarchal times. We, forsooth, living in the meridian of the Christian dispensation, have no practical sense of duty on this question; and yet how clearly it is the law of God, and how strongly and frequently it was enforced by Christ. "Be not forgetful to entertain strangers: for thereby some have entertained angels unawares." Most solemnly does he deprecate and deny on his own behalf any immorality—

Seventhly: In relation to *hypocrisy*. "*If I covered my transgressions (like people in general) as Adam, by hiding mine iniquity in my bosom: did I fear a great multitude, or did the contempt of families terrify me, that I kept silence, and went not out of the door?*" He means to say, that if, after the manner of men, I have endeavoured to misrepresent myself, make myself appear better than I am, then let me be confounded before the great multitude. Let me never show my face nor speak a word any more. As a still stronger proof of his sincerity, he exclaims, "*Oh that one would hear me! behold, my desire is, that the Almighty would answer me, and that mine adversary had written a book. Surely I would take it upon my shoulder, and bind it as a crown to me. I would declare unto him the number of my steps; as a prince would I go near unto him.*" He appeals to Omniscience as his Judge, and challenges his adversary to write a book, and to make any charges he has against him on this score. Of such a book he would not be ashamed, but would carry it about with him, he would go with it with the calmness of a prince, with the serene majesty of conscious innocence. "It must be remembered," says a modern expositor, "that all this is said with reference to the charges which had been brought against him by his friends, and not as claiming absolute perfection. He was accused of gross hypocrisy, and it was maintained that he was suffering the judicial infliction of Heaven on account of that. So far as those

charges were concerned he now says that he could go before God with the firm and elastic tread of a prince, with entire cheerfulness and boldness. We are not, however, to suppose that he did not regard himself as having the common infirmities of our fallen nature. The discussion does not turn at all on that point." Most solemnly does he deprecate and deny on his own behalf any immorality—

Eighthly : In relation to his conduct as a *land proprietor*. "*If my land cry against me, or that the furrows likewise thereof complain; if I have eaten the fruits thereof without money, or have caused the owners thereof to lose their life: let thistles grow instead of wheat, and cockle instead of barley.*" He declares he had not taken possession of any man's land by violence, nor had he cultivated it without paying for its use, so that it could not, metaphorically, cry out against him. Had he done so, he desires that on his own soil there should spring up thistles instead of wheat, and cockle instead of barley. Such is the insight we have into Job's morality—both his morality in theory and his morality in practice. His theory astonishes us at his advanced intelligence, an ethical intelligence touching even the Christian point; and his practice, as solemnly avowed by himself, commends him to our highest esteem as an upright man, "one that feared God and eschewed evil."

CONCLUSION.—The words of *Delitzsch* may be quoted as a judicious summary of the whole chapter. "The poet allows us to gain a clear insight into that state of his hero's heart and also of his house which was well-pleasing to God. Not merely outward—adultery, even the adulterous look; not merely the unjust acquisition of property and goods, but even the confidence of the heart in such things; not merely the shame of an open adoration of idols, but even the side glance of the heart after them, is accounted by him as condemnatory. He has not merely guarded himself from using sinful curses against his enemies, but he has also not rejoiced when misfortune overtook them. As to his servants, even when he has had a dispute with any of them, he has not forgotten that master and servants, without distinction of birth, are creatures of one God. Towards orphans, from

early youth onwards he has practised such tender love as if he were their father; towards widows, as if he were their son. With the hungry he has shared his bread, with the naked his clothes; his subordinates had no reason to complain of niggardly sustenance; his door always stood open hospitably to the stranger; and, as the two final strophes affirm, he has not hedged in any secret sin, anxious only not to appear as a sinner openly, and has not drawn forth wailings and tears from the ground which he cultivated by avarice and oppressive injustice. Who does not here recognize a righteousness of life and endeavour, the final aim of which is purity of heart, and which in its relation to man flows forth in that love which is the fulfilling of the law? The righteousness of which Job (ch. xxix. 14) says he has put on like a garment, is essentially the same as that which the New Testament Preacher on the Mount enjoins."

HOMILY No. LXIII.

THE FIRST SPEECH OF ELIHU.

(1.) CONTROVERSY, INDIGNATION, AND AGE.

"So these three men," &c.—CHAP. xxxii. 1-7.

GENERAL NOTE.—A new interlocutor now appears on the scene. Job's three friends are silenced, and he himself argues no more with them. Elihu, a young man who seems to have heard all the discussion, comes and delivers himself on a subject which his predecessors had scarcely or at all touched, namely, that God's chastisements have a loving purpose. His address extends to the close of the thirty-seventh chapter. All that we know of Elihu is contained here. He was

a young man gifted with genius of high order, and profoundly interested in questions pertaining to the character and procedure of the Almighty.

EXEGETICAL REMARKS. *Ver. 1.* —"*So these three men ceased to answer Job, because he was righteous in his own eyes.*" They had said perhaps all that they had to say, and it may be they were put a little out of temper with Job's self-vindication.

Ver. 2.—“*Then was kindled the wrath of Elihu the son of Barachel the Buzite, of the kindred of Ram: against Job was his wrath kindled, because he justified himself rather than God.*” The name Elihu signifies, “Whose God is He?” He is my God. His father’s name is here given—Barachel the Buzite. Barachel means, “God blesses.” The names of father and son suggest that they were of pious family. The designation of the “Buzite” has been thought to indicate his relationship to Buz, one of the sons of Milcah (Gen. xxii. 21). This young man seemed to be of a somewhat choleric temper. Job’s self-vindication filled him with indignation; the wrath, or anger, of Elihu was “kindled.”

Ver. 3.—“*Also against his three friends was his wrath kindled, because they had found no answer, and yet had condemned Job.*” Was it because these three friends represented Job as a fool, sinner, tyrant, sceptic, and a heretic? (chaps.

v. 2; xi. 6; xxii. 5, 6; ix. 12, 14; xv. 5). Probably so.

Vers. 4, 5.—“*Now Elihu had waited till Job had spoken, because they were elder than he. When Elihu saw that there was no answer in the mouth of these three men, then his wrath was kindled.*” Out of respect to those who had spoken, all of whom were older than he, he awaited.

Ver. 6.—“*And Elihu the son of Barachel the Buzite answered and said, I am young, and ye are very old; wherefore I was afraid, and durst not shew you mine opinion.*” Though it would seem he had formed strong convictions upon the debate, his reverence for age restrained him from speech, and he all but sank into silence.

Ver. 7.—“*I said, Days should speak, and multitude of years should teach wisdom.*” “I thought days ought to speak.” “It is,” says an expositor, “one of our marks of vanity, when respect is not shown to the sentiments of the aged.”

HOMILETICS.—“The opinion of the best Hebrew scholars is, that the speech of Elihu proceeds from a later writer than the author of the rest of the book.”—*Dr. Samuel Davidson*. This matters not. His words may be justly regarded as suggesting and illustrating great truths of universal application. And certainly no homiletical treatment of the Book of Job would be considered complete without thoughtful attention to the remarkable deliverance of this confessedly highly-gifted young man. We have three things in these words worthy of a little attention:—*Religious controversy issuing in utter failure; indignation springing from zeal for God; and reverence for age restraining the speech of youth.* We have here—

I. RELIGIOUS CONTROVERSY ISSUING IN UTTER FAILURE. Long was the controversy of Job and his three friends, hot was their spirit, and varied the arguments employed on both

sides. But what was the result? Neither party was convinced. Each retained its own views. The disputants equipped, marshalled, and sent forth their opinions into the conflict; but though they had been beaten about, and often struck to the ground, the authors took them back into their tent and felt them to be as strong as ever. Whilst disputants seldom convince each other, they generally generate a mutual feeling of dislike and hostility. Polemics have proved the greatest hindrance and the greatest curse to the cause of truth.

“Disagreement,” says *F. W. Robertson*, “is refreshing when two men lovingly desire to compare their views, to find out truth. Controversy is wretched when it is an attempt to prove one another wrong. Therefore Christ would not *argue* with Pilate. Religious controversy does only harm. It destroys the humble inquiry after truth; it throws all the energies into an attempt to prove ourselves right. In that disparaging spirit no man gets at truth. ‘The meek will He guide in judgment.’ The only effective way to clear the atmosphere of religious errors, is to stir it with the breath and brighten it with the beams of Divine truth. Bring out the truth, regardless of men’s opinions.” “As those wines,” says *Lord Bacon*, “which flow from the first treading of the grape are sweeter and better than those forced out by the press, which gives them roughness of the husk and the stone, so are those doctrines best and sweetest which flow from a gentle crush of the Scriptures, and are not wrung into controversies and common-places.” We have here—

II. INDIGNATION TOWARDS MEN SPRINGING FROM ZEAL FOR GOD. “*Then was kindled the wrath of Elihu . . . against Job was his wrath kindled, because he justified himself rather than God. Also against his three friends was his wrath kindled.*” This young man was indignant with the disputants all round, indignant not only with Job but his three friends also. Why? Not because they had injured him, but because their opinions concerning God’s character and procedure did not agree with his. Such indignation, alas! has always been prevalent in the so-called “Religious World.” Men in all

ages have hated their fellow-creatures because their opinions concerning God tally not with their own. The *odium theologicum* has from all times been one of the savage devils of humanity. How *arrogant* is this! To treat our own views as infallible is the spirit of Popery, and the soul of all religious despotism. How *impious* is this! Does the Almighty require us to fight with our fellow-men for His sake? A zeal for God which kindles within us an indignation towards our fellow-men, is a *false zeal*—a zeal abhorrent to the Divine nature. How *inhuman* is this! As all men differ not only in kind and measure of faculty, but in educational progress and stand-points of observation, diversity of opinion is essential to the race. It is inhuman therefore to be indignant with another on account of his opinions. It turns brethren into persecutors, and causes men, instead of ministering to each other's good, to construe tracks and gibbets, hollow out dungeons, forge fetters, and kindle up the fires of martyrdom. We have here—

III. REVERENCE FOR AGE RESTRAINING THE SPEECH OF YOUTH. “*I am young, and ye are very old; wherefore I was afraid, and durst not show you mine opinion. I said, Days should speak, and multitude of years should teach wisdom.*” Here this young man appears in a far more interesting aspect—an aspect most becoming and commendable. He manifests—First: *A sense of his theological inferiority arising from his youthhood.* He seems to have been free from that pert and self-conceited spirit so common in the young, and which is evermore forward and flippant in speech. So suspicious of his own opinions of the matters in debate was he, that he speaks not until all was silent. He manifests—Secondly: *A deference for the judgment of his seniors.* “*I said, Days should speak.*” Age gives a man great advantage in judging things. There is no school like the school of experience—a school where the lessons are burnt into a man's soul. “The aged,” says a modern writer, “have had an opportunity of long observation. They have conversed much with men. They have seen the results of certain courses of conduct, and they have arrived at a period of life when they can look at the reality of

things, and are uninfluenced now by passion. Returning respect for the sentiments of the aged, attention to their counsels, veneration for their persons, and deference for them when they speak, would be an indication of advancement in society in modern times ; and there is scarcely anything in which we have deteriorated from the simplicity of early ages, or in which we fall behind the Oriental world, so much as in the want of this." "The eye of age," says *Longfellow*, "looks meek into my heart! The voice of age echoes mournfully through it! The hoary head and palsied hand of age plead irresistibly for its sympathies. I venerate old age, and I love not the man who can look without emotion upon the sunset of life, when the dusk of evening begins to gather over the watery eyes, and the shadows of twilight grow broader and deeper upon the understanding."

HOMILY No. LXIV.

THE FIRST SPEECH OF ELIHU.

(2.) A YOUNG PREACHER JUSTIFYING HIS MISSION.

"*But there is a spirit in man:*" &c.—CHAP. xxxii. 8-22.

EXEGETICAL REMARKS. *Ver. 8.* —"*But there is a spirit in man:*" &c. Some render the words thus: "Truly it is the spirit of man and breath of God that giveth him understanding." The spirit here, man's rational and moral nature, is understood ; and on account of that the speaker claims inspiration. Perhaps he means to say, that the source of wisdom is not from without, but from within—not outward experience, but inward inspiration.

Ver. 9.—"Great men are not always wise: neither do the aged understand judgment." The word "judgment" should have been

translated *justice* or *right*. What he means is, that men's judgment is not to be taken as just and right because they are advanced in years.

Ver. 10.—"Therefore I said, Hearken to me; I also will show mine opinion." Because aged men are not always wise, he feels justified in giving his opinion, and claims Job's attention to his utterance.

Ver. 11.—"Behold, I waited for your words; I gave ear to your reasons, whilst ye searched out what to say." It would seem from this that Elihu had been present during the whole discussion, that he had heard

the argument carried on between Job and his friends from its commencement to its close. He means to say, I was in no hurry to come forward; though I differed from what was said, I waited to the end and have sifted the arguments.

Ver. 12.—“*Yea, I attended unto you, and, behold, there was none of you that convinced Job, or that answered his words.*” “As you have none of you been able to convict Job of any of the enormous crimes you imputed to him, his complaints and pleadings have remained totally unanswered by you, whose arguments, based upon the supposition that he fully deserved the punishments that have been inflicted on him,—a supposition entirely unwarranted,—could not do otherwise than fall to the ground.”—*Bernard*.

Ver. 13.—“*Lest ye should say, We have found out wisdom: God thrusteth him down, not man.*” Having thus paid a tribute of respect to the age of the three friends,—whom he is about to oppose,—he proceeds to show that he fully perceives the drift of their arguments, and that he cannot approve of them. Therefore, lest they should conclude from his silence that he approves of what they have said, he resolves to speak. It may be remarked some have questioned the connection of this verse with the context.

Ver. 14.—“*Now he hath not directed his words against me: neither will I answer him with your speeches.*” The idea is, as Job has not ordered his words against me, I approach the subject dispassionately and without prejudice, and I shall not answer him with your speeches. Perhaps, however, he means to say that as Job’s argument had not touched the position which he intended to take, and the other speakers had not employed

the arguments he was about to use, he felt himself justified in speaking.

Ver. 15.—“*They were amazed, they answered no more: they left off speaking.*” Here Elihu passes from the second to the third person, turns from the friends of Job to Job himself.

Ver. 16.—“*When I had waited, (for they spake not, but stood still, and answered no more.)*” Here he expresses his disappointment at their silence.

Ver. 17.—“*I said, I will answer also my part, I also will show mine opinion.*” Since they are silent, I feel I have not only a right to speak, but am bound to show my opinion.

Ver. 18.—“*For I am full of matter, the spirit within me constraineth me.*” I have been silent, not because I have nothing to say, for I am full of matter or words, I have a great deal to say, and the spirit within me constrains me to speak.

Ver. 19.—“*Behold, my belly is as wine which hath no vent; it is ready to burst like new bottles.*” Just as wine, when allowed to ferment in a cask or other vessel which has no vent-hole, may be expected to burst that vessel’s walls, so does the subject I have to speak upon ferment and work within me. It is ready to burst like new bottles. These would be more likely to burst than old bottles, because new wine would be put into new bottles, as we read in Matt. ix. 17. “By bottles, here as well as in Matthew, of course, leathern bottles or wine skins must be understood.”—*Bernard*. *Umbreit* and some others have regarded Elihu as a vain and self-conceited young man on account of such an utterance as this; but what man of fertile mind and strong convictions has not often experi-

enced a fulness of sentiment within that grew almost to irrepressibility?

Ver. 20.—“*I will speak, that I may be refreshed: I will open my lips and answer.*” I will speak that I may breathe.—*Margin.* As if he felt that the sentiments within him were such a burden as to prevent free respiration.

Vers. 21, 22.—“*Let me not, I pray you, accept any man's person, neither let me give flattering titles unto man. For I know not to give flattering titles; in so doing my*

Maker would soon take me away.” “I will not now accept the person of any man, neither will I use bland words to any man. For I know not how to use bland words; my Maker will almost have to forgive it me. No one can charge me with ever having used bland and flattering words to any one who required correction: my tendency lies toward the other extreme, so that God may perhaps find fault with me for conveying my correction in too frank and open a manner.”—*Bernard.*

HOMILETICS.—In these words we have the picture of a *young* preacher justifying his mission. Whether Elihu is a character fictitious, or historic, whether his doctrines and character are in perfect accord with truth and right or not, in either case we are justified in taking his utterances for what they are worth, and turning them to the best spiritual account. It is certain that, in the passage before us, he appears as a young preacher, discoursing on the character and procedure of God, and propounding good reasons to justify the work he had undertaken. The reasons he here assigns are quite sufficient to justify any young man in his endeavours to preach truth to his fellow-men. There are five reasons here—

I. A CONSCIOUSNESS OF POSSESSING, IN COMMON WITH ALL MEN, A GOD-INSPIRED SPIRIT. “*There is a spirit in man.*”

First: There is a *spirit in man*. A rational, accountable, undying personality. This is a fact too universally accepted to justify formal argument in its support, a fact attested by scientific induction, the consciousness of every man, and the word of God. Elihu is not only conscious of a spirit within him, but feels that that spirit is from God. Many theories as to the origin of the human soul have prevailed in the world, and still prevail. There is the theory of *emanation*. There is one Infinite Spirit, and all other spirits are but emanations from that, parts of it, separate only from it for a little while, to be lost in it again as rivers are lost in the

ocean. All finite souls are like the waters rising from the sea, passing into clouds, rolling over the land, and returning back to the sea again. There is the theory of *pre-existence*, either in a higher or a lower state. Some, holding this theory, say that the soul came down from a higher life; others, that it has risen from lower forms of being. Another theory, is that of *creation*. Every new soul is a new creation. This is called the theory of *insufflation*, because it affirms that God immediately breathes a new soul into every new being. Another theory, is that of *traduction*. This theory maintains that all souls have been transmitted from Adam in the way of generation. Another theory, is that of *fulguration*. It states that the germs of all souls were created with all the particles of matter, and that those particles so crowd the atmosphere that they are flashed with the first breath into the child. All these theories are profoundly interesting for thought. But it is not for us to discuss them here.

Secondly: This spirit is *Divinely inspired*. "*The inspiration of the Almighty giveth them understanding.*" It has within it primitive beliefs, moral intuitions, the eternal rudiments of all theology and moral law. These elements of Divine truth come not into the soul by education or by personal thought and culture: God put them there. They are inbred, not imported; they are not like lamps ignited by human hands, but like the fixed stars, kindled by Heaven and burning on for ever. All men have this spirit within them. Hence all men are equally near to God, equally close to the Fountain of all truth: the pauper as near as the primate. Hence, too, the implied conclusion of Elihu, that he has a right to speak on moral subjects. Because the youngest and the poorest man has this spirit within him, he has as much right to form and to express convictions on the great questions of duty and destiny as the highest hierarch in Christendom. This seems to have been Elihu's conviction, and herein he was right.* It is blasphemous presumption for any man to pretend to give another licence to speak in God's name.

* See *Homilist*, Fourth Series, vol. iii., p. 1.

Another reason here is—

II. AN IMPRESSION THAT AGE DOES NOT NECESSARILY BRING WISDOM. “*Great men are not always wise ; neither do the aged understand judgment.*” If it were found that in proportion to a man’s age would be his wisdom, that the more years added to his life the more true ideas would be added to his intelligence, it would be presumption for the young to speak in his presence. But, alas! it is not so. There are old fools. The men (and they are the vast majority in all ages) who pass through youth and neglect to lay the foundation of knowledge and to cultivate the faculties for building up the temple of science within, are certain to become more stupid in intellect and more intensely dark in soul as years pass away. Hence the impression of Elihu was a right one, that he, though young, should speak. How often have we heard it said that young men have no right to lecture their elders. If their seniors were more enlightened, their prelections would be impertinent and incongruous as well as worthless. But it is not always so, nor even generally so. Where there have been no studious habits, years contract men’s faculties, narrow and darken their mental horizons. Hence in England to-day there are hundreds of young men, men of culture, men of intelligence and devotion, who are not only competent but are Divinely authorized to preach, not only to the aged who have received no early education, but even to the aged who have passed national grammar-schools and universities. “*Great men are not always wise ; neither do the aged understand judgment.*” Hence let young men of intelligence and morality preach even to the aged who are less virtuous and informed. For this reason Elihu did. “*Therefore I said, Hearken to me ; I also will show mine opinion.*”

Another reason here is—

III. A CONVICTION THAT RELIGIOUS TEACHERS DO NOT ALWAYS SAY WHAT REQUIRES TO BE SAID. “*Behold, I waited for your words ; I gave ear to your reasons, whilst ye searched out what to say. Yea, I attended unto you, and, behold, there was none of you that convinced Job, or that answered his words.*”

He had heard all that the three religious friends had to say, and all that Job, the just and upright man, had to offer in reply. He had expected something else from them. "*When I had waited, (for they spake not, but stood still, and answered no more ;) I said, I will answer also my part, I also will shew mine opinion.*" He was not like some of the modern critics of the pulpit, who denounce religious ministrations without a calm inquiry into its nature and impartial judgment as to its merits, who,—because there is much ritualistic tawdry, morbid superstition, pietistic cant, and vulgar blasphemy connected with the pulpit,—condemn the whole as so much rubbish, and take no account of the teaching of our Arnolds, Fosters, Robertsons, and Morrisons. This Elihu heard the whole out to the end, each speech of each speaker, until they had nothing more to say, and then, feeling the deficiency, says, "*I will show you mine opinion.*" I will not repeat what you have said. I will not "*answer him with your speeches.*" I will not repeat your utterances. I will speak out my own convictions. I have something to say that you have not said, that ought to be said, and that something I feel bound to speak. Now, the man, however young, who has got such a conviction as this, is certainly justified, by his own conscience anyhow, in addressing others, even his seniors, about the things of God. God knows that there is much that requires to be said about the great spiritual realities and responsibilities of being, which the modern pulpit does not say. Let young men of genius, conscience, and grace mark the deficiency and stand up, and hungry souls will gather in crowds around them to be fed.

Another reason is—

IV. A CONSCIOUS FULNESS OF RELIGIOUS IDEAS STRUGGLING FOR UTTERANCE. "*For I am full of matter, the spirit within me constraineth me. Behold, my belly is as wine which hath no vent; it is ready to burst like new bottles.*" There are men,—confessedly few in every age,—whose spiritual nature is so fertile, that, as they think, thoughts on religious subjects come crowding into their heart, and mightily struggle for utterance. While they "*muse, the fire burns,*" and with volcanic force breaks through the mountains of con-

ventional thought. Jeremiah was one of those men. "I will speak no more in His name," he exclaimed. "But His word was in mine heart as a burning fire shut up in my bones, and I was weary with forbearing, and I could not stay." So Peter and John, when they stood before the Sanhedrim, said, "We cannot but speak the things which we have seen and heard." When a man's religious thoughts thus swell and surge within him, however young he may be, he is justified in speaking; nay, is bound to speak. "Necessity is laid" upon him. It may be questioned as to whether any man who has not this spiritually fertile nature is justified in preaching, or whether any man, however fertile in thought, is justified only when he is full to irrepressibility. Modern sermons are to a great extent mere manufacture, compositions often carefully and elaborately prepared, containing the extinct dogmas of other men. What a contrast between the conventional and the genuine preacher, the man of verbal composition and the man of vehement thought, the empty-minded and the full-minded preacher. The former is always the most showy and sounding. Yesterday, sitting in an arbour in my garden near to a fountain and a pond, I heard for some minutes a roaring sound in the water-pipes. This noise subsided, when the water came up to the aperture and flowed down in liquid music to the pond. The noise was the noise of emptiness; the delicious music which silenced and superseded it, was the vibration of the vital spray. It is so with the preacher: emptiness roars in thunder, fulness rolls with musical serenity in the deep and living stream.

The other reason is—

V. A HIGH-MINDED INDIFFERENCE TO THE FROWNS OR FAVOURS OF MEN. "*Let me not, I pray you, accept any man's person, neither let me give flattering titles unto man. For I know not to give flattering titles; in so doing my Maker would soon take me away.*" The meaning is, may I never flatter men, for in a little while my Maker will bear me away. A man who is full of irrepressible truth has but little respect for the accidental distinctions of society. Kings, to a great soul, are not greater than beggars. Empty minds magnify

adventive distinctions, full souls minify them into nothingness. The smaller the soul, the greater the flatterer and the sycophant. "Flattering titles!" Ah me! how preachers have used these. The fawning sycophancy of some of the old preachers, Anglican and Puritanic, as expressed in the dedications of some of their books, is in some form or other even too prevalent in the pulpits of England to-day. Congregations are flattered; and because they are flattered they are in many cases kept together. Elihu avowed a conscious superiority to this, and a determination to avoid it.

"The deep conviction," says an excellent author on this passage, "that we are all soon to try the realities of a bed of death and of the grave, and that we are to go to a world where there is no delusion, and where the ascription of qualities to us here which do not belong to us will be of no avail, would prompt to a wish to state always the simple truth. Under that conviction we should never so ascribe to another any quality of beauty, strength, or talent, any name or title, as to leave him for one moment under a deception about himself. If this rule were followed, what a change would it produce in the social, the political, the literary, and even the religious world!"

HOMILY No. LXV.

THE FIRST SPEECH OF ELIHU.

(3.) GROUNDS FOR CLAIMING A RELIGIOUS HEARING FROM OUR FELLOW-MEN.

“Wherefore, Job, I pray thee, hear my speeches, and hearken to all my words.” &c.—CHAP. XXXIII. 1-7.

EXEGETICAL REMARKS. *Ver. 1.*—“*Wherefore, Job, I pray thee, hear my speeches, and hearken to all my words.*” In this chapter, Elihu addresses himself to Job.

Ver. 2.—“*Behold, now I have opened my mouth, my tongue hath spoken in my mouth.*” “As long as I could refrain from speaking, I did so; but now that I have once begun to speak, I must be allowed to continue, till I have uttered all I have to say; and therefore I crave thy constant and undivided attention.” “Open my mouth” always indicates careful deliberate utterance on solemn occasions.

Ver. 3.—“*My words shall be of the uprightness of my heart: and my lips shall utter knowledge clearly.*” “The uprightness of my heart shall be my eloquence, and my knowledge shall consist in this, that my lips speak clearly.” The speaker had not, it appears, forgotten Job’s finding fault with his friends for seeking to display their oratorical talent, on which occasion he had maintained that words spoken with sincerity, though plain and unadorned with rhetorical ornaments, were more powerful than set speeches replete with elegance and eloquence. Referring to this, Elihu says, I do not lay claim to eloquence, or to any great profundity of knowledge. I lay claim to sincerity of heart. No lofty worded phrases must be

expected from me; all that I can promise is, that whatever I do say shall come out of my heart, and be expressed in plain and simple language, unvarnished and unadorned. Having thus modestly acknowledged his inability to play the orator, he next calls attention to the wish expressed by Job, that God would remove His rod and His terror from him, whereby he should be enabled to reason with Him, without being overwhelmed by His power and majesty; and in reference to this, Elihu says, “In me, at least, there is nothing whatever that can strike thee with awe and deter thee from endeavouring to refute my arguments, if I am wrong, for I am a human being like thyself.”

Ver. 4.—“*The Spirit of God hath made me, and the breath of the Almighty hath given me life.*” Here he repeats what he had stated in chap. xxxii. 8. Perhaps he refers to it again in order to assert that he and Job possessed a common nature, were men formed in the same way, from the breathing of the Almighty and the same clay.

Ver. 5.—“*If thou canst answer me, set thy words in order before me, stand up.*” The meaning of this verse is, says *Dr. Burnes*, “The controversy between you and me if you choose to reply, shall be conducted in the most equitable manner, and on the most equal terms. I

will not attempt, as your three friends have done, to overwhelm you with reproaches; nor will I attempt to overawe you as God would do, so that you could not reply. I am a man like yourself, and desire that if anything *can* be said against what I have to advance, it should be offered with the utmost fairness and freedom. ‘*Stand up.*’ That is, maintain your position, unless you are convinced by my arguments. I wish to carry nothing by mere authority or power.”

Ver. 6.—“*Behold, I am according to thy wish in God’s stead: I also am formed out of the clay.*” “Behold, I am like thyself, of God; formed out of clay am I also.”—*Delitzsch.* “I, like thee, am a creature of God.” Others, however, regard Elihu as saying, “I am according to thy mouth or wish for

God, that is, I am in His place. Perhaps the reference is to (chap. xxxi., ver. 35,) where he had exclaimed, “Oh that one would hear me! behold, my desire is, that the Almighty would answer me, and that mine adversary had written a book.” Elihu perhaps means, “Thou hast expressed a wish to reason with God. I am here in His stead, reason with me, thou needest not be afraid, for I am a man like thyself.”

Ver. 7.—“*Behold, my terror shall not make thee afraid, neither shall my hand be heavy upon thee.*” In (chap. xiii., ver. 21,) Job had said, “His hand was heavy upon him,” and what Elihu here means is, “If he would come to him and regard him as speaking in the name of God, he would not feel any pressure.”

HOMILETICS.—These verses, like vers. 8-22 in preceding chapter, reveal to us good grounds for claiming a religious hearing from our fellow-men. What are these grounds?

I. A consciousness of SINCERITY.—“*My words shall be of the uprightness of my heart.*” There might be in this language an oblique reproof to the three friends who had spoken. They could scarcely have believed Job to be the great sinner and great hypocrite which they, in their arguments, had represented. Elihu means to say, My words shall be the expression of the genuine feelings of my heart!

A speaker who is conscious of his sincerity has a strong claim to the attention of his hearers. Though he may be mistaken in his sentiments and under the influence of error, his sincerity implies that he has employed his faculties to reach convictions which he is desirous to propagate. Whilst sincerity is not necessarily a virtue, insincerity is essentially a sin. A sincere man, though he may not be true to eternal realities, is true to himself and deserves honour; but an insincere man is untrue to eternal fact and also to himself. A man who believes, has a right to speak. “I believe, and

therefore I speak." The greatest things in the universe to a man are his convictions, whether they are right or wrong; and their existence gives him a strong claim to a hearing. Far greater respect have I for a man who proclaims errors that he really believes in, than for the man who utters truths in which he has no faith. I prefer a fanatic to a charlatan. What are these grounds?

II. A consciousness of KNOWLEDGE TO COMMUNICATE.—*"My lips shall utter knowledge clearly."* He felt that he had ideas on the great subject in debate, and that he had the power of laying them clearly before the mind of the patriarch. This is not the language of egotism or conceit, for the speech of this man reveals a vast fund of varied information.

It seems to me that he had more spiritual intelligence than either Job or his friends.

He who has the most knowledge, if he be sincere, has the strongest claim to a hearing. He who has not more knowledge than his hearers, has no right to speak; he is out of his place, whether in the senate, the college, or the church. Knowledge is the Divine licence for speech. Bishops often license ignorance and pretence; but God grants a licence to none but the enlightened and sincere. The man who stands up before his fellow-men to speak, conscious that he has something to say of which they are more or less ignorant, and which it is necessary for them to know, will always speak with an authority that will command attention. Let preachers therefore strive earnestly for knowledge,—a knowledge, not of the mere words of God, but of the ways of God; a knowledge not of mere facts, but a knowledge of those eternal principles that create facts and govern the universe. What are these grounds?

III. A consciousness of A COMMON HUMANITY.—*"The Spirit of God hath made me, and the breath of the Almighty hath given me life. . . . I also am formed out of the clay."* Perhaps Elihu meant to say to Job, "I feel that I am essentially one with you—common reason, common conscience, common infirmities, common ambitions, common problems, common

destinies. The man who does not feel this, has no claim to be heard. He whose manhood is lost in the preacher, the priest, the ecclesiastic, may speak with erudition and eloquence, but has no claim to my attention. The Great Teacher descended to the "lowest parts of the earth," came down to the common experiences of humanity, and from that plane He spoke, and "the common people heard Him gladly." The true teacher must be *en rapport*, he must bear the burdens and carry the sorrows of our common nature. Oh, come the day when man shall speak to man on the great questions of religion—not in professional modes of thought, or speech, or garb, or spirit, but as a brother immortal, and thus commending himself "to every man's conscience in the sight of God." What are these grounds?

IV. A consciousness of REPRESENTING GOD HIMSELF.—
 "Behold, I am according to thy wish in God's stead." God reveals Himself through man to man. A true man is the temple of God. There the Almighty Himself is to be met with. In Him the shekinah beams its mystic radiance. Paul at Athens said, "Him declare I unto you." Every true man may be said to be "in God's stead" on this earth. He is the mirror of God's being, the organ of God's will. The man who feels this may well have confidence in speaking. "I beseech you in Christ's stead," says Paul, "be ye reconciled to God."

CONCLUSION.—Heaven grant to all who speak to their fellow-men on the great vital questions of being, that consciousness of sincerity, knowledge, common humanity, and Divine representation which Elihu seems to have had, and which is essential to the discharge of their high and awful mission.

HOMILY No. LXVI.

THE FIRST SPEECH OF ELIHU.

(4.) THE COMMON IN CONTROVERSY, SIN, AND THEOLOGY.

“*Surely Thou hast spoken in mine hearing,*” &c.—CHAP. xxxiii. 8-18.

EXEGETICAL REMARKS. *Ver. 8.*—“*Surely thou hast spoken in mine hearing, and I have heard the voice of thy words.*” This language shows that Elihu had been present during the debate, and had paid profound attention to all that had been said. And it denotes not a little astonishment.

Ver. 9.—“*I am clean without transgression, I am innocent; neither is there iniquity in me.*” He here professes to quote the very words which he heard Job utter. But where are those words recorded? Nowhere throughout the record of the discussion can we find them. It is true that Job had maintained that he was not guilty of the transgressions of which his friends had charged him (see chap. ix. 21; xii. 4; xvi. 17), but nowhere does he declare his absolute innocency.

Vers. 10, 11.—“*Behold, He findeth occasions against me, He counteth me for His enemy, He putteth my feet in the stocks, He marketh all my paths.*” In (chap. xix. 11.) Job had given utterance to what Elihu here states, and also in (chap. xiii. 27.)

Ver. 12.—“*Behold, in this thou art not just: I will answer thee, that God is greater than man.*” “Behold, in this thou art not right, let me tell thee. Thy three friends told thee, thou must needs have done wickedly in the former part of thy life, and saying so they may have wronged thee. But I do not

say so, I believe thee to have lived a righteous life, till these afflictions came upon thee; but *then* thou didst sin, and sin very grievously, in that thou couldest presume to utter unseemly words concerning God, because He had afflicted thee, *for God is greater than frail man.* He is a Being so great and so exalted that it is not possible to suppose He would afflict such a weak and frail being as man, unless He knew that he would be benefited by his afflictions.”—Bernard.

Ver. 13.—“*Why dost thou strive against Him? for He giveth not account of any of His matters.*” The idea is that it is useless to contend with God, for, whether His creatures like it or not, He pursues His course without pause or alteration. Submission to His will, and not contention, is at once the wise and proper course of conduct.

Ver. 14.—“*For God speaketh once, yea twice, yet man perceiveth it not.*” God’s communications to man are many and numerous, yet man too often disregards them.

Ver. 15.—“*In a dream, in a vision of the night, when deep sleep falleth upon men, in slumberings upon the bed.*” Dreams and visions in seasons of deep sleep were the means by which the Almighty made known His will in the earlier period of the world’s history; and I am disposed to believe that these are means He employs in every part of the world now.

Ver. 16.—“*Then He openeth the ears of men, and sealeth their instruction.*” For “*openeth*,” the margin has “*revealeth*,” or “*uncovereth*.” The idea is, that God makes the admonition thus communicated as secure as if a seal were affixed to it.

Ver. 17.—“*That He may withdraw man from his purpose,* [margin, “*work*,”] *and hide pride from*

man.” The object of God’s communications to the mind of wicked men, is to turn them from their evil practices and to prevent them ruining themselves.

Ver. 18.—“*He keepeth back his soul from the pit, and his life from perishing by the sword.*” The meaning is, that God by His warnings seeks to turn man from an evil life that will lead to his ruin.

HOMILETICS.—These words present us with three subjects of thought—

I. A FAULT COMMON TO CONTROVERSIALISTS. What is that fault? *The exaggeration of an opponent’s opinions.* Elihu charges Job here with having said, “*I am clean without transgression, I am innocent; neither is there iniquity in me.*” There is no proof that Job said this. It is all but certain that he never gave utterance to such an untruth. He declared often that he was no hypocrite, that he was sincere, never that he was innocent and free from all sin. Now, to *exaggerate* an opponent’s error is a fault too prevalent in all controversies. How the errors of the Arminians are exaggerated by the Calvinists, errors of the Unitarians by what are called the Orthodox party, the Papists by the Protestants, the Churchmen by the Dissenters, and *vice versâ*. The polemic takes the opinion of his opponent, and of the dwarfs he makes giants, of the innocents he makes devils, of the harmless he makes pestilences. This exaggeration springs from a variety of causes. *Pride* has much to do with it. The disputant wishes to appear as a hero, battling with Apollyons, so that if he crushes them, his triumphs will be the more signal and the more lauded. *Revenge* contributes to its existence. The mutual retorts have kindled mutual revenge, and revenge has magnified the errors on each side. *Untruthfulness*, the want of a strict adherence to truth, has left the imagination free to fabricate falsehoods. Ah me! in religious polemics some of the best men that ever lived are made to appear monsters, unworthy of life. Here we have—

II. A SIN common to MANKIND. “*Why dost thou strive against Him?*” Striving against God, is the common sin of humanity. “The carnal mind is enmity with God.” What is it to strive against Him? It is to pursue a course of conduct contrary to His will, contrary to truth, justice, benevolence, holiness, out of harmony with the holy ordinances of nature, with the conditions of true happiness, with the progress of the world. Striving against God—(1) How *wrong*. Striving against the best Friend. (2) How *foolish!* How futile the attempt! It is a moth struggling against the flames. “*Why dost thou strive against Him?*” Ah, why? Has He ever done thee any harm? Hast thou any hope of success? Here we have—

III. A THEOLOGY common to THE BIBLE. What are the theological points here?

First: *The infinite superiority of God.* “*God is greater than man.*” Greater! There is no comparison. You may compare a rain-drop to the Atlantic, a spark to the central fires of the universe; but between God and man there is no comparison.

Secondly: *The absolute irresponsibility of God.* “*He giveth not account of any of His matters.*” The only moral intelligence in existence that is irresponsible, is God. He is absolutely independent, and is under obligation to no being in the universe. He does “whatsoever seemeth good in His sight” with the armies of heaven and the inhabitants of this earth. He is not bound by law or power, outside of Himself, to be kind, loving, or just. Hence these attributes in Him are the more conspicuously glorious.

Thirdly: *The constant communicability of God.* “*God speaketh once, yea twice, yet man perceiveth it not. In a dream, in a vision of the night, when deep sleep falleth upon men, in slumberings upon the bed; then He openeth the ears of men, and sealeth their instruction.*” God has not only access to the human mind, but access to it even irrespective of its choice or effort; He enters it when “*deep sleep falleth upon men,*” when the senses are sealed, when the limbs are motionless, when the will is passive. Then He enters it. Not once, but often; not with one, but with all.

Fourthly: *The redemptive purpose of God.* Why does He work with men? "*That He may withdraw man from his purpose, and hide pride from man. He keepeth back his soul from the pit, and his life from perishing by the sword.*" Colonel Gardiner, it is said, was meditating an act of wickedness, and was alone in his room awaiting the appointed hour; but in the silence of the night and the solitude of his room, he had a vision of the Saviour on the cross, and this vision broke his purpose, and kept back "*his soul from the pit.*"

HOMILY No. LXVII.

THE FIRST SPEECH OF ELIHU.

(5.) THE SUCCESSFUL DISCIPLINE OF LIFE.

"*He is chastened also,*" &c.—CHAP. XXXIII. 19-33.

EXEGETICAL REMARKS. *Ver. 19.*—"He is chastened also with pain upon his bed." From here to the end of the chapter, Elihu indicates even severer methods than alarming dreams employed by God to discipline the human soul. He is subjected to severe physical sufferings. "*And the multitude of his bones with strong pain.*" While his bones are firm.—*Ewald.*

Ver. 20.—"So that his life abhorreth bread, and his soul dainty meat." This is the natural effect of great corporeal suffering. Instead of a craving for food, there is a disgust or nausea, even the dainties are loathed.

Ver. 21.—"His flesh is consumed away, that it cannot be seen." Another effect of physical suffering; the fires of pain consume the fat. "*And his bones that were not seen stick out.*" His bones protrude and he appears as a mere skeleton.

Ver. 22.—"Yea, his soul draweth near unto the grave, and his life to the destroyers." The soul here, as elsewhere, does not mean the spirit, as distinguished from the body, but life—the man himself. "The meaning is, that the afflicted man comes very near to those acute sufferings which terminate life, and which by personification are here represented as the authors of death."

Vers. 23, 24.—"If there be a messenger with him, an interpreter, one among a thousand, to show unto man his uprightness: then he is gracious unto him, and saith, Deliver him from going down to the pit: I have found a ransom." *Dr. Samuel Davidson's* translation of these verses, which we prefer to any other, runs as follows—"If there be for him an angel, an intercessor, one of the thousand, to show man what is right; then he is gracious to him and saith, Deliver him from going

down to the pit, I have found a ransom, then his flesh becomes fresher than in youth." There is no reference here to the Messiah, but to some one who is Divinely commissioned to interpret the procedure of God to the soul of the afflicted. In all probability, Elihu refers to himself, as one qualified for this high office. He seems to suppose, that if the afflicted man is thoroughly satisfied with the rectitude of God in his sufferings, that the Almighty would then be "*gracious*" unto him and deliver him from going down to the pit, having sufficient reason for doing so. This is meant, I think, by the expression, "*I have found a ransom.*" The man is brought into a proper state of mind; and in this I discover a sufficient reason why he should not die, but be delivered.

Ver. 25.—"*His flesh shall be fresher than a child's: he shall return to the days of his youth.*" For "*child*" the margin reads "*childhood.*" "The meaning," says Dr. Barnes, "is obvious. He would be restored again to health. The calamity which had been brought upon him for purposes of discipline would be removed. This was the theory of Elihu in regard to afflictions, and he undoubtedly meant that it should be applied to Job. If he would now, understanding the nature and design of affliction, turn to God, he would be recovered again, and enjoy the health and vigour of his youth."

Ver. 26.—"*He shall pray unto God.*" Elihu now, to the end of the chapter, points out the conduct of a true penitent, and the Divine deliverance and blessedness which would be vouchsafed to him. "*He shall pray unto God.*" That is, when he is brought into a proper state of mind by being convinced

of the righteousness of his Maker, he will pray. True repentance leads to prayer. "*He will be favourable unto him: and he shall see His face with joy: for He will render unto man his righteousness.*" "He, the Almighty, will deal with him in justice and equity. When He sees evidence of penitence, He will treat him accordingly: and if in the afflicted man He discerns true piety, He will regard and treat him as His friend."

Ver. 27.—"*He looketh upon men, and if any say, I have sinned, and perverted that which was right, and it profited me not.*" In the margin it reads, "He shall look upon men and say." Some render it, "Now he sings joyfully among men." *Umbreit, Noyes, Delitzsch*, and others generally agree in this rendering. It gives the idea that the afflicted penitent, having been pardoned, sings out with joy to men—"I have sinned," &c.

Ver. 28.—"*He will deliver his soul from going into the pit, and his life shall see the light.*" "He hath delivered my soul from going down to the pit, and my life rejoices in the light."—*Delitzsch*. Most commentators accept the present version.

Vers. 29, 30.—"*Lo, all these things worketh God oftentimes with man, to bring back his soul from the pit, to be enlightened with the light of the living.*" "God repeatedly warns and admonishes them either in dreams or by severe afflictions, these being, in fact, the language which He employs towards men, and a language well befitting the Creator, when He would hold communication with His creatures: a language which He employs to make man's soul turn from the pit, to the brink of which he has either brought himself by the wicked

deeds which he has committed, or would have brought himself by the wicked deeds which he was on the point of committing when he received these timely admonitions."—*Bernard.*

Ver. 31-33.—"Mark well, O Job, hearken unto me: hold thy peace, and I will speak. If thou hast anything to say, answer me: speak, for I desire to justify thee. If not, hearken unto me: hold thy peace, and I shall teach thee wisdom." "But I have not quite done yet. I have something yet to add, and therefore attend, O Job, listen unto me: keep silence, and I will speak. If thou hast words to oppose to my statements, reply to me: speak, for I delight in pronouncing thee to have been righteous, before

thy afflictions came upon thee. Thou needest not fear that I will tax thee, as did thy friends, with sins and crimes to which thou mayest have been an utter stranger; on the contrary, it is my delight to think that thy former life was free from spot or blemish, and that thou only hast begun to wander and go wrong since these afflictions came upon thee, and that for the simple reason that thou wast unable to penetrate the object with which they were sent upon thee." If thou hast none. If thou beginnest to see that what I say is true, then listen thou to me. Keep silence, and I will teach thee wisdom. I will show thee that the wisdom of God passeth all human understanding."

HOMILETICS.—Now, the subject we draw from the text is, *the successful discipline of life*. Millions pass through the school of life undisciplined and unimproved. Instead of having their moral errors corrected, their sympathies purified, their spiritual faculties quickened and developed, they get morally hardened and carnalized. The passage leads us to remark three things concerning the *successful discipline of life*—

I. IT OFTEN INVOLVES GREAT SUFFERING. Here Elihu, although by no means an infallible teacher, presents a most graphic, touching, and impressive picture of the man who has to pass *successfully* through this school. "*He is chastened also with pain upon his bed.*" Where repose and re-invigoration are sought, he finds through his sufferings only restlessness and exhaustion. "*His life abhorreth bread.*" His sufferings have stolen away his appetite, so that he loathes that which is necessary to the sustenance of his existence. He is reduced to a skeleton. "*His flesh is consumed away, that it cannot be seen.*" The fires of pain have consumed his flesh, and made bare his ribs. He is brought "*near unto the grave.*" Such is the physical suffer-

ing that has often to be endured in this school, if the discipline is to be successful.

The amount of human suffering, which is confessedly enormous, is used by the infidel to prove that God is not love, as the Bible teaches. It were absurd to expect that an intellect like man's, limited and infirm, could reconcile all the sufferings of the world with the benevolence of the Creator. But if the physical sufferings of men aid their spiritual culture—what are they but blessings in disguise? * And this they do, not, of course, against man's consent; but the fault is theirs if they consent not. Philosophy as well as piety recognizes and proclaims the doctrine that "affliction worketh good." Resulting, as it ever does, from the infraction of laws, it warns the criminal, and rouses his intellect to the study of the system under which he lives, in order to lead him to put himself in harmony therewith. It is the rod of nature chastising its wayward and rebellious child. Vice is often checked by it, and by it virtue is frequently developed. Physical evils are thus spiritual blessings. "Our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh out for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory."

Affliction does the good man service in many ways. It detaches him from society, and makes him feel his own solemn individuality. It impresses him with the worthlessness of materialism, and with the awful solemnity of the spiritual world. It brings the ideas of death, retribution, eternity, powerfully near to the heart. It is the cutting that makes the diamond sparkle; the crushing that makes the aromatic plant emit its fragrance; the dashing billows that polish the pebbles on the shore; the shaking of the torch that brightens its flame. Affliction is like the winter frost; it kills the pernicious insects which the sun of health has engendered. It acts like the stormy wind upon the tree; it strengthens the fibres and deepens the roots of our virtue. It is like the thunderstorm in nature; it purifies the unhealthy atmosphere that has gathered round the heart. It is the bitter potion which the skilful physician administers to his patient. "As threshing separates the corn from the chaff," says Burton, "so does affliction purify

* For remarks on this, see *Homilist*, First Series, vol. ii., p. 297.

virtue." "Virtue," says Lord Bacon, "is like precious odours, most fragrant when they are incensed and crushed; for prosperity doth best discover vice, but adversity doth best discover virtue." It is the sufferer that retires to Bethesda, turns from earth to heaven, from the natural to the supernatural, and, with an anxious eye and a throbbing heart, waits the visits of the descending angel. Evil is evil, but evil is not an end. Good is the end, and evil is ever rushing to it like streams and rivers to the ocean world. The evils of this world, like the furious storm that spreads devastation over sea and land, will one day die away in a clear sky and a pure atmosphere, and leave the world all beautiful and bright. Another thing which the text leads us to remark concerning the *successful* discipline of life is—

II. IT ALWAYS REQUIRES RELIGIOUS TEACHING. "*If there be a messenger with him, an interpreter, one among a thousand, to show unto man His uprightness.*" What is the religious teaching that is essential? Not the teaching of theology and rubrics, but instruction in God's *righteousness*—"His uprightness." It is a teaching that has to do not merely with the imagination or intellect, but mainly with the *conscience*. Righteousness appeals to the conscience, and this is the soul of the soul, the moral heart of the man. This is the teaching essential to successful moral discipline. No other can supply its place nor supersede its necessity. Men must feel the righteousness of God's *claims*. He claims their supreme affection, their unbounded trust and loyal obedience. Must not these, in order to be practically recognized, be felt as righteous? What man but he who is constrained from his inner heart to say, "Thy testimonies that Thou hast commanded are righteous and very faithful," will ever render homage to such claims? He must say, ere he can yield,—There is nothing that Thou demandest of me but is unquestionably and absolutely right. It is the felt righteousness of His claims that reveals to man his true condition: shows to him his standing in the universe, and his true relation to the Infinite. David felt this when he said, "I have seen an end of all perfection, but Thy com-

mandment is exceeding broad." In its eternal light man feels, that whatever he has which the world considers great and valuable is mere trash, and that goodness alone is the real worth. When the "*commandment*" comes to a man, and flashes Divine righteousness on his conscience, does he not, like Paul, "die" to all he prized and loved before?

He must "show," moreover, not only the righteousness of His claims, but the righteousness of His *treatment*. In the greatest sufferings and severest trials of life, it is necessary for a man to feel, if he would succeed in the true moral scholarship of life, that "The right hand of the Lord is full of righteousness:" that He is "righteous in all His ways, and holy in all His works." Without this, could there be a loving and loyal submission to the Divine will, in which alone there is happiness? On the contrary, would there not be great murmuring and rebellions of heart? Now, Elihu implies that such religious teaching is *rare*. "*An interpreter, one among a thousand.*" Where are the teachers to be found that flash God's righteousness upon the human conscience? Professed religious teachers, as compared to the population, are less than "*one among a thousand*;" and amongst the religious teachers who bring Divine righteousness to the conscience, the proportion, I fear, is still less. We have men who are everlastingly bringing to their hearers the Assembly's Catechism, the Thirty-nine Articles, Calvin's Institutes, and Wesley's theology; but how few bring Divine righteousness! Have not most of even our best "interpreters" gone from the Sermon on the Mount and preferred Paul's theological discussions, in which there are some "things hard to be understood"? It is not until the world has true moral interpreters that cabinets will cease their intrigues, merchants and tradesmen their chicaneries, priests their impostures, monarchs their tyrannies, warriors their damnable profession, and all renounce their selfishness, their falsehoods, and their sins. We want the righteousness of God preached, and not the religions of man.

Thank God! the world has One such "Interpreter," One of Whom Elihu in all probability knew nothing—Christ the "Righteousness of God;" He is the world's Interpreter, to show unto man God's "*uprightness.*" This He does now

by the faithful preaching of His faithful followers; and by His Spirit, whose prerogative it is to "reprove the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment." Oh, let us, whose office it is to deal with human souls, seek to bring the character of Christ, rather than the creed of Churches, in contact with conscience. The world has no soul quickening, correcting, purifying, strengthening, and ennobling spiritual force but this. This is the world's "Sun of Righteousness."

Another thing which the text leads us to remark concerning the *successful* discipline of life is—

III. It EVERMORE CULMINATES IN COMPLETE RESTORATION.

"*Then He is gracious unto him, and saith, Deliver him from going down to the pit: I have found a ransom.*" Elihu proceeds on the assumption that the sufferings which the man had endured, and the moral teachings of the "*interpreter*," had produced a proper effect on his heart, and had brought him into genuine sympathy with the mind and will of God. Such being the case, he says, God would be "*gracious unto him*," and would find "*a ransom*,"—which does not mean an atonement, but a valid reason for mercifully interposing on his behalf. In the genuine penitence of a man, Elihu regards the Almighty as having a sufficient reason for his deliverance. (1) The restoration is here represented as a restoration to *health*: "*His flesh shall be fresher than a child's.*" The physical sufferings, having answered their moral ends, cease; and the stream of health again flows through the veins, and reinvigorates the frame with youthful energy. (2) The restoration is here represented as a restoration to *Divine favour*: "*He shall pray unto God, and He will be favourable unto him.*" The soul that had been clouded by remorse, pressed down with a sense of Divine displeasure, and blinded by corrupt feelings, shall be enabled to look up to God and "*see His face with joy.*" (3) The restoration is here represented as a restoration to *safety*. "*He shall deliver his soul from going down to the pit, and his life shall see the light.*" The "*pit*" to which the sinner is exposed may stand to represent not only the grave, into which we must all descend; but, what is worse, all the moral ignorance, self-criminations,

and dark forebodings to which all guilty souls are exposed. Deliverance from such a terrible "*pit*" and elevation to the "*light of the living*," or the living light, are included in this restoration. We are far enough from believing that Elihu understood all that we mean by this complete restoration of man; but to us the blessed assurance is given, that all who are truly repentant and regenerate shall have the "vile body fashioned and made like unto Christ's glorious body"—shall be raised from bondage and corruption to the glorious life and liberty of the children of God. The words of Elihu suggest two facts in relation to this true restoration—

First: *It is effected by the gracious agency of God.* "*He is gracious unto him,*" &c. Who else could accomplish this? It is a resurrection from the dead, a new creation; and what but sovereign grace could inspire the Almighty to such an undertaking? This indeed is His great and constant work with humanity. God works with all men, works with their circumstances, with their bodies, with their souls: works, as Elihu tells us, by visions of the night, by special afflictions, and by moral interpreters sent by Heaven. He thus works with each and all, in varied ways and without remission, in order to bring men back from the "*pit*"—a scene of darkness, confinement, and desolation—and give them the living light, the light of intelligence, purity, and joy. The words of Elihu suggest that—

Secondly: This gracious agency of God is *obtained in connection with penitential prayer.* "*He looked upon men,*" that is, as the margin has it, the penitent man looks upon his fellow-men, and says from experience, "*I have sinned and perverted that which was right, and it profited me not.*" This is the language of true contrition. The genuinely penitent man never ascribes his sin to his organization or to his circumstances, but to himself—"I have sinned." Now, it is this state of mind that ensures Divine interposition. Because of this He,—that is, God,—"*will deliver his soul from going into the pit.*" This moral state of mind is indispensable to man's complete restoration. If men repent, will not the Almighty save? "The Lord is nigh unto them that are of a broken heart, and saveth such as be of a

contrite spirit." "If My people, which are called by My name, shall humble themselves, and pray, and seek My face, and turn from their wicked ways: then will I hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin, and will heal their land." This is the great call of God to man in the Gospel. "In that time Jesus began to preach and say, Repent." "Except ye believe and repent, ye shall all likewise perish." "God commandeth all men everywhere to repent."

Such is the *successful discipline of life*, as suggested by the words of Elihu. In this school, afflictions are required, and we have them. The human world is full of suffering. "Man is born unto trouble as the sparks fly upward." "Man that is born of a woman is of few days, and full of trouble." In this school these troubles and trials are chastisements. In this school moral "*interpreters*" are required, and we have them in the books, in the examples, and in the teachings of the faithful followers of Him who is the One Infallible "Interpreter," Jesus Christ, the Righteous. In this school the complete restoration of man is the grand end.

CONCLUSION.—The great question for us to determine is, What are we doing in this school? How are we using our afflictions? As arguments to reflect on the benevolence of God, and as reasons for murmuring and repining under His dispensations? Or do we regard them as the chastenings of a loving Father? Are we so "*exercised*" by them that we feel that, like the gales of the mariner, they are bearing us away from those unholy scenes on which our hearts are set? How are we treating our moral "*interpreters*"? Do we close our ears to their instructions, and trifle with the admonitions of those who are seeking to show us the righteousness of God in all His procedure? Or do we hearken to their words with an ardent and sincere desire to know Him "whom to know is life eternal"? Are we getting restored, intellectually and morally restored, by all the lessons and influences of His great school? Or are we getting more morally depressed and infirm? We shall soon have passed through this school. We shall only have a few more lessons, a few more fleeting years, or days, it may be,

and our school-time will be over; and then, if we have not rightly improved our opportunities, we shall "mourn at the last," and say, "How have we hated instruction, and our heart despised reproof!"

HOMILY No. LXVIII.

THE SECOND SPEECH OF ELIHU.

(1.) A THREEFOLD SUBJECT OF THOUGHT.

"Furthermore Elihu answered and said," &c.—CHAP. xxxiv. 1-15.

EXEGETICAL REMARKS. *Ver. 1.* — "*Furthermore Elihu answered and said.*" It would seem as if Elihu had paused for a reply from Job. But as no reply came, he begins again, and calls upon Job's friends, who were present, to pay attention to what he was going to say.

Ver. 2. — "*Hear my words, O ye wise men, and give ear unto me, ye that have knowledge*" [experience]. Did Elihu address himself to some sages standing by, or merely to Job and his three friends? To the latter, I trow, and there is the breath of irony in them.

Ver. 3. — "*For the ear trieth words, as the mouth [margin, "palate"] tasteth meat.*" He means, that as food cannot be pronounced to be pleasant or otherwise until it has passed through the ordeal of the palate, the discourse cannot be appreciated until it has been tried by the ear, or the understanding.

Ver. 4. — "*Let us choose to us judgment: let us know among ourselves what is good.*" As if he had

said, Let us select among the conflicting opinions advanced what will stand the test of examination. Amongst ourselves, let us see what is good, and come to an understanding.

Ver. 5. — "*For Job hath said, I am righteous: and God hath taken away my judgment.*" Job had virtually said this. (See chaps. xiii. 18; xxvii. 2, 4, 5.)

Ver. 6. — "*Should I lie against my right?*" Nowhere do we find these words as uttered by Job. Is this Elihu's slander, or is it his honest interpretation of the drift of Job's utterances? "*My wound is incurable without transgression.*" Nowhere can I find Job maintaining his absolute perfection; but everywhere he insists that his sufferings were not to be taken as a test of his character. For "*wound*" the margin reads, "*arrow.*" The instrument of the suffering put for the suffering itself.

Ver. 7. — "*What man is like Job, who drinketh up scorning like water?*" Elihu means to say that Job was as full of scorning and

scoffing as a man is brimful of water who has had his fill.

Ver. 8.—“*Which goeth in company with the workers of iniquity, and walketh with wicked men.*”

What he means probably is, that Job made common cause with the wicked by taking up their sentiments. Elihu does not mean, I presume, that Job was morally a companion of wicked men, but in his arguments he seemed to join with them.

Ver. 9.—“*For he hath said, It profiteth a man nothing that he should delight himself with God.*”

He states this as a proof that Job went with the wicked in his sentiments, for it is the leading characteristic of all wicked men that they regard religion as worthless and unprofitable.

Ver. 10.—“*Therefore hearken unto me, ye men of understanding: far be it from God, that He should do wickedness; and from the Almighty, that He should commit iniquity.*” In the margin “*men of understanding*” is rendered, “*men of heart,*” meaning, however, the same thing. Far be it from entering any man’s mind, that God is capable of wickedness or iniquity. God cannot do wrong.

Ver. 11.—“*For the work of a man shall He render unto him, and cause every man to find according to his ways.*”—

“No, indeed, man’s work He recompenses to him,

And according to man’s walk
He causeth it to be with him.”—

Delitzsch.

The Governor of the Universe is no

Respecter of persons. He metes out justice to all.

Ver. 12.—“*Yea, surely God will not do wickedly, neither will the Almighty pervert judgment.*” This is a repetition of the idea in the former verse.

Ver. 13.—“*Who hath given Him a charge over the earth? or who hath disposed the whole world?*”

Who hath given the earth in His charge, and who hath disposed the whole globe? He is the Creator and Proprietor of the universe, and is responsible to no one, and has no motive for doing wrong.

Vers. 14, 15.—“*If He set His heart upon man, if He gather unto Himself his spirit and his breath; all flesh shall perish together, and man shall turn again unto dust.*”

There are different interpretations of this passage. With some it means, If God sets His heart upon doing a thing, it will be done. With others it means, that if He dealt strictly with men according to their characters, all would be destroyed. With others it means, If God merely regarded Himself, set His heart upon Himself (as is the translation of *Delitzsch*), consulted merely His own welfare, He would live and reign alone, and leave the universe to sink to ruin. The fact that the word man is not in the original rather favours this idea. With others it means, that man has no right to complain of the Divine procedure, for if the Infinite chose, He could reduce the whole earth to desolation. Who art thou that repliest against God?

HOMILETICS.—There are three subjects of thought here: the judicial faculty of man’s mind, the moral imperfections of man’s character, and the transcendent glories of man’s God. We shall notice these thoughts with great brevity.

I. THE JUDICIAL FACULTY OF MAN'S MIND. The address of Elihu to the three friends implies two things concerning this faculty—

First : Its *innate existence*. “*For the ear trieth words, as the mouth tasteth meat.*” The idea seems to be, that just as man has a palate by which to test the quality of his food, he has a judiciary faculty within him by which to test the truth and falsehood of statements, the right or wrong of principles of action. Who doubts this? (1) There is the *intellect*. By this doctrines are brought into comparison with what is commonly called common sense. With this, man tries all abstract truth, whether it come to him in the form of philosophy, mathematics, or science. There are certain principles within him independent of education, innate and ineradicable, which his understanding treats as the criteria of all truth. (2) There is *experience*. By a law of mind, he brings all outward facts to this test. Whatever does not chime in with what during his life he himself has observed, heard, thought, felt, he will not accept without further evidence. Hence all facts and all events that accord not with his experience, he keeps outside of him, and will not accept. Hence the reluctance of men to believe in miracles. (3) There is *conscience*. This is a faculty that concerns itself, not with the truth or falsehood of propositions, nor with the probability or improbability of events, but with the right or wrong of actions. These are three elements, or perhaps forms, of the judicial faculty in man. This faculty the Bible appeals to. We are commanded to “prove all things,” to “hold fast that which is good,” to “try the spirits, whether they be of God.” “Why even of yourselves judge ye not what is right?” The address of Elihu to these friends implies another thing concerning this faculty—

Secondly : Its *social dependence*. In order to have this faculty the more efficiently exercised, Elihu calls upon these three friends to come into counsel with him. “*Let us choose to us judgment : let us know among ourselves what is good.*” “In the multitude of counsellors there is safety.” One man's intelligence and experience may supplement the deficiencies of others. Honest controversy often quickens the

intellect, brightens the atmosphere, and stimulates the faculties of the soul. The absolutely lonely man would be incapable of the right exercise of his judicial faculty. The wisest men must meet, compare opinions, weigh suggestions, and thus, by the honest process of inquiry, travel to a wise conclusion in which they all agree. Thank God for this faculty. It distinguishes us from all other sentient existences on the face of this earth. By it we go through phenomena to reality. We come to judge, not "according to appearance," but judge "righteous judgment." Thus we find out truth, advance in intelligence, and are brought into the presence of the great First Cause as the ever-adorable personality. Notice—

II. THE MORAL IMPERFECTIONS OF MAN'S CHARACTER. Elihu here charges Job with many salient defects of character. Some of these, I am disposed to believe, did not belong to him, and are libels. What are the defects here indicated and charged on Job?

First: *Flagrant impiety*. He represents Job as—(1) Charging God with injustice. "*For Job hath said, I am righteous: and God hath taken away my judgment.*" Did Job say this? Not in the sense that Elihu understood him. He never regarded himself as an absolutely perfect man; all that he maintained was, his innocency of the charges brought against him by his friends, and the sincerity of his own heart. He represents Job as—(2) Charging God with cruelty. "*Should I lie against my right? my wound is incurable without transgression.*" Whatever Job had said in his anguish, did he ever mean that God was cruel and had taken away his "judgment"? Did he ever mean that his "*wound was incurable without transgression,*" and that he was innocent? I trow not. He represents Job as—(3) Using contemptuous language. "*What man is like Job, who drinketh up scorning like water?*" It is true that Job had, in the extremity of his anguish, uttered his sentiments in somewhat extravagant language, and that he appeared to indulge in reproaches as a man drinks water. Another defect charged on Job here is—

Secondly: *Ungodly companionship*. "*Which goeth in com-*

pany with the workers of iniquity, and walketh with wicked men." Elihu did not in all probability mean, as we have seen, that he mingled with wicked men, but that he adopted their sentiments, pursued the same line of irreverent thought in relation to God. Now, it is true that the "*workers of iniquity*" have wrong thoughts of the Almighty—ungrateful, rebellious, blasphemous thoughts. And it is also true that those who adopt such thoughts may be justly regarded as going in company with them, and walking with "*wicked men.*" The hermit, the misanthrope,—who shuns his race and lives alone and never mingles personally with his kind,—nevertheless "*goes in company with them*" just so far as he moves and acts in the circle of their thoughts. Be careful of your thoughts. "As a man thinketh in his heart, so is he." Thoughts formulate both the character and the creed. Another defect charged on Job is—

Thirdly: *Depreciation of religion.* "*For he hath said, It profiteth a man nothing that he should delight himself with God.*" There is no advantage in piety. It will make no difference in the Divine dealings with him. He will be treated just as well if he lives a life of sin, as if he undertakes to live after the severest rules of piety. It is worthy of remark, incidentally, that Elihu seems to have the right idea of religion when he speaks of it as delighting in God, and having friendship with Him. This is in truth religion stripped of all theologies, ceremonies, and conventional forms. It is friendship with God; this is its essence.

Now, such are the charges that are here brought against Job. He charges him with flagrant impiety, ungodly companionship, and depreciation of religion. Was Job guilty of all this? I trow not. I think the young Arabian, either intentionally or otherwise, libels the old patriarch. Albeit his charges involve glaring moral imperfections of character, imperfections that we should be ever ready to repudiate and denounce. Notice—

III. THE TRANSCENDENT GLORIES OF MAN'S GOD. Elihu here speaks of wrong in any form as being *impossible* to God.

First: *As being repugnant to His nature.* "*Therefore*

hearken unto me, ye men of understanding : far be it from God, that He should do wickedness ; and from the Almighty, that He should commit iniquity. For the work of a man shall He render unto him, and cause every man to find according to his ways." "*Far be it from God.*" The idea is not to be thought of, it is to be deprecated. He cannot do wrong, He cannot be unjust, He cannot do wickedness, He cannot "*commit iniquity,*" He cannot "*pervert judgment.*" On the contrary, He is bound to do right, bound to "*cause every man to find according to his ways.*" This moral weakness of God is His glory. It is the glory of a noble mother that she is too weak to murder her lovely babe, her whole nature recoils. God cannot lie, cannot break His word, He cannot be unjust, cannot be unkind. Elihu speaks of wrong—

Secondly: *As being contrary to His supremacy.* "*Who hath given Him a charge over the earth ? or who hath disposed the whole world ?*" As He is the original Proprietor and absolute Master of all, as His authority is undenied and universal, and as He is responsible to no being in the universe, what motive has He to do the wrong? Were He a mere sub-ruler, accountable to some one above Him, it is conceivable that something might come that would turn Him from the right. He is irresponsible, and therefore can act out His nature with absolute freedom. And as His nature is essentially holy, just, and good, therefore He cannot do wrong. "*Far be it from God, that He should do wickedness.*" Elihu speaks of wrong—

Thirdly: *As inconsistent with His power over man.* Why should He do wrong towards man, as man is absolutely in His hands? "*If He set His heart upon man, if He gather unto Himself his spirit and his breath ; all flesh shall perish together, and man shall turn again unto dust.*" Observe incidentally—(1) That man dies because of God's purpose. "*If He set His heart upon man.*" Which means, If He determines. Here is the cause of human dissolution. Man dies, not by accident, disease, or age, but by God's purpose. "*Thou changest his countenance and sendest him away.*" Observe—(2) That man in his death returns to the Almighty. "*He gathers unto Himself his spirit and his breath.*" "*Then shall the dust return to the earth as it was : and the spirit shall*

return unto God Who gave it." Observe—(3) That man dies as the destiny of the race. "*All flesh shall perish together.*" By one volition God could terminate the race, put an end to all flesh. All men being so absolutely in the hands of God, why should He deal unjustly towards them? This is Elihu's argument.

HOMILY No. LXIX.

THE SECOND SPEECH OF ELIHU.

(2.) HIS REMONSTRANCE AND ITS REASONS.

"*If now thou hast understanding,*" &c.—CHAP. XXXIV. 16-30.

EXEGETICAL REMARKS. In the former section Elihu had been addressing himself to the three friends of Job, as wise men; here he turns to Job himself.

Ver. 16.—"*If now thou hast understanding, hear this: hearken to the voice of my words.*" In the subsequent verses Elihu proceeds to remonstrate with him concerning his views, and to show him that what he had said implied impious reflections on the character and procedure of God.

Ver. 17.—"*Shall even he that hateth right govern? and wilt thou condemn Him that is most just?*" The government of the world would be impossible if injustice were allowed: God must be just because He governs. "What doth he hating right govern? The question implies that the combination of injustice and supreme power is inconceivable." — *Canon Cook*. (2 Sam. xxiii. 3.)

Ver. 18.—"*Is it fit to say to a king, Thou art wicked? and to princes, Ye are ungodly?*" Does

it behove us to say to a king, "O ye ungodly one," and to any among princes, "O thou worthless one?" Elihu seemed to feel that there would be great impropriety in this; but, alas! it is not always wrong, for human kings are often wicked and unjust.

Ver. 19.—"*How much less to Him that accepteth not the persons of princes, nor regardeth the rich more than the poor? for they all are the work of His hands.*" The prince is not distinguished from the beggar, all are alike to Him. He is absolutely impartial. God is no respecter of persons.

Ver. 20.—"*In a moment shall they die, and the people shall be troubled at midnight, and pass away: and the mighty shall be taken away without haul.*" The hour of death is not deferred for the great man on account of his greatness, nor hastened for the poor man on account of his poverty. At "midnight," when least expected, in the season of unconsciousness and repose, He brings all to

death, the rich and the poor, the illustrious and the obscure. And does it often in a sudden and terrible way. "*The mighty shall be taken away without hand.*" He requires no human instrumentality to sweep a whole generation from the face of the earth.

Vers. 21, 22.—"*For His eyes are upon the ways of man, and He seeth all his goings. There is no darkness, nor shadow of darkness, where the workers of iniquity may hide themselves.*" "The workers of iniquity" always seek to hide themselves; darkness is evermore the best hiding-place. But they cannot escape His eyes; they peer into the profoundest gloom (Psalm cxxxix.).

Ver. 23.—"*For He will not lay upon man more than right; that he should enter into judgment with God.*" "For He needeth not long to regard a man, that he may enter into judgment with God."—*Delitzsch*. In this rendering *Noyes*, *Umbreit*, *Wemyss*, and others agree. The meaning probably is, that God does not require any preparation or time to bring a man to judgment. He can do it at once; can call him to His bar in an instant.

Ver. 24.—"*He shall break in pieces mighty men without number, and set others in their stead.*" He breaketh in pieces mighty men in an unsearchable manner; no one can discover the means by which He destroys them, and He setteth others in their place. This is always going on, some falling, some rising—births and deaths: some passing from the earth, others stepping into their place.

Ver. 25.—"*Therefore He knoweth their works, and he overturneth them in the night, so that they are destroyed.*" The word "destroyed" in the margin reads "crushed."

Ver. 26.—"*He striketh them as wicked men in the open sight of others*" [margin, "in the place of beholders"]. The idea is, that the wicked are destroyed openly. Sin may be privately committed, but retribution will be publicly administered.

Ver. 27.—"*Because they turned back from Him* [margin, "from after Him"], *and would not consider any of His ways.*" This is the cause of their ruin. They apostatized from Him, and they would not reflect upon His ways or His methods.

Ver. 28.—"*So that they cause the cry of the poor to come unto Him, and He heareth the cry of the afflicted.*" No cry or groan ever escaped the lips of an afflicted man without His hearing it.

Ver. 29.—"*When He giveth quietness, who then can make trouble? and when He hideth His face, who then can behold Him? whether it be done against a nation, or against a man only.*" "When He giveth quietness. When He looketh upon a man and bestoweth ease, peace, and comfort upon him. Who then can make trouble? On the other hand, if He hideth His face, if He withdraws His favour from men, who then can behold Him? Who can hope to behold His face, to enjoy His favour, as long as He remains unpropitiated? It is all one whether He doeth this, whether He hides His face, on account of a whole nation or on account of one man. Who has provoked Him?"—*Bernard*.

Ver. 30.—"*That the hypocrite reign not, lest the people be ensnared.*" "Whether on account of a hypocritical man's reigning, or on account of the snares of a people; whether the anger of God which causes Him to hide His face, arises

from the provocation He has received from a whole nation or from that given by a single man; whether from the reign of a hypocrite or from a corrupt community, it is an anger which will abide in the one case as in the other so long as the sins which called it forth remain unexpiated and unatoned for."

HOMILETICS.—These words are an expostulation addressed by Elihu to Job, concerning what he considered the patriarch's wrong views in relation to the character and procedure of God. "*If now thou hast understanding, hear this: hearken to the voice of my words.*" His remonstrance, which is somewhat severe, seems to be founded upon the following things, which come out pretty strongly in his language. It is—

I. Founded on the SUPREMACY of the Eternal.—"Shall even he that hateth right govern? and wilt thou condemn Him that is most just?" He means to say, that where there is absolute supremacy there can be no injustice. The Supreme is a law unto Himself; there is no law outside of Him, no ab-extra authority to which He is amenable for His conduct. There are some who speak of the absolute law of right, as something outside of the Almighty, independent of Him, and to which He is accountable. This is an absurdity which can only be entertained by shallow thinkers, a blasphemy repugnant to all our moral intuitions. What the Supreme wills, is right, and right *because* He wills it. "Shall not the Judge of all the earth do right?" "*Is it fit to say to a king, Thou art wicked? and to princes, Ye are ungodly?*" This is a poor illustration, and shows either that Elihu had no experience of unrighteous monarchs, or that he was one of those servile natures that worship mere power for its own sake. If kings are wicked and ungodly, the people should not only declare it to them but *denounce* them. To be blind and mute in relation to the vices of royalty, is unjust alike to self, society, and to the ruler himself. If Elihu meant, by king here, an ideal king—all that a king should be, he was, of course, right to declare it wrong to charge him with wickedness. He means, perhaps, to say, that it would be wrong to charge even a good human king with wickedness; and how much more, to charge the All-perfect Monarch of the universe with injustice. There

is no *true* human king but is just : he that ruleth over men must be just. And if to charge such an one with injustice is wrong, how much more heinous the wrong of charging the Great King of the universe with wickedness ! This remonstrance of Elihu's is—

II. Founded on the IMPARTIALITY of the Eternal. “*How much less to Him that accepteth not the persons of princes, nor regardeth the rich more than the poor ? for they all are the work of His hands.*” God “is no respecter of persons.” This is a fact proclaimed over and over again in the Bible, and which all nature and history demonstrate. The persons of princes are no more to Him than the persons of paupers. The affluent are no more to Him than the indigent. All alike are the “*work of His hand.*” And all are liable every moment to be swept by Him from the face of the earth. “*In a moment shall they die, and the people shall be troubled at midnight, and pass away : and the mighty shall be taken away without hand.*” All are alike subject to the common doom. None are spared on account of their rank, their wealth, their talent, their beauty, or their learning. The most degraded and the most destitute alike have to descend to the grave. The thought of God's impartiality serves two purposes—

First : *To alarm the influentially wicked.* Unrighteous magnates, millionnaires, princes, kings in the world, what are you ? No more in the eyes of God than the meanest beggar that totters from door to door in search of alms. Your pride, your arrogance, your pageantry, are an incongruity and an indecency, as well as an impiety before God. Mark this, you will one day have your due. God is impartial. This thought serves—

Secondly : *To encourage the godly poor.* Let not your want of food or raiment or shelter depress you, you will have justice done you. Your virtue makes you nearer and dearer to the great King of the universe than are the mightiest monarchs of the universe without godliness. This remonstrance of Elihu is—

III. Founded on the OMNISCIENCE of the Eternal. “*For*

His eyes are upon the ways of man, and He seeth all his goings. There is no darkness, nor shadow of death, where the workers of iniquity may hide themselves." Observe—

First: *That wicked men perform their deeds in darkness. "Men love darkness rather than light, because their deeds are evil."* As a rule, men will not perpetrate their worst deeds, in open day, before the social eye. They retire into dark chambers and shadowy haunts. Like nocturnal animals, they can only live in the dark. Observe—

Secondly: *However deep the darkness, God's eye is on them. "There is no darkness, nor shadow of death,"—i. e. the deepest darkness,—“where the workers of iniquity may hide themselves.”* There is no hiding from Omniscience. “Whither shall I flee from Thy presence?” &c. (Psalm cxxxix.). If there be a God, He is Omniscient; and if He is Omniscient, nothing is or can be hid from Him. “The darkness and the light are both alike to Him.” How should this solemn fact restrain us from wrong and stimulate us to right!

“O let these thoughts possess my breast
Where'er I roam, where'er I rest,
Nor let my wicked passions dare
Consent to sin, for God is there.”

This remonstrance of Elihu is—

IV. Founded on the POWER of the Eternal. What a description of power we have here! “*For He will not lay upon man more than right; that he should enter into judgment with God.*” The meaning of this verse, as we have seen, is, He needeth not long to regard man, to bring him before God to judgment. He can do it at once. “*He shall break in pieces mighty men without number, and set others in their stead.*” Unintimidated by their wealth, their power, or number, He can strike them down at once and call others up in their place. “*Therefore (for) He knoweth their works, and He overturneth them in the night, so that they are destroyed.*” Unlike human judges, He does not want witnesses to confirm their guilt, “*He knoweth their works,*” and execution can take place at once. “*He striketh them as wicked men in the open sight of others*” (or in “the place of beholders”), “*because they turned back from Him, and would not consider*

any of His ways: so that they cause the cry of the poor to come unto Him, and He heareth the cry of the afflicted." Those against whom His great crushing power is directed are not the godly, but those who have turned back from Him, have apostatized, "would not consider His ways," and those who "caused the cry of the poor to come unto Him." Here is a glorious truth, that God, in His almighty procedure, has a regard to character. He will crush the wicked, and the wicked only. His power will invigorate, ennoble, and beautify the good. Still more, "when He giveth quietness, who then can make trouble? And when He hideth His face, who then can behold Him? whether it be done against a nation, or against a man only." The idea is, that so effective is His power, that when He gives rest no one can disturb, that when "He hideth His face," no one can "behold Him"; and the same with nations as with individuals. If He quiets a nation or a man, no one can disturb the quiet; or if He disturbs the peace of either, no one can restore it, so powerful is He. And what is the great object of His power? "*That the hypocrite reign not, lest the people be ensnared.*" Such is Elihu's representation of God's power—power to break in pieces "mighty men without number," power to overturn and crush them in the night, power to strike down wicked men in open day, and power which, in all its operations, has a due regard to the moral character of mankind.

Such are the grounds on which Elihu takes his stand, in expostulating with Job on what he considers his wrong views concerning God. He reminds him of God's supremacy, impartiality, omniscience, and power, in order that he might humbly submit to, and cordially acquiesce in, the dispensations of Heaven. And are not these views of God sufficient to hush every murmuring thought, to subdue every rebellious will, and to bring every heart into a loving agreement with His plans?

HOMILY No. LXX.

THE SECOND SPEECH OF ELIHU.

(3.) A GOOD COUNSEL AND A BAD EXAMPLE.

"Surely it is meet to be said unto God," &c.—CHAP. XXXIV. 31-37.

EXEGETICAL REMARKS. *Ver. 31.*—*"Surely it is meet to be said unto God, I have borne chastisement, I will not offend any more."* This verse begins a new strain of remark, the design of which is to bring Job to correct reflections upon what had been said. This verse has been differently rendered. That which agrees with our version and which appears to me at the same time the most faithful translation, is given by *Bernard*. "Surely what is meet to be said unto God is, I have borne my chastisement, I will deal corruptly no more." Here is a confession and resolution.

Ver. 32.—"That which I see not teach Thou me." A most becoming prayer is this. "If I have done iniquity, I will do no more."

Ver. 33.—"Should it be according to thy mind? He will recompense it, whether thou refuse, or whether thou choose; and not I: therefore speak what thou knowest." "According to thy mind;" margin, "from with thee." Shall God proceed in judgment according to thy will? No. It matters not whether thou choose or refuse, He will proceed. "There has been," says a modern expositor, "much diversity of opinion in regard to the meaning of this verse. It is exceedingly obscure in the original, and has the appearance of being a proverbial expression. The general sense seems to be, that God will not be regulated in His dealings by what

may be the views of man, or by what man might be disposed to choose or refuse. He will act according to His own views of what is right and proper to be done. The phrase, 'Should it be according to thy mind,' means, that it is not to be expected that God will consult the views and feelings of men rather than His own." The sense, says *Canon Barry*, seems to be this: "Shall God recompense, according to thy mind, in that thou refusest (His judgment)? That choosest thou, and not I; therefore speak what thou knowest."

Vers. 34, 35.—"Let men of understanding tell me, and let a wise man hearken unto me. Job hath spoken without knowledge, and his words were without wisdom." "Elihu can get no answer from Job; he pauses, and then adds, *Men of heart, and the wise men who hear me, will say to me, Job doth not speak with knowledge, and his words are not in wisdom.*"—*Canon Cooke*.

Ver. 36.—"My desire is that Job may be tried unto the end because of his answers for wicked men." For "desire" the margin reads "father." *Bernard* reads the words, "O my father, let Job be proved for ever, that there may be answers against iniquitous men." This agrees to some extent with the Vulgate, which reads, "My father, let Job be tried to the end, do not cease from the man of iniquity."

Ver. 37. — “For he addeth multiplieth his words against rebellion unto his sin, he clappeth his hands among us, and calumny.” This is an exaggeration, a

HOMILETICS.—In these words we have two things worthy of remark, a *good counsel* and a *bad example*.

I. A GOOD COUNSEL. Elihu recommends Job to do two things.

First: *To resolve on an improved life.* “Surely it is meet to be said unto God, I have borne chastisement, I will not offend any more: that which I see not teach Thou me.” As if Elihu had said, Thou hast had chastisements, severe ones, and these have caused thee to rise up against thy Maker. Now I recommend thee to change thy conduct in this respect, appeal to the Almighty, and say, “I have borne chastisement, I will not offend any more.” Thou hast offended, now resolve to offend no more. Sound advice this; even Paul could give no better. It includes—(1) *Moral reform.* A renunciation of the bad and an adoption of the good. It includes—(2) *Increased light.* “That which I see not teach Thou me.” What a world of important spiritual things even the best men see not! A thick haze of ignorance hangs over their mental sceneries. “More light” should be the cry of every soul. “Open Thou mine eyes, that I may behold wondrous things out of Thy law.” Elihu recommends Job—

Secondly: *To submit to the eternal will.* “Should it be according to thy mind?” That is, shall God recompense according to thy mind? Is He to act according to thy will? The idea is monstrous. God’s mind is the *standard*—all knowing, all loving, all righteous, immutable. That mind cannot change; and were it possible, the change would be worse for humanity and the universe. Submission, therefore, is as expedient as it is binding. Opposition to it is the hell of the soul, a cordial loving submission is its heaven. Every prayer we offer, every purpose we form, every engagement we pursue, should be in submission to the Divine will. “Not my will, but Thine be done.” All answers to prayer are summed up in this loving submission. Depraved men would have things according to *their* mind, and not according to the mind of God. But how monstrous,

how impious, how ruinous, it would be! To such we put two questions—

First: Should *the arrangements of life* be “*according to thy mind?*” Those who are constantly murmuring under the dispensations of Providence, and think and sometimes say that things should be otherwise, would do well to remember four things:—(1) The circumscribed sphere of their observation. What a small spot of this earth,—which is itself but a mere atom in the creation,—thou, who wouldest have things according to *thy* mind, occupiest; whereas God’s government comprehends the universe. (2) The limitation of human faculties. How little even of *thy* small sphere hast thou the faculty of seeing. Thou canst not penetrate the essence of anything about thee, nor canst thou understand all the relations, bearings, issues, of what thou seest on that little spot on which thou standest. (3) The brevity of man’s mortal existence. The system of things under which thou livest began in eternity and reaches on through interminable ages. Thou art only here for a few years. Thou art of “yesterday and knowest nothing.” (4) The narrowness of human sympathies. Thou canst only feel an interest in the few things about thee. Thy sympathies are bound to the little sphere of thy observation; but the system under which thou livest is founded upon a sympathy embracing the universe. What is thy point of observation to His? What is a molehill to the Andes? What is thy faculty of knowledge to His? What is the glowworm that reveals the tiny leaf on which it rests, to the central sun that lights up the creation? What is thy time for understanding things, compared with His? Even a thousand years to eternity are less than one atom to all the massive globes of space. What is thy sympathy to His? He loves all. His love is the spring, the support, and the sunshine of existence. Should life then be arranged “*according to thy mind?*” The idea is as monstrous as it is wicked. We put another question, viz.—

Secondly: Should *the method of redemption* be “*according to thy mind?*” There are many who raise objections to Christianity. Many who imagine that they could have constructed a better system of spiritual redemption. Two

facts convince us that the human mind is utterly incompetent to form a scheme for such a work. (1) The mistakes it has made on the subject where the Bible is not. Men under the light of nature tried for 4000 long years to find out a true system of religious redemption, and failed—signally failed. “The world by wisdom knew not God.” And now, everywhere where Christianity is not, it is still trying, and all its efforts are fruitless. Darkness on this subject still covers the earth and “gross darkness the people.” (2) The mistakes it has made on the subject in interpreting *Christianity*. With the Gospel under its eye, clearly revealing the scheme, it has formed most gross and absurd conceptions as to the way of salvation. The perverters of the Gospel plan of salvation may be divided into two grand classes:—(a) Those that infer from Christianity, that they can be saved by a mere intellectual faith in certain theological propositions. (b) Those that infer that they can be saved by an external observance of certain ceremonies—the intervention of priests, the invocation of saints, the observance of sacraments, &c. Hence we would say to the captious sceptic, we cannot have a system of religion “*according to thy mind*.” “*Thy mind*” is utterly incapable of constructing such a scheme. “Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard,” &c. The counsel, then, that Elihu gives to Job is unquestionably good, and better could not be given. It was a recommendation to adopt an improved life and to search for a higher knowledge.

The other subject we have in these words is—

II. A BAD EXAMPLE. There are four things (vers. 34-37) that exhibit Elihu in no very virtuous or amiable light.

First: There is *vanity*. “*Let men of understanding tell me, and let a wise man hearken unto me.*” Whether this language be regarded as a demand, as in our version, or, as in other versions, “men of understanding will say to me,” they seem to breathe vanity. For a young man either to demand the attention of sages or to predict what they will say, is to exhibit a self-conceitedness that, alas! is too general in young teachers. Vanity is one of the worst features of character, it is damaging to the man’s own mind and offensive

to the minds of others. "Wouldst thou not be thought a fool in another's conceit," says Quarles, "be not wise in thy own: he that trusts to his own wisdom proclaims his own folly: he is truly wise, and shall appear so, that hath folly enough to be thought not worldly wise or wisdom enough to see his own folly."

Secondly: There is *arrogance*. "*Job hath spoken without knowledge, and his words were without wisdom.*" Whether he says this himself, or expects every wise man will say so, and thus confirm his impression, his arrogance in both cases is manifest. The fact of a young man speaking thus of an old, richly experienced, and deeply tried patriarch, reveals a superciliousness of soul that is truly disgusting. A young man, however talented and intelligent, should ever speak with reverence in the presence of age. "He," says an old author, "is the most *lovely* professor who is the most *lowly* professor. As incense smells the sweetest when it is beaten the smallest, so saints look fairest when they lie lowest. Arrogance in the soul resembles the spleen in the body, which grows most while other parts are decaying. God will not suffer such a weed to grow in His garden without taking some course to root it up. A believer is like a vessel cast into the sea: the more it sinks, the more it fills."

Thirdly: There is *heartlessness*. "*My desire is that Job may be tried unto the end because of his answers for wicked men.*" "My father, let Job be tried," the margin has it. The reading in our present version does not alter the sense. This seems to mean, that he desired Job's great trials to be continued, that the old man should continue to writhe in agony. As a young man, one might have expected that he would have broken into tears and sobbed out prayers for the patriarch's relief. Such heartlessness is truly horrible in a young man; it is worthy only of those intolerant religionists who have been ready in every age to martyr those who will not adopt the credenda of their own little souls.

"Let not this weak, unknowing hand
Presume Thy bolts to throw,
And deal damnation on the land,
On all I deem Thy foe.
If I am right, Thy grace impart,
Still in the right to stay;
If I am wrong, oh, teach my heart
To find the better way."

Fourthly: There is *calumny*. “*For he addeth rebellion unto his sin, he clappeth his hands among us, and multiplieth his words against God.*” Where is Job found guilty of such conduct? Where is he found adding rebellion to his sins, “clapping” his “hands” in derision, and multiplying his words against his Maker? Nowhere in this book. It is one of those religious slanders common to bigots.

CONCLUSION.—Whilst we would follow this young man’s counsels, as laid down in these verses, we would hold up his vanity, arrogance, heartlessness, and calumny as a warning to the young advocates of religious opinions.

HOMILY No. LXXI.

THE THIRD SPEECH OF ELIHU.

(1.) MAN’S CHARACTER.

“*Elihu spake moreover, and said,*” &c.—CHAP. XXXV. 1-8.

GENERAL NOTE. If Elihu paused for a reply from Job he was disappointed. The old patriarch remains mute, and hence the young man proceeds to deal with the assertion that a life of righteousness had brought no corresponding blessedness, and to argue that man’s righteousness constitutes no claim on God.

EXEGETICAL REMARKS. *Vers. 1, 2.*—“*Elihu spake moreover, and said, Thinkest thou this to be right, that thou saidst, My righteousness is more than God’s?*” Where did Job say this? I cannot find it in any of his utterances.

Ver. 3.—“*For thou saidst, What advantage will it be unto Thee? and, What profit shall I have, if I be cleansed from my sin*” [margin,

“more than by my sin”]? Job had said, that the wicked who use these very words do not suffer for it; from this Elihu infers that (chap. xxi. 13-15) he virtually sanctioned their sentiments.

Ver. 4.—“*I will answer thee*” [margin, “I will return to thee words”], “*and thy companions with thee.*” Perhaps the reference is here to Eliphaz, who had propounded the same question (chap. xxii. 2); but instead of discussing, he went off to deal reproaches against Job. Elihu seems to have undertaken to refute not only Job’s argument but his friends’ (chap. xxxii. 6, 7).

Vers. 5-8.—“*Look unto the heavens, and see; and behold the clouds which are higher than thou,*” &c. “Which are so high above

thee (ver. 6). If thou hast sinned, what effect canst thou produce on Him? And if thy transgressions are numerous, what canst thou do unto Him? (ver. 7). If thou art righteous, what givest thou Him? or what doth He receive of thine

hand? (ver. 8). A man like thee only can thy wickedness affect, and thy righteousness only a son of man; consequently, if God desires to see thee a good man, it is not for His but for thine own benefit."—*Bernard*.

HOMILETICS.—We shall take these verses as suggesting some thoughts concerning man's character.

I. THAT SELFISHNESS IS AN EVIL IN MAN'S CHARACTER.

"For thou saidst, *What advantage will it be unto thee? and, What profit shall I have, if I be cleansed from my sin?*" Job never said so. But whether he did or not, Elihu's language implies that such an idea is a great evil. Satan had charged the patriarch with this selfishness: "Doth Job serve God for nought?" Selfishness in every department of action is an evil; but when carried into religious services it has a peculiar enormity. Yet, sad to say, in this sphere it has been prevalent in all ages. It is by no means an uncommon thing for men to take up religion on purely selfish motives. (1) There are some who take it up for mere *worldly* gain. As religion becomes popular and fashionable in a neighbourhood, the temptation to this increases. Men join congregations in order to increase the number of their clients, their patients, their customers, and thus enrich their coffers; thus they endeavour to make gain of godliness. (2) There are some who take it up for *eternal* gain. Their object is to escape hell and get to heaven. Religion, to them, is not the *summum bonum*, but a means to a selfish end. But selfishness, however it may show itself in a man's character, is an evil. It vitiates every act. It is incompatible with moral excellence: the soul of which is disinterestedness. It is incompatible with true happiness, which springs from self-oblivious love. It is incompatible with usefulness: all power for good consists in benevolence. And it is incompatible with the Spirit of Christ. "He pleased not Himself, He sought not His own." The verses suggest—

II. THAT GOD IS INDEPENDENT OF MAN'S CHARACTER.

"Look unto the heavens, and see; and behold the clouds which

are higher than thou. *If thou sinnest, what doest thou against Him? or if thy transgressions be multiplied, what doest thou unto Him?*” The idea is, that God is too infinitely exalted to have His happiness at all affected by the character of man, whether good or bad. It does not mean that He is too high to observe our conduct, or to be interested in it, but too high to have His well-being affected by it. Let rebels in His universe be multiplied a million-fold; let all who populate His holiest heavens become rebellious and depraved, it would have no more effect in diminishing His happiness than the breath of an infant in darkening the sun. This being the case, it follows that sovereignty must be the principle of all His conduct with man.

First: *It is the reason of all law.* Why does He require us to love and serve Him? Not for His own sake, but for ours. Thus only we can become happy.

Secondly: *It is the source of Redemption.* Why did He send His Son into the world? He cannot be advantaged by it. “God so loved the world,” &c.

Thirdly: *It is the ground of rewards.* The blessedness He communicates to the good is given, not on the ground of *merit*, but of *grace*. He doeth all things according to the counsel of His own will. We can confer no favour upon Him. “He is,” says Paul at Athens, “Lord of heaven and earth, dwelleth not in temples made with hands; neither is worshipped with men’s hands, as though He needed anything, seeing He giveth to all life, and breath, and all things.” *God’s only want is, a want to give.* The verses suggest—

III. THAT SOCIETY IS INFLUENCED BY MAN’S CHARACTER. “*Thy wickedness may hurt a man as thou art; and thy righteousness may profit the son of man.*” “*May hurt!*” “*May profit!*” Nay, Elihu; rather say, *does and ever must.* “No man liveth unto himself.” Every action a man performs before the eye of another, is like a pebble cast into a lake. It will spread out in circling waves until it touch the boundary. Every word spoken to another swells the flowing current in a deathless soul. One man’s character is reproduced in another. The sire comes out in the son; the

past generation reappears in the present. The wickedness of one *must* hurt society, the righteousness of one *must* profit it. There are at least three things that give every man some influence upon his race. (1) Relationship. Men are not detached from each other like angels, without father or mother. They derive their existence from others, and transmit it again. Each is a link in the chain, receiving and propagating impulses. (2) Dependence. Men are dependent upon one another for the necessaries of physical life, the means of intellectual culture, and the blessings of religion. (3) Affection. We are creatures of social sympathy. Our affections are rooted in theirs, and theirs in us. Thus we derive and give that which moves the world. We are either a curse or a blessing to others. If wicked, we are fountains of poison that will stream out pestilential influences long after we are gone. If righteous, we are fountains of life, whence rivers to irrigate, purify, and beautify the world will flow down the ages.

Brother, look well to thy character. Seek goodness for its *own* sake. Worship the Infinite because it is right; and thus thou shalt truly bless thyself, and bless all who will come within the circle of thine influence. "Add to your faith, virtue; and to virtue, knowledge," &c.

HOMILY No. LXXII.

THE THIRD SPEECH OF ELIHU.

(2.) FIVE PREVALENT EVILS AMONGST MEN.

"*By reason of the multitude,*" &c.—CHAP. XXXV. 9-16.

EXEGETICAL REMARKS. *Vers.* 9-11.—"*By reason of the multitude of oppressions they make the oppressed to cry,*" &c. "(Ver. 9.) If men cry unto God on account of the multitude of oppressions which they suffer at the hands of those

high in power. If they cry aloud on account of the 'arm.' The power of great men who tyrannize over them. (Ver. 10.) When, viz. the oppressor, who uttereth songs in the night, who passes the whole night in feasting and revelry, doth

not say within himself, Where is God my Maker? Is there not in heaven a God who has made them as well as me? (Ver. 11.) Who teacheth us men to be more than the beasts of the earth, and hath made us wiser than the fowl of heaven. If there is a God in heaven who has blessed us with intellect and reason, and given us a conscience to teach us that might is not right, that, when we take advantage of our strength and power against the feeble and the weak, we degrade ourselves to the level of the brute, and that we then resemble rather wolves and tigers than men—if there is such a God, how can I venture to oppress my fellow-creatures in His presence?"—*Bernard*.

Ver. 12.—“*There they cry, but none giveth answer, because of the pride of evil men.*” “There they cry, yet He answereth not, because of the pride of evil men.”—*Delitzsch*. It is natural for men to cry to Heaven in distress. Prayer is an instinct of the soul; but all prayer is utterly unavailing where there is pride in the heart.

Ver. 13.—“*Surely God will not hear vanity, neither will the Almighty regard it.*” A vain, hollow, heartless petition Heaven will ever disregard.

HOMILETICS.—In these verses we have *five* evils that are prevalent amongst men—the cry of oppression, the absence of piety, the prayer of inefficiency, the non-recognition of God, and the uncharitableness of speculative religionists.

I. THE CRY OF OPPRESSION. “*By reason of the multitude of oppressions they make the oppressed to cry.*” The cry of oppression has been heard in all ages and all lands, and is one of the loudest cries in the world to-day. Men are everywhere oppressing their fellow-creatures, the autocrat his subjects, the employer his employés, and the master his

Ver. 14.—“*Although thou sayest thou shalt not see Him, yet judgment is before Him; therefore trust thou in Him.*” This is again addressed to Job. Job had said (chap. xxxiii. 8) that he could not find out his Maker, he went to the east, the west, &c. He was concealed. Elihu reminds him, that though God was invisible to him, he was visible to God; and that God, though invisible, is just, and should be trusted.

Ver. 15.—“*But now, because it is not so, He hath visited in His anger; yet He knoweth it not in great extremity.*” But now that with which His anger has visited thee is as nothing, yea, He hath not regarded the great multitude of thy sins. The idea seems to be, that although Job had been afflicted, his affliction was as nothing compared with the sinfulness of his speeches, and that in the abundance of His mercy God had overlooked his numerous transgressions.

Ver. 16.—“*Therefore doth Job open his mouth in vain; he multiplieth words without knowledge.*” In view of all that Elihu had now said, he concluded that the views of Job were utterly erroneous, and that he had no just cause of complaint.

servants. There are oppressions of various kinds—political, social, domestic, ecclesiastical. In some cases the oppression springs from wanton malice, in others from heartless ambition and hungry greed. Everywhere the stronger treads down the weaker, the mighty fatten on the feeble. “The children of Israel sighed by reason of the bondage, and they cried: and their cry came up unto God.” “Behold, the hire of the labourers who have reaped down your fields, which is of you kept back by fraud, crieth; and the cries of them which have reaped are entered into the ears of the Lord of Sabaoth.” What millions can say to-day with David, “I go mourning because of the oppression of the enemy!” Sin dehumanizes human nature, turns love into hate, transforms even brothers into foes. Another evil we have in these verses is—

II. THE ABSENCE OF PIETY. “*But none saith, Where is God my maker?*” &c. Mark how Elihu represents the Almighty. He represents Him as the Author of our *being*. He is our “Maker:” from Him we derived our complex constitution, so “fearfully and wonderfully made,” with all its varied attributes. He represents Him as the Author of our *happiness*. “*Who giveth songs in the night.*” In the dark night of calamity He can cause the sufferer’s heart to sing for joy. He has often done so, is doing so now, and will continue to do so to the end of time. “At midnight Paul and Silas prayed and sang praises unto God.” He represents Him as the Author of our *intelligence*. “*Who teacheth us more than the beasts of the earth, and maketh us wiser than the fowls of heaven.*” Man can see what these creatures cannot see, he can see wisdom, power, and goodness in the universe. Man can do what these creatures cannot do, he can ascend from facts to principles, from phenomena to laws, from effects to causes, from the creation to the Creator. Now, what Elihu complains of is, that men do not inquire after this God, and that He is not recognized. Alas! this lack of piety is very general. So morally fallen are men, that have come practically to ignore the Author of their being, the Source of their intelligence and joy. What a deplorable condition is this! Men

tically ignoring Him who fills their horizon, and in whom they "live and move and have their being." Another evil we have in these verses is—

III. THE PRAYER OF INEFFICIENCY. "*There they cry, but none giveth answer.*" Or, as some render it, "He giveth no answer," and that because of their pride. "*Surely God will not hear vanity, neither will the Almighty regard it.*" There is plenty of prayer in the world. From the laws of mind, man in agonies and in danger, whatever his creed, involuntarily appeals to Heaven. There are formal prayers and selfish prayers, and the prayers of selfishness are often very earnest and importunate. But such prayers are inefficient, and that because of "*pride*" and "*vanity.*" The unsubmissive, insincere prayer, however ardent and persistent, the Almighty will not regard. "I will not hear." How prevalent is this prayer of inefficiency! How little does prayer accomplish in these days! Are not the heavens all but sealed? Only a few drops of blessing descend here and there: there are no showers now. Why is this? What is popularly called prayer is not prayer. Prayer, in the true Gospel sense, never fails. Its very existence involves its answer. "The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much." Do not let us disparage the true because the false is useless. "To say," says Dr. Owen, "that prayer is no good because some pray hypocritically and derive no blessing, it may be as well pretended, that because the sun shining on a dunghill doth occasion offensive and noisome steams, therefore all that is pretended of its influence on spices and flowers, causing them to give out their fragraney, is utterly false." Another evil we have in these verses is—

IV. THE NON-RECOGNITION OF GOD. "*Although thou sayest thou shalt not see Him, yet judgment is before Him; therefore trust thou in Him.*" Observe—(1) God is not seen. Job confesses (chap. xxiii. 8) that he sought Him but could not find Him: he looked earnestly to all points of the compass, but he discovered Him not. (2) He is just, though not seen, and should be trusted. "*Yet judg-*

ment is before Him; therefore trust thou in Him." Though invisible, He is righteous, and demands our confidence. (3) That although He is just, the punishment which He now inflicts upon sinners is not equal to their deserts. "But now, because it is not so, He hath visited in His anger; yet he knoweth it not in great extremity." It means,—“but now the visitations of His anger are as nothing, and He has not taken cognizance with strictness of transgression.” This is true to the experience of every man. He hath not dealt with us according to our transgressions. Now this God, who is invisible yet just, and who should be trusted, and who only partially punishes sinners here, is unrecognized by the vast majority of mankind. Men everywhere live as if no God existed. They are “without God in the world,” practical atheists. How comes it to pass that the existence of this Supreme One is thus so ignored? Is it because He works behind the veil of secondary causes? No, for He does so in the spheres of the angels. Is it because the universe moves on with such unbroken harmony from age to age, that men are not startled into a consciousness of His presence? No. For to the eyes of the holy ones who see God, the creation is equally harmonious to them. Why then? It is because men do not like to “retain God in all their thoughts.” Their depraved hearts are out of sympathy with Him: they dread Him and turn their eyes from Him. What a terrible evil is this, and how prevalent, alas! Our country teems with practical atheists. To thousands of those who say every Sunday, “I believe in God the Father,” God is a word, nothing more. Oh, when will the time come when men shall seek the Lord with all their hearts? For they that “seek Him shall find Him.” The other evil we have in these verses is—

V. THE UNCHARITABLENESS OF SPECULATIVE RELIGIONISTS.

“Therefore doth Job open his mouth in vain; he multiplieth words without knowledge.” This is untrue and ungenerous. Job’s words were often real and full of intelligence. A speculative religionist is ever uncharitable: he has seldom any heart, his sympathies are gone off into cold abstractions, he is severe and intolerant to his opponents.

CONCLUSION.—Such are some of the evils suggested by these verses: evils, these, that abound everywhere, and that are rotting out the moral heart of humanity. They are a mildew and a blight.

HOMILY No. LXXIII.

THE FOURTH SPEECH OF ELIHU.

(1.) THE PORTRAIT OF A TRUE PREACHER.

“*Elihu also proceeded, and said,*” &c.—CHAP. XXXVI. 1-4.

GENERAL NOTE. Job having still made no reply, Elihu resumes his address.

EXEGETICAL REMARKS. *Vers. 1, 2.* — “*Elihu also proceeded, and said, Suffer me a little, and I will show thee that I have yet to speak on God’s behalf*” [margin, “there are yet words for God”]. Elihu had already delivered three speeches. “*Suffer me a little.*” Though I have already occupied so much time, I have not said all. This is a formula of politeness.

Ver. 3.—“*I will fetch my knowledge from afar.*” By this he means, I will now dive more deeply into the subject, I will not deal in commonplaces, I will bring up original arguments to vindicate the character of God. “*And will ascribe righteousness to my Maker.*” I will prove that He is just in all His dispensations.

Ver. 4.—“*For truly my words*

shall not be false.” He means, I am going to speak nothing but the truth. Though much that has been uttered, both by thy three friends and thyself, has been false, what I say shall be the truth. Job had charged his friends (chap. xiii. 7, 8) with sophistical arguments. Perhaps Elihu refers to this. “*He that is perfect in knowledge is with thee.*” There are two opinions about this expression. The one supposes that Elihu refers to God, and represents Him as the One “perfect in knowledge,” and that his idea is, that although God is enthroned in heaven, He is with thee, by thee, and around thee, and I speak in His presence. The other and the more admissible opinion is, that he speaks of himself as the one “perfect in knowledge.” Elihu means himself, as opposed to the dishonest reasoning of the friends (chap. xxi. 34).

HOMILETICS.—In these four verses we discover some features in the *portrait of a true preacher*. We do not say that Elihu was true; but certainly his language here suggests

the true. The words represent four things concerning a true preacher—

I. THE SIDE HE HAS TO TAKE. “*I have yet to speak on God’s behalf.*” Sin is a controversy with God. The millions of ungodly men are engaged in this debate. The true preacher has to take the side of God in the discussion.

First: *He has to defend the procedure of God.* He has to justify the ways of Heaven. Secondly: *He has to vindicate the character of God.* His character is defamed, misrepresented, condemned. The true preacher has to clear his Maker of all ungodly accusations. Thirdly: *He has to enforce the claims of God.* His claims to their supreme love and constant obedience. Fourthly: *He has to offer the redemption of God.* To show forth the wonderful mercy of God in Christ Jesus. The words represent a true preacher in—

II. THE KNOWLEDGE HE HAS TO COMMUNICATE. “*I will fetch my knowledge from afar.*” All, perhaps, that Elihu meant by this expression was, that he did not intend dealing in commonplaces, to go over the same ground which others had trodden, but to go into fresh regions for his thoughts. Literally, the true preacher has to fetch his “*knowledge from afar.*” First: “*From afar*” in relation to the *intuitions* of men. The facts of the Gospel, though they agree with, lie far away from, the inbred sentiments of the human soul. Secondly: “*From afar*” in relation to the *philosophical deductions* of men. Human reason could never discover the essential truths of the Gospel. “Eye hath not seen,” &c. Thirdly: “*From afar*” in relation to the depraved *spirit* of men. The spirit of the Gospel is foreign to the dispositions of the ungodly world. We have to fetch our “*knowledge from afar.*” We have to go back over the centuries, back to Christ and His apostles, &c. The words represent a true preacher in—

III. THE PURPOSE HE HAS TO MAINTAIN. “*I will ascribe righteousness to my Maker.*” Elihu’s purpose seemed to be, to demonstrate to Job that God was righteous in all His

ways and worthy of his confidence. The conviction of God's righteousness must be amongst the deepest and most invincible forces in the soul of the true preacher. A sceptical philosophy in criticizing the Divine procedure may sometimes throw such a thick mist over the righteousness of God as to hide it for a time from his reason; but his heart must hold on to it with tenacity. God's ways are equal. This must be his watchword, his landmark in his mental explorations, his pole-star in his excursions. With this conviction he will show—First: *That no suffering falls on any creature more than he deserves.* Secondly: *That no work is demanded of any creature more than he can render.* The words represent a true preacher in—

IV. THE FAITHFULNESS HE HAS TO PRACTISE. “*Truly my words shall not be false: he that is perfect in knowledge is with thee.*” If in the latter clause Elihu refers to himself—as is the general opinion—it expresses his purpose to be true and real. *Faithfulness* is essential to the character of a true preacher. He should labour hard to get honest convictions of truth, and those convictions he should thunder out, regardless alike of the smiles and frowns of men. No class of men do I know more despicable, dangerous, and denounceable than hollow, insincere, temporizing preachers of God's Word.

HOMILY No. LXXIV.

THE FOURTH SPEECH OF ELIHU.

(2.) GOD ABSOLUTELY AND RELATIVELY.

“Behold, God is mighty, and despiseth not any:” &c.—CHAP. XXXVI. 5-15.

EXEGETICAL REMARKS. *Ver. 5.*—“Behold, God is mighty, and despiseth not any: He is mighty in strength and wisdom.” The idea seems to be, that although God is mighty both in “strength and wisdom,” He does not despise any, treats none with indifference or disdain. For wisdom [heart].

Ver. 6.—“He preserveth not the life of the wicked.” Elihu here maintains substantially the same sentiment which the three friends of Job had done, that the dealings of God in this life are in accordance with character, and that strict justice is thus maintained. *Bernard* renders it, “He will not preserve the wicked man alive.” “But giveth right to the poor” [margin, “afflicted”]. There is justice in suffering.

Ver. 7.—“He withdraweth not His eyes from the righteous: but with kings are they on the throne; yea, He doth establish them for ever, and they are exalted.” *Dr. Samuel Davidson* thus translates the verse: “He withdraweth not His eyes from the righteous: yea, with kings on the throne he makes them to sit for ever and be exalted.” God does not forsake the godly, as Elihu implied, but establishes or makes them sit on the throne as kings (1 Sam. ii. 8; Ps. cxiii. 7, 8). True of believers in the highest sense already in part (1 Pet. ii. 9; Rev. i. 6); hereafter fully (Rev. v. 10; xxii. 5).”

Ver. 8.—“And if they be bound

in fetters, and be holden in cords of affliction.” He is speaking of the righteous, as in verse 7. Sometimes, indeed frequently, the righteous are “holden in cords of affliction.” Affliction is no proof of wickedness, as the friends maintained.

Ver. 9.—“Then He sheweth them their work, and their transgressions that they have exceeded.” Their afflictions are disciplinary. The afflictions of the good are designed to reveal to them their transgressions, and to stimulate them to get rid of all sin.

Ver. 10.—“He openeth also their ear to discipline, and commandeth that they return from iniquity.” (See chap. xxxi. 11.)

Ver. 11.—“If they obey and serve Him, they shall spend their days in prosperity, and their years in pleasures.” If their afflictions lead to a renunciation of their sins, and to genuine obedience and worship, prosperity and pleasure will come to them.

Ver. 12.—“But if they obey not, they shall perish by the sword, and they shall die without knowledge.” “And if they hear not, they pass away by the bow, and expire in lack of knowledge.” — *Delitzsch*. This is the converse of the preceding verse. Ruin must befall the impenitent.

Ver. 13.—“But the hypocrites in heart heap up wrath: they cry not when He bindeth them.” “Heap up wrath” may mean either they treasure up wrath against themselves (Rom.

ii. 6) or that they cherish wrath in their hearts, *i. e.* they grow spiteful and malignant under the afflicting rod. The reason is, because "they cry not when He bindeth them." They do not pray under their afflictions.

Ver. 14.—"They die in youth"

[margin, "their soul dieth"]. The meaning is, they would soon be cut down and slain, the lot of all the wicked. "*And their life is among the unclean*" [margin, "Sodomites"]. The idea is, they will be treated as the most abandoned and vile of mankind.

HOMILETICS.—The passage presents to us God *absolutely and relatively*. Here we have—

I. God ABSOLUTELY. Elihu speaks of Him as—

First: *Almighty*. "*God is mighty*;" and again, is "*mighty in strength*." It needs no Bible to tell us this. The first and deepest impression perhaps that man in his rudest state receives, is that the Creator and Controller of this wonderful universe is mighty. He sees effects and evidences of force everywhere; in the revolution of the heavenly orbs, in the eternal surgings of the great world of waters, in the rushing tempests, and the belching volcanoes. He is the fountain of all force. Elihu speaks of Him as—

Secondly: *All-wise*. "*He is mighty in strength and wisdom*." That is, intelligence, for the heart is the Biblical symbol for intelligence, as well as affection. The farther and deeper that science searches into the arcana of nature, the more is it impressed with the infinite intelligence of the Great Architect. God's intelligence is as great as His strength. His Almighty energy is not at the mercy of blind impulse, but directed by an all-seeing and all-encompassing intelligence. Elihu speaks of Him as—

Thirdly: *All-considerate*. "*Despiset not any*." He is lovingly interested in all that He has created. Take the microscope and examine the tiniest sentient existence, and its exquisite organization, powers, and beauties must convince us that He has a regard for all the works of His hand. He has made all for enjoyment, and provided means of enjoyment for all. However we may differ from Elihu in many things, his views of God are often accurate and grand. Here we have—

II. God RELATIVELY, or, in other words, what He is in relation to man.

First : He takes *cognizance of the character and conduct of individual man in this life.* “*He withdraweth not His eyes from the righteous.*” He sees them wherever they are, and in whatever condition. “*With kings are they on the throne.*” That God takes notice of the particular as well as the universal, individuals as well as nations and worlds, is a truth sustained by reason, universal experience, and the Bible. It is a glorious truth.

Secondly : He *exercises discipline* towards men in this life. “*If they be bound in fetters, and be holden in cords of affliction; then He showeth them their work.*” He sends affliction upon men. “*He openeth also their ear to discipline, and commandeth that they return from iniquity.*” The moral ears of men are closed against truth; no one can open those ears but He; and this He does with the truths He suggests, through the influences of nature and His providence. Humanity on this earth is under a disciplinary administration. Life is a moral school; and the schoolmaster is the Great Father of souls. He works to make men “meet for the inheritance of the saints in light.” Two things Elihu teaches here concerning God’s disciplinary treatment. (1) If men are rightly influenced by it, they will find happiness. “*If they obey and serve Him, they shall spend their days in prosperity, and their years in pleasures,*”—i. e. they shall be happy. This is true in this life. “*Godliness is profitable unto all things.*” (2) If men resist His influence, they shall find ruin. “*But if they obey not, they shall perish by the sword, and they shall die without knowledge. But the hypocrites in heart heap up wrath: they cry not when He bindeth them. They die in youth, and their life is among the unclean.*” Such men, it is here taught, are exposed to (α) Violence. “*Perish by the sword.*” (β) Permanent ignorance. “*Shall die without knowledge.*” Nothing will enlighten them; blinded to the last. (γ) Wrath. “*The hypocrites in heart heap up wrath.*” The wrath of the hypocrite’s own conscience will ruin him: it will echo all the woes that Christ Himself pronounced against the class.

Thirdly : *He has a special regard for the poor and afflicted in this life.* “*He delivereth the poor in his affliction, and openeth their ears in oppression.*” “Observe—(1) Afflictions

of various kinds, whether from men or otherwise, are allowed by God for wise purposes. (2) One of these purposes is to receive instruction. Divine chastening connected with Divine teaching (Ps. xciv. 10). "Hear ye the rod" (Micah vi. 2). (3) Accepted chastisement usually followed by imparted deliverance (Lev. xxvi. 41, 42). Deliverance may be either (α) By removing the affliction; (β) By removing the afflicted to a better world; or (γ) By filling his soul with comfort, and raising him above his affliction." —*Dr. Robinson.*

CONCLUSION.—From this uninspired, fallible, and somewhat vain young man let us gratefully and gladly receive all the truths he propounds; and let us look at the God he has here brought under our notice, the absolute and the relative God, until our spirits glow with gratitude, reverence, and devotion.

HOMILY No. LXXV.

THE FOURTH SPEECH OF ELIHU.

(3.) A SOUND DOCTRINE, A FALSE CHARGE, A SOLEMN WARNING, AND AN IMPORTANT ADMONITION.

"*Even so would He have removed thee out of the strait into a broad place,*"
 &c.—CHAP. xxxvi. 16-21.

EXEGETICAL REMARKS. Elihu goes on in these verses to apply what he had said to Job.

Ver. 16.—"Even so would He have removed thee out of the strait into a broad place, where there is no straitness; and that which should be set on thy table should be full of fatness." "And He even bringeth thee out of the jaws of distress to a broad place, whose ground hath no straitness; and the adorn-

ing of thy table shall be full of fatness." — *Delitzsch.* Elihu had stated that if a sufferer would properly apply to God in a proper spirit he would obtain relief; and inasmuch as Job had not obtained relief, he concluded that he lacked the proper spirit. The meaning is, He would have led thee forth also out of the jaws of a strait if thou hadst humbled thyself as the pious poor in affliction.

Ver. 17.—“*But thou hast fulfilled the judgment of the wicked: judgment and justice take hold on thee.*” This verse requires no new translation, it accords with the Hebrew, and is good sense. The expression “*take hold on thee*” is in the margin rendered “*should uphold thee.*” Perhaps Elihu meant to say, that inasmuch as Job displayed the spirit of the wicked, he was treated as they are.

Vers. 18, 19.—“*Because there is wrath, beware lest He take thee away with His stroke: then a great ransom cannot deliver thee. Will He esteem thy riches? no, not gold, nor all the forces of strength.*” The paraphrase of *Dr. Bernard* upon these verses seems to me to express the idea, and is worthy of quotation. “*For now it is wrath; the very sufferings which were originally sent upon thee through the grace and mercy of God, now torture and rack thee because of His wrath: I warn thee therefore, yea, take heed lest He should remove thee with one blow, which no ransom, however great, will enable thee to*

avoid. For that which is a ransom among men is no ransom with God. Will He esteem thy riches? No, neither gold, nor all the endeavours of strength. The only ransom He will accept, is a penitent and contrite heart.”

Vers. 20, 21.—“*Desire not the night, when people are cut off in their place. Take heed, regard not iniquity: for this hast thou chosen rather than affliction.*” These words Elihu seemed to utter in reference to the great longing which Job often expressed to descend to the grave. He seems to have expressed at one time a desire for self-destruction. Here Elihu warns him against the commission of suicide, and reminds him that death, which comes through and sweeps away all nations, would assuredly come to him one day; there is no need of hurry. The following translation gives the idea: “*Pant not for that night which cutteth off whole nations in their place. Take heed, turn thee not to that iniquity, for thou seemest to choose it rather than affliction.*”

HOMILETICS.—In these verses we have a sound doctrine, a false charge, a solemn warning, and an important admonition.

We have here—

I. A SOUND DOCTRINE. “*Even so would He have removed thee out of the strait into a broad place, where there is no straitness; and that which should be set on thy table should be full of fatness.*” The doctrine is this: That a man can only expect to be delivered from painful circumstances by cherishing a right state of mind towards God. Elihu seems to intimate that Job was in a “*strait*,” pent up and bound by his affliction, and deprived of all that he required on his “*table*” because of sin. All men like Job are more or less in a “*strait*” in this life, pent up by sufferings, enthralled by a

variety of circumstances, and deprived of a sufficiency for their "table." Where are the men to be found on this earth who feel they have full liberty and satisfaction? They are very few. How are they to get out of their difficulties, rise to true liberty and enjoyment? Elihu intimates that it must be by cherishing a right spirit towards God. This is true, there is nothing truer than this. It is this state of the mind that will break open the prison door of the soul and take it out into a "broad place" where there is no "straitness," and introduce it to a banquet where there are provisions full of fatness, yielding full satisfaction. True liberty cannot be given, it must be won by the soul. Satisfactory provisions cannot be bestowed, they must grow up in the true heart. The holy soul creates its own heaven, spreads out its bright skies, pours forth its rivers of life, paints its beauties, and produces its fruits.

Here is—

II. A FALSE CHARGE. "*But thou hast fulfilled the judgment of the wicked.*" The general idea seems to be this: Because thou art wicked thou art suffering the judgment due to the wicked. Now Job was suffering, suffering terribly, but he was not suffering on account of his sin. This he felt was not the fact. He was suffering for a reason which he did not know, which none of his friends knew, which no one knew but God and Satan; and that was, to demonstrate the fact to humanity and the universe, that man could be disinterested in religion. God had pronounced Job a "perfect" man. Satan denied this, and said he was selfish, that he was religious because it answered his purpose, that it yielded him plenteousness, that he did not "serve God for nought." Whereupon God said, Test him by taking everything from him. It is done, and the patriarch, when stripped of everything and in the greatest anguish, held fast to his righteousness and said, "Yea, though He slay me, yet will I trust in Him." Job was suffering therefore, not as Elihu implied, but because God made him the instrument of working out the greatest of human problems, viz. disinterestedness in religion.

Here we have—

III. A SOLEMN WARNING. "*Because there is wrath, beware lest He take thee away with His stroke: then a great ransom cannot deliver thee.*" As a warning to sinners generally, this is admirable, although it does not apply to Job. Three truths are suggested—

First: *There is "wrath" in the government of God.* The wrath, however, is not a Divine passion, but a beneficent principle; it is not against existence, but against the sins and sufferings of existence. It reveals itself not only in the judgments that befall men and communities, but in the agonies of a guilty conscience and the indissoluble connection between crime and misery.

Secondly: *This "wrath" may overtake the sinner any moment.* It may destroy his possessions, blast all his hopes, and strike him down at once as with a "*stroke.*" It is a cloud in every sinner's sky, and it goes on spreading and blackening and cradling the thunders of retribution.

Thirdly: When it overtakes him in this way, he has *no means of deliverance.* "*Then a great ransom cannot deliver thee.*" "*Riches profit nothing in the day of wrath.*"

Here we have—

IV. AN IMPORTANT ADMONITION. "*Desire not the night, when people are cut off in their place. Take heed, regard not iniquity: for this hast thou chosen rather than affliction.*" He admonishes Job—

First: *Not to long for death.* "*Desire not the night.*" Death is a night: a long, starless night. Job had often longed for it; with all the depths of his nature he cried out for the grave. Elihu reminds him that there is no need for this, that it would come soon enough. "*People are cut off in their place.*" Death comes to all, and it will come to thee; thou needest not hasten thy steps towards it. This is true of us all. No effort is required to terminate our existence, that will be done soon enough. He admonishes Job—

Secondly: *To guard against sin.* "*Take heed, regard not iniquity.*" This advice in this case was not only unnecessary, but heartless. Job did not choose "*iniquity*" rather than "*affliction.*" Men often do this; but he did it not.

We may take the advice, for we are all prone to choose "*iniquity*" rather than "*affliction.*" Matthew Henry, with characteristic wisdom and quaintness, says—"They who choose iniquity rather than affliction, make a very foolish choice; they that ease their cares by sinful pleasures, escape their troubles by sinful projects, and evade sufferings for righteousness' sake by sinful compliances against their consciences; these make a choice they will repent of, for there is more evil in the least sin than in the greatest affliction."

HOMILY No. LXXVI.

THE FOURTH SPEECH OF ELIHU.

(4.) THE BEING AND AGENCY OF GOD.

"Behold, God exalteth by His power:" &c.—CHAP. XXXVI. 22-33.

EXEGETICAL REMARKS. *Ver.* 22.—"Behold, God exalteth by His power." "Exalted in His power."—*Bernard*. "Acteth loftily in His strength."—*Delitzsch*. "Who teacheth like Him?" Elihu seems to have the idea that God taught by punishment. He is an incomparable Teacher.

Ver. 23.—"Who hath enjoined Him His way?" "Who hath appointed Him His way?"—*Delitzsch*. The idea is, absolute independency. "Or who can say, Thou hast wrought iniquity?" An interrogatory implying Elihu's belief that no one could bring a charge of injustice against God for His conduct towards man. He is always right.

Ver. 24.—"Remember that thou magnify His work, which men behold." "Which men sing."—*Delitzsch*. "Which men do contemplate."—*Bernard*. "Which men celebrate with song."—*Noyes*.

Ver. 25.—"Every man may see it; man may behold it afar off." The works of God are visible to all men: even those works that are "*afar off*" in the spangled firmament may be seen.

Ver. 26.—"Behold, God is great, and we know Him not, neither can the number of his years be searched out." Incomprehensible both in His being, duration, and works.

Vers. 27-29.—"For He maketh small the drops of water: they pour down rain according to the vapour thereof: which the clouds do drop and distil upon man abundantly. Also can any understand the spreadings of the clouds, or the noise of His tabernacle?" "The entire passage contained in the remainder of this chapter and the first portion of the following, form a very accurate and picturesque delineation of the process of vaporization, and the formation of rain, clouds, and tempests."

—*Kitto*. “When He taketh away the drops of water.” From the seas, rivers, and other collections of water, as also from the earth generally by means of evaporation. They, these drops, distil rain for His mist. These imperceptible particles, derived by evaporation from the sources just named, unite into drops (which *Elihu* terms rain, even before they have ascended to form clouds), when but a short distance above the face of the earth, and constitute mists. Rain which the clouds drop, pour forth upon man in abundance. Yea, can one understand the spreading of the thick clouds or the noise of His tabernacle? The roaring of the thunder heard among the clouds in which God dwells as in a tabernacle.

—*Bernard*.

Vers. 30-33. — “Behold, He spreadeth His light upon it, and covereth the bottom of the sea. For by them judgeth He the people; He giveth meat in abundance. With clouds He covereth the light; and commandeth it not to shine by the cloud that cometh betwixt. The

noise thereof showeth concerning it, the cattle also concerning the vapour.” *Dr. Samuel Davidson’s* translation of these verses is not only faithful to the original, but gives the meaning so clearly as scarcely to require a note of explanation.

“Behold, He spreadeth His light over Himself,
And covereth Himself with the depths of the sea,
For by them He judgeth the peoples,
Giveth food also in abundance.
His hands He covereth with light,
And commandeth it against the adversary.
His thunder giveth notice of Him,
Making wrath rage against iniquity.”

The ideas, as expressed in this passage, are, that the Great God, who spreads light over Himself and covers Himself with the depths of the sea, employs the waters which come down upon the earth, sometimes to punish people, and sometimes to confer on them an abundance of food; that with His hands He uses the lightnings, and directs them against His enemies, and that the thunder intimates His approach to punish wrong.

HOMILETICS.—The whole passage brings under our attention the *being* and *agency* of God. Notice—

I. His BEING, as here presented. God *is*. This is the greatest fact in the universe—great in its proofs, in its moral meaning, in its infinite influence. *Elihu* points our attention to three great facts concerning this Great Being.

First: He is *mighty*. “Behold, God exalteth by His power.” Whether the expression means that God exalts Himself by His power, or is exalted by others, does not matter: power is the idea. Power belongeth unto God. All kinds of power, physical, intellectual, and moral.

Secondly: He is *independent*. “Who hath enjoined Him His way?” “Who, being His counsellor, hath taught Him?” “He doeth according to His will in the army of

heaven and among the inhabitants of the earth." The only *irresponsible* Being in the universe is God. He is amenable to no one beyond Himself. Independent in judgment: no one can enlighten Him. Independent in work: no one can help Him.

Thirdly: He is *righteous*. "Who can say, *Thou hast wrought iniquity?*" God has never been convicted of wrong, and never can be. If devils could do this, they would have no remorse, no hell.

Fourthly: He is *adorable*. "Remember that thou magnify His work, which men behold." Man is here called upon to adore Him in His works, which are visible to all. We are not to worship His works,—that would be idolatry,—but to worship Him in His works, which are not only His productions, but emblems of Himself. Nature is a temple for worship.

"Nature—a temple worthy Thee,
That beams with light and love,
Whose flowers so sweetly bloom below,
Whose stars rejoice above,
Whose altars are the mountain cliffs
That rise along the shore,
Whose anthems the sublime accord
Of storm and ocean's roar."

Fifthly: He is *incomprehensible*. "Behold, God is great, and we know Him not." (1) Incomprehensible in His *nature*. He is the unfathomed, fathomless mystery.

"Thy nature is the mystery
In which all thoughts are lost;
Archangels wonder at Thee
Through heaven's unnumbered host.
Unbounded is Thine essence,
All space is full of Thee,
And 'tis Thy blessed presence
That suns immensity."

(2) Incomprehensible in His *duration*. "Neither can the number of His years be searched out." How old is God? How old are the mountains? They are called "everlasting." Geology is lost in its endeavours to reach their birth. How old are the heavens? Far older perhaps than this earth, whose birth is lost in the abysses of past eternities. But they are young, only of yesterday, as compared with God. Count all the sand on ocean's shore, and all the drops

that form the ocean, all the atoms that make up the world; add them all together, the mighty sum stands as nothing in the presence of eternity. Verily, "*God is great.*" What are all the things that men call great among themselves, crowns, sceptres, thrones, equipages, compared to His greatness? More contemptible far than the pyrotechnic flashes in the presence of the splendour of the starry heavens. Notice—

II. His AGENCY as here presented. His agency both in the mental and the material domains is here referred to.

First; His agency in the *mental* realm. He is a Teacher. "*Who teacheth like Him?*" (1) He teaches the *best lessons*—lessons the grandest in their nature and the most vital to the interests of all moral intelligences. He reveals Himself, and He is the root and sap of all the branches of the tree of science. (2) He teaches the best lessons in the *best way*. (α) By symbols. All the works of nature are the symbols, the hieroglyphics He employs. "The heavens declare the glory of God," &c. (β) By example. "He bowed the heavens and came down," and He acted out His grand lessons in the life of a wonderful Man—the Man Christ Jesus. (3) He teaches the best lessons in the best way for the best *purpose*. He does not teach as men teach, in order to make their pupils craftsmen, merchants, artists, and to qualify them for getting on in this life; He teaches in order to make them *men*, fit them for eternity. He does not aim to make them great citizens on earth, but to make them great citizens of the spiritual universe. I like to think of God as the Great Father teaching His spiritual universe.

Secondly: His agency in the *material* realm. Four ideas are suggested here concerning His agency in nature. It is—(1) *Minute*. "*He maketh small the drops of water.*" Then He has to do with the vapour, the cloud, the lightning, &c.; His agency is not only seen in rolling oceans, but in the rain-drop.* Men are prone to think of God,—when they think of Him at all,—only in connection with the great and the awful. They see Him in the flash of lightning, not in the sunbeam; hear Him in the thunder, not in the whispering

* See "*Science Byways,*" by R. A. Proctor, p. 243. Published by Smith and Elder.

air. Ever should we remember that great and small are but relative terms : what is great to one being is small to another. To God there is nothing great or small. And ever should we remember also, that God has as much connection with what we consider small as with the great. His agency in nature is—(2) *Inscrutable*. “*Also can any understand the spreadings of the clouds, or the noise of His tabernacle?*” Scientific men talk very largely about the laws of meteorology, but can they trace the primary force that originates and controls all the phenomena? Can any understand the ultimate power by which the clouds are formed, by which they are suspended in the heavens, drink up oceans, cradle tempests, and discharge their contents on the earth? We are told of laws; but what are the laws? His agency in nature is—(3) *Moral*. “*By them judgeth He the people; He giveth meat in abundance.*” God is a Moral Being, all His operations are controlled by moral impulses and directed to moral ends. By nature He punishes, and by nature He blesses men. His agency in nature is—(4) *Often terrible*. “*The noise thereof showeth concerning it, the cattle also concerning the vapour.*” Or, as *Davidson* has it, His “*thunders give notice of Him.*” How overwhelmingly terrible are some tempests! The next chapter will suggest some remarks on this subject.

CONCLUSION.—With what profound reverence should we regard that God, who is above all, in all, and through all!

HOMILY No. LXXVII.

THE FOURTH SPEECH OF ELIHU.

(5.) THE PHENOMENA OF NATURE.

"At this also my heart trembleth, and is moved out of his place." &c.—
CHAP. XXXVII. 1-13.

EXEGETICAL REMARKS. This chapter is a continuation of the argument which Elihu commenced in the previous one, an argument to demonstrate the greatness of God. His aim seems to be, to show that God's character is so great and His works so inscrutable that it becomes man to bow with submission.

Ver. 1.—*"At this."* That is, at the thunder-storm which had just commenced; and whose approach he indicated in the previous chapter. *"My heart trembleth, and is moved out of his place."* The thunder-peals made his nerves quiver, sent the blood from the extremities to the heart, and threw it into violent palpitations.

Vers. 2-5.—*"Hear attentively the noise of His voice, and the sound that goeth out of His mouth. He directeth it under the whole heaven, and His lightning unto the ends of the earth. After it a voice roareth: He thundereth with the voice of His excellency; and He will not stay them when His voice is heard. God thundereth marvellously with His voice; great things doeth He, which we cannot comprehend."* The words seem so true to the original, that biblical critics have suggested no important emendations. It is one of the sublimest descriptions of a thunder-storm we have in any literature; it is equal, if not superior, to that given in Psalm xxix. A thunder-storm, indeed, seldom fails

to awaken terror. "Instances," says Proctor, in his admirable work, "Science Byways," "have been known of death being occasioned by the dread which a thunder-storm has excited, when the seat of danger was in reality several miles away. There are, however, persons, not otherwise wanting in courage, who experience an oppressive sense of terror,—apart from the fear of danger,—when electrical phenomena are in progress. The Emperor Augustus used to suffer the most distressing emotions when a thunder-storm was in progress; and he was in the habit of retiring to a low vaulted chamber under-ground, under the mistaken idea that lightning never penetrated far below the earth's surface; and used also to wear seal-skin dresses, under the impression that he derived safety thereby. Major Vokes, the Irish police-officer, a man whose daring was proverbial, used to be prostrated by terror during a thunder-storm. We cannot doubt that in these instances nervous effects are produced which are wholly distinct from the fear engendered by the simple consciousness of danger.

Ver. 6.—*"For He saith to the snow, Be thou on the earth."* "Some readers, regarding Job and his friends as Emirs of the region bordering on Palestine, will, from the ideas they form of hot regions, be surprised at their familiarity with snow. The

mountains of Lebanon are covered all the winter with snow, which, when the winds are easterly, affects the whole coast from Tripoli to Sidon with a more piercing cold than is known even in this northern climate. But the other maritime and inland places, whether to the north or south of these mountains, enjoy a milder temperature and a more regular change in the seasons. Le Bruy, travelling along the maritime coast in January, found the whole country round Tripoli covered with deep snow.—*Kitto*. “*Like-wise to the small rain, and to the great rain of His strength.*” “The idea before the mind of Elihu seems to have been that of a shower, as it commences and increases until it pours down torrents; and the meaning is, that alike in the one case and the other, the rain was under the command of God, and obeyed His will. The whole description here, is that which pertains to winter; and Elihu refers doubtless to the copious rain which fell at that season of the year.”

Ver. 7.—“*He sealeth up the hand of every man; that all men may know His work.*” “He putteth a seal on the hand of every man, that all men may come to a knowledge of His creative work.”—*Delitzsch*. When the earth is bound with the chains of frost, what can man do? He is only made to feel his dependence on Him who can bind and unbind it at His pleasure.”

Ver. 8.—“*Then the beasts go into dens, and remain in their places.*” Not only does the snow and the frost tie the hands of man, but chain the wild beasts to their dens. It is a beneficent arrangement, that when the severe cold prevents these creatures from obtaining their means of subsistence, they lie torpid and thus require no provisions.

Ver. 9.—“*Out of the south cometh the whirlwind: and cold out of the north.*” The marginal reading is, “Out of the chamber cometh the whirlwind, and cold out of the scattering winds.” The whirlwinds are poetically regarded as pent up by God in His south chamber, whence He sendeth them forth. See Psalm cxxxv. 7: “He bringeth the wind out of His treasures.”

Ver. 10.—“*By the breath of God frost is given.*” “Not by the violent north wind, nor by the whirlwind of the south, but God seems to breathe in a gentle manner, and the earth is covered with hoary frost. It appears in a still night when there is no storm or tempest, and descends upon the earth as silently as if it were produced by mere breathing. Frost is congealed or frozen dew. The figure is poetical and beautiful. The slight motion of the air, even when the frost appears, seems to be caused by the breathing of God.”—*Burnes*. “*And the breadth of the waters is straitened.*” Frost contracts as well as hardens the fluid into a solid mass.

Vers. 11-13.—“*Also by watering He wearieth the thick cloud: He scattereth His bright cloud: and it is turned round about by His counsels: that they may do whatsoever He commandeth them upon the face of the world in the earth. He causeth it to come, whether for correction, or for His land, or for mercy.*” In Amos iv. 7, 8, we have these remarkable words: “Also I have withholden the rain from you, when there were yet three months to the harvest, and I caused it to rain upon one city, and caused it not to rain upon another city: one piece was rained upon, and the piece whereupon it rained not withered. So two or three cities wandered unto one city, to drink water.”

This seems to teach that God sometimes shows His favour and His disfavour at the same time, by simultaneously giving and withholding rain. Elihu had this idea in these verses. Various translations have been given of these verses, but the idea of Amos is evidently expressed in all. Perhaps the rendering of *Delitzsch* is the

best. "Also He loadeth the clouds with water, He spreadeth far and wide the cloud of His light, and these turn themselves round about, directed by Him, that they execute all that He hath commanded them over the wide earth. Whether for a scourge or for the good of His earth, or for mercy, He causeth it to discharge itself."

HOMILETICS.—We have here Elihu's view of the phenomena of nature. He regarded it—

I. As the RESULT of the Divine AGENCY. He speaks of the thunder as the voice of God. "*The sound that goeth out of His mouth,*" "*the voice of His excellency.*" He speaks of the lightning as being directed under the whole heaven by Him, even unto the "*ends of the earth.*" He speaks of snow and rain as being sent by Him. "*He saith to the snow, Be thou on the earth.*" He speaks of the "*whirlwind*" as coming out of His chamber, and "*frost*" as being produced by His breath; and the clouds as being "*turned round about by His counsels,*" and doing "*whatsoever He commandeth them upon the face of the world in the earth.*" Modern science spreads out theoretic schemes between nature and God. It speaks of laws and forces. This was not the science of Elihu: he regarded man as being brought face to face with God in nature; he saw God everywhere—in the clouds, in the winds, in the thunders and the lightnings, in the light and in the dark, in the freezing winds and the thawing breeze. This is the true science; this is the science exhibited in Psalm civ. and throughout the word of God; this is the science that we ought all to cultivate. He regarded the phenomena of nature—

II. As the REVEALER of the Divine CHARACTER. He recognised—(1) His *majesty*. "*In the thunder.*" (2) His *ubiquity*. He saw Him everywhere, in the little as well as in the great. (3) His *inscrutableness*,—He could not follow Him in all His movements. He "*thundereth marvellously*

with His voice; great things doeth He which we cannot comprehend." He regarded the phenomena of nature—

III. As the INSTRUMENT of the Divine PURPOSE. "*And it is turned round about by His counsels: i. e. that they may do whatsoever He commandeth them upon the face of the world in the earth. He causeth it to come, whether for correction, or for His land, or for mercy.*" He wielded all the phenomena of nature for the benefit of some and for the ruin of others. This truth is obvious enough, whether we accept it or not. The same gust of air that strengthens one man, strikes disease into another. The same temperature useful to one is injurious to another, &c. It is even so in the moral system: the same truth which will inspire and elevate one will crush another. Even the Gospel of Christ itself is the "savour of life unto life" to some and the "savour of death unto death" to others.

CONCLUSION.—What is nature without God? A shadow without a substance, an instrument without an agent, a machine without a motor, a body without a soul.

HOMILY No. LXXVIII.

THE FOURTH SPEECH OF ELIHU.

(6.) THE RELIGIOUS USE OF NATURE.

"*Hearken unto this, O Job: stand still, and consider the wondrous works of God.*" &c.—CHAP. XXXVII. 14-18.

EXEGETICAL REMARKS. Ver. 14. —"*Hearken unto this, O Job.*" "Pay attention, O Job, to what has been said."—*Dr. Samuel Davidson.* "*Stand still, and consider the wondrous works of God.*" Instead of dictating to the Almighty, or complaining of Him, give earnest attention to His marvellous works.

Ver. 15.—"*Dost thou know when God disposed them, and caused the light of His cloud to shine?*" "*Dost thou know when God designed to cause the light of His cloud to shine?*"—*Delitzsch.* How is it that light breaks from the dark thunder-cloud?

Ver. 16.—"*Dost thou know the*

balancings of the clouds, the wondrous works of Him which is perfect in knowledge?" How are they poised—held up in the air, yet so heavily charged with oceans of water and thunder-storms?

Ver. 17.—“*How thy garments are warm, when He quieteth the earth by the south wind?*” How is it that thy garments become heated when the “land becomes sultry from the south”? Who now understands heat? Is it electricity? If so, what is electricity? Science has no answer to this day.

Ver. 18.—“*Hast thou with Him spread out the sky, which is strong, and as a molten looking-glass?*” “Caust thou like Him spread out

the sky, strong, as it were a molten mirror?”—*Dr. Samuel Davidson.* When the sky after a thunder-storm is swept of the clouds, the firmament indeed appears as a mirror. The ancients regarded the sky as a solid expanse; and they, like Elihu, described the works of God according to their phenomenal aspect, not to their scientific. “Sometimes the sky is spoken of in the Scriptures as a curtain (Isa. xl. 22); sometimes as a firmament, or a solid body spread out (Gen. i. 6, 7); sometimes as a fixture in which the stars are placed (Isa. xxxiv. 4); and sometimes as a scroll that may be rolled up, or as a garment (Ps. cii. 26).”

HOMILETICS.—These verses suggest the *religious use of nature*. Elihu seems to use it here for three purposes—

I. TO EVOKE MAN'S STUDY. “*Stand still, and consider the wondrous works of God.*” Solomon sends men to study the insects: “Go to the ant, thou sluggard.” Isaiah, to consider the heavens: “Lift up your eyes on high, and behold who hath created these things.” Christ, to “consider the lilies of the field.” Nature is the Book of God.

First: It is the *Divinest* book. Even the Book we call the Bible is not all Divine. It has the records of crimes, and the utterances of wicked men and devils. But every part of nature is Divine. Who but God could create even an atom? Study it; it is full of Him.

Secondly: It is the *oldest* book. We know something about the age of the Bible, when its various parts were written; and the oldest parts of it are, as compared with nature, very young. When did this earth come into existence? When were the teeming orbs of heaven rounded, burnished, and set a-going? “In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth.” But when was that?

Thirdly: It is the *fullest* book. Who shall number its verses or count its pages? It is the fountain of all true literature. “*Stand still,*” then, “*and consider the wondrous*

works of God." "When I consider Thy heavens, the work of Thy fingers, the moon and the stars which Thou hast ordained," &c.

Elihu uses the phenomena of nature here—

II. TO PROVE MAN'S IGNORANCE. "*Dost thou know when God disposed them, and caused the light of His cloud to shine? Dost thou know the balancings of the clouds, the wondrous works of Him which is perfect in knowledge? How thy garments are warm, when He quieteth the earth by the south wind?*" Of the essence, the *modus operandi*, the final issues and bearing of things, who knoweth? The men who have studied nature most, who have taken their torch the farthest into her arcana, have, like Isaac Newton and Humphrey Davy, ended their efforts under an overwhelming sense of their own ignorance. Nature swims on the ocean, and is canopied by the heavens of mystery. Men object to the Bible because of its mysteries; but the mysteries of the Bible are nothing to the mysteries of nature. Thank God! mystery is morally educational, it quickens, humbles, devotionalizes.

Elihu uses the phenomena of nature here—

III. TO EXPOSE MAN'S INSIGNIFICANCE. "*Hast thou with Him spread out the sky, which is strong, and as a molten looking-glass?*" In the presence of this "*molten looking-glass,*" where the clouds are suspended and balanced, and where countless orbs have their pathway, how insignificant must man feel! How powerless too! Can we cause one planet to halt a moment? Nay, can we affect the clouds? Can we quench the flaming lightnings, arrest the thunder-bolt, or even stop one drop of rain from descending to the earth?

CONCLUSION.—It is well, then, to study nature. Brothers, "*stand still and consider the wondrous works of God.*"

"Up! up, my friend! and quit your books,
Or surely you'll grow double;
Up! up, my friend! and clear your looks;
Why all this toil and trouble?
One impulse from a vernal wood
May teach you more of man,
Of moral evil and of good,
Than all the sages can.

Sweet is the lore that nature brings :
 Our meddling intellect
 Misshapes the beauteous forms of things—
 We murder to dissect.
 Enough of science and of art :
 Close up those barren leaves :
 Come forth and bring with you a heart
 That watches and receives.”—*Wordsworth*.

HOMILY No. LXXIX.

THE FOURTH SPEECH OF ELIHU.

(7.) SUGGESTIONS CONCERNING MAN, AND DECLARATIONS
CONCERNING GOD.

“*Teach us what we shall say unto Him ;*” &c.—CHAP. xxxvii. 19-24.

EXEGETICAL REMARKS. *Ver. 19.*
 —“*Teach us what we shall say unto Him ; for we cannot order our speech by reason of darkness.*” This also is addressed by Elihu to Job. So overawed does Elihu profess to be with the sense of God’s majesty, as revealed in nature, that he knows not how to speak to Him.

Ver. 20.—“*Shall it be told Him that I speak ? if a man speak, surely he shall be swallowed up.*” Right translation of the second clause is, *Or has one willed that destruction should come upon him ?*—*Dr. Samuel Davidson*. This also is the language of awe. He means to say, that any attempt to speak to God would expose him to destruction, he would be “*swallowed up.*”

Ver. 21.—“*And now men see not the bright light which is in the clouds : but the wind passeth, and cleanseth them.*” The note of *Barnes* on this verse is explanatory, beautiful, and to the point. “*There is,*” says he, “*reason to believe that, as Elihu delivered the sentiments re-*

corded in the close of this chapter, he meant to describe God as if He were seen to be approaching, and that the symbols of His presence were discovered in the gathering tempest and storm. He is introduced in the following chapter with amazing sublimity and grandeur to speak to Job and his friends, and to close the argument. He comes in a whirlwind, and speaks in tones of vast sublimity. The tokens of His coming were now seen ; and, as Elihu discerned them, he was agitated, and his language became abrupt and confused.” His language is just such as one would use when the mind was overawed with the approach of God—solemn and full of reverence, and much less calm than in his ordinary discourse. The close of the chapter, therefore, it seems to me, is to be regarded as spoken when the tempest was seen to be gathering, and when in awful majesty God was approaching, the lightnings playing round Him, the clouds piled on clouds attending

Him, the thunder reverberating along the sky, and an unusual brightness evincing His approach. The idea here is, that men could not steadfastly behold the bright light. It was so dazzling and so overpowering that they could not gaze on it intently. The coming of such a Being, arrayed in so much grandeur, and clothed in such a light, was fitted to overcome the human powers. "*But the wind passeth, and cleanseth them.*" The wind passes along and makes them clean. The idea seems to be, that the wind appeared to sweep along over the clouds, as the tempest was rising, and they seemed to open and disperse in one part of the heavens, and to reveal in the opening a glory so bright and so dazzling that the eye could not rest on it. That light or splendour made in the opening cloud was the symbol of God, approaching to wind up this great controversy, and to address Job and his friends in the sublime language which is found in the closing chapters of the book. The word rendered cleanseth (רָצַף) means properly to shine, to be bright, and then to be pure or clean. Here the notion of shining in brightness is to be retained, and the idea is, that a wind appeared to pass along, removing the cloud which seemed to be a veil on the throne of God, and suffering the visible symbol of His majesty to be seen through the opening. "He holdeth back the face of His throne, and spreadeth His cloud upon it."

Ver. 22.—"*Fair weather cometh out of the north.*" For "fair" the margin reads "gold." "Oriental classical literature," says *Delitzsch*, "furnishes a large number of in-

stances in support of calling sunshine gold. Elihu saw a bright light breaking through the northern sky, and, either because of the value he attached to it, or its gold-like hues, he calls it gold." "*With God is terrible majesty.*" "Above Elohim is terrible majesty."—*Delitzsch*. The phenomena of the tempest gave him this impression. Who has not felt the same in a thunder-storm?

Ver. 23.—"*Touching the Almighty, we cannot find Him out.*" The incomprehensibility of God has been often referred to in this book, and Elihu himself has referred to it more than once. There is no need for the word "*touching*:" it is not in the original, and is an encumbrance. "The Almighty, we cannot find Him out," Him that is excellent.—*Dr. Samuel Davidson*. "*Excellent in power, and in judgment, and in plenty of justice.*" He excels in strength and in rectitude. "*He will not afflict.*" This last clause some read, "He preventeth not," *i. e.*, He preventeth not justice. It should be, "He answers not."—*Dr. Samuel Davidson*.

Ver. 24.—"*Men do therefore fear Him.*" Because of His glorious character He is held in reverence. "*He respecteth not any that are wise of heart.*" The wisdom of the wisest men influences Him not. "With these words end Elihu's speeches, which remain unanswered and unnoticed in the dialogue by God and man. In spite of much difficulty of detail their general sense is clear; in spite of some harshness and excess of dogmatism, they seem to contain the root of the matter."—*Dr. Alfred Barry*.

HOMILETICS.—In this passage we have two classes of

thought, namely, suggestions concerning man, and declarations concerning God.

I. SUGGESTIONS CONCERNING MAN. These are twofold. The one refers to the sublimest act, the other to a sad tendency.

First: *The sublimest act.* What is that? Speaking to God. “*Teach us what we shall say unto Him,*” &c. Speaking to Him is an act implying a belief in the personality, nearness, and susceptibility of God: an act, too, that involves the highest exercise and sublimest delights of our social nature. Most men speak *about* God; only few who speak *to* Him; and fewer still who speak to Him in a *right* way. Concerning this act, Elihu here intimates three things: (1) A conscious *unfitness* for it. “*We cannot order our speech by reason of darkness.*” If unlettered men feel unfit to speak to those of their fellows possessing the highest genius and culture, how profoundly should we feel our unfitness to speak to Infinite Intelligence and Purity! “*Wherewithal shall we come before the Lord?*” &c. Elihu intimates concerning this act—(2) A conscious *necessity* for it. Hence he appeals to Job to enable him to do so. Has there ever lived a man who has not felt at times the necessity of communing with God, who has not felt a burden of thoughts and anxieties on his soul, which he desired to pour into the bosom of the Almighty Father? He could not speak them to others. Job felt this. “*Oh that I knew where I might find Him!*” &c. Elihu intimates concerning this act—(3) The conscious *solemnity* of it. “*If a man speak, surely he shall be swallowed up,*” or destroyed. Is there any act more sublimely awful than the act of speaking to God? “*Be not rash with thy mouth, and let not thine heart be hasty to utter anything before God, for God is in heaven and thou upon earth: therefore let thy words be few.*” The other suggestion concerning man here refers to—

Secondly: *A sad tendency.* This is suggested in the words, “*Men see not the bright light which is in the clouds.*” Although the reference here is of course to the *physical* fact, it is certainly suggestive of the mental tendency, which is

very strong in some, to *look at the dark side of things*. You see this tendency—(1) In the sceptic, in relation to the dark things of revelation. There are confessedly many dark things in the Bible. There are apparently historical discrepancies, immoralities, contradictory statements, and insoluble problems. But over all these *clouds* there is a “*bright light*”; the darkest has a silver fringe. The love of the Infinite Father, the unspotted holiness of our Great Example, the elements of moral restoration, and the existence of a blessed immortality, is a “*bright light*” surrounding all. But the sceptic will only look on the cloud, he will not look at the light. You see this tendency—(2) In the repiner, in relation to God’s Providence. Providence has dark “*clouds*”—the permission of moral evil, the apparent disregard of God for the condition of society, the power which wickedness is often allowed to exercise over virtue, are dark clouds in the heavens of God’s Providential dealings. But the clouds have all a “*bright light*” shining around them. Still the repining man looks only at the “*clouds*,” sees no sunshine. “All these things are against me,” &c. You see this tendency—(3) In the misanthrope, in relation to the character of his fellow-men. Men’s characters, even the best of them, it is true, are very cloudy, opaque, and unattractive. The misanthrope sees that and nothing else. To him all are corrupt; virtue, he says, is but vice in a pleasing garb; benevolence is but selfishness in disguise; charity, but lust refined; religion, only superstition and hypocrisy. He sees these “*clouds*,” but he sees not the light, he does not see the disinterestedness, incorruptible honesty, inflexible justice, self-sacrificing heroism in society; and are not these a “*bright light*” in the “*cloud*?” You see this tendency—(4) In the desponding Christian in relation to his own experience. In the experience of the best of men there is much that is cloudy; reminiscences of wrong, doubts, and fears, are *clouds* rolling over the soul. The desponding man sees the *clouds* and nothing else. He often says, I walk in darkness, and there is no light. But is there no light in the cloud? What are the Divine promises? “Blessed are they that mourn,” &c. “He shall feed His flock like a shepherd.” “Come unto Me, all ye that are weary,” &c. Let us

struggle against the tendency, and learn to see in all the clouds hanging over the Bible, Providence, society, and our own experience the "*bright light*." In this passage we have—

II. DECLARATIONS CONCERNING GOD. There are four facts concerning God here declared; and as they have been noticed more than once before, it will be sufficient just to mention them:—

First: His *greatness* is referred to. "*With God is terrible majesty.*" God's greatness in itself is not terrible; it is attractive and inspiring, commanding supreme love and reverence. It is the guilty conscience that makes it appear terrible. A guilty conscience robes the Infinite Father in vengeance, and makes Him speak in thunder.

Secondly: His *inscrutability* is referred to. "*We cannot find Him out.*" Often have we had this attribute before our notice. "Who by searching can find out God?" &c.

Thirdly: His *righteousness*. "*He is excellent in power, and in judgment, and in plenty of justice.*" Of this subject also we have written on a previous verse.

Fourthly: His *independency*. "*He respecteth not any that are wise of heart.*"

CONCLUSION.—Here endeth the speech of Elihu; and to it Job makes no reply. Because Elihu is not mentioned either in the prologue or the epilogue of this book, as well as for other reasons,—his speech is by some regarded as an interpolation, and he himself as a mere fictitious character. Be it so; I have found that his utterances have often been most sublime, and many of his thoughts grand and suggestive. Although, perhaps, the drama would be complete without his speech, I would not have it taken away. He has spoken much truth, and truth of the highest order; and truth is none the less real or important because uttered by an uninspired man, or even by a mere fictitious character. The Homiletic Sketches which I have drawn from his speech, I am sure, have been naturally suggested, and I trust will be found to furnish germs of thought that will grow into many powerful and practical discourses.

HOMILY No. LXXX.

JEHOVAH'S ADDRESS.

(1.) A CHALLENGE TO JOB'S INTELLIGENCE IN RELATION TO THE WHEN AND HOW OF THE EARTH'S ORIGIN.

"Then the Lord answered Job out of the whirlwind," &c.—CHAP. XXXVIII. 1-7.

EXEGETICAL REMARKS. Ver. 1. —"Then the Lord answered Job." It may be well at the outset to ask two questions. First: *Did Jehovah speak exactly to Job in the form and words here represented?* If so, was it outwardly or inwardly? Was the outward atmosphere wrought into a tempest, and were the words articulated in the whirlwind? Did the Divine voice literally fall on the outward ear, or was the whole a mere vision? Did Job feel the rushing tempest, and hear the Divine utterances, in vision? Was the whole the same to him as to John on Patmos—a mere vision, a grand dream? Neither is impossible, and the latter would be as real as the former—nay, more real. Secondly: *If he did not, are we to suppose that the grand old poet who produces this imperishable drama personates the Almighty, and speaks in the name of the Eternal?* The old prophets did this. In chap. xxxi. ver. 35, Job had implored the Almighty to answer him. Here is the answer; and the answer comes out of the storm,—comes in a series of tremendous appeals intended to impress him with the fact that it was not for him to contend with his Maker, but to submit humbly to Him.

Ver. 2. —"Who is this that darkeneth counsel by words without knowledge?" Who? What is he?

What does He know? He talks of things of which he is utterly ignorant.

Ver. 3.—"Gird up now thy loins like a man; for I will demand of thee, and answer thou Me." Gather up all thy powers as a man, and I will question thee and demand of thee an answer.

Ver. 4.—"Where wast thou when I laid the foundations of the earth? declare, if thou hast understanding." It means, thou hadst no existence when I created the world, and how presumptuous for thee to sit in judgment on My procedure?

Ver. 5.—"Who hath laid the measures thereof, if thou knowest? or who hath stretched the line upon it?" These words are designed as a rebuke. The earth is represented as a building, the plan of which was laid out beforehand, and which was then made according to the sketch of the Architect. It is not, therefore, the work of chance or fate. It is laid out and constructed according to a wise plan, and in a method evincing infinite skill.

Ver. 6.—"Whereupon are the foundations thereof fastened? or who laid the corner stone thereof?" "Upon what are the bases of its pillars sunk in? Or who hath laid its corner stone?"—*Delitzsch*. The allusion is to human architecture. The foundation stone of a building is let down until it settles in the

clay. The earth may be said to settle down in the gravitating force of the universe.

Ver. 7.—“*When the morning stars sang together, and all the sons of God shouted for joy?*” The stars are figuratively said “to sing God’s praises.” Some think, however, that by “stars” here “angels” are meant—the “elder born

of God.” From the former clause probably comes the fancy of the “music of the spheres,” of which Shakespeare has made use in the *Merchant of Venice*, and Milton in the *Hymn on the Nativity*. The general idea is, of course, simply that which runs through the *Benedicite*, expanded (as it would seem), Psalm cxlviii.—*Canon Barry*.

HOMILETICS.—The grand object of the whole of this magnificent address of Jehovah to Job is to impress him with his utter ignorance of the world in which he lived, and his incompetency therefore to interpret God’s moral administration. He gives him to understand that, as he cannot explain the phenomena of His natural government, it is useless for him to attempt understanding His moral; and, therefore, he should submit, and not contend. The moral of the whole sublime communication appears to be this, *Be concerned, Job, for a moral trust in My character, rather than for a theoretical knowledge of My ways.*

In this chapter and the following we have a series of Divine challenges to Job, in order to hush his disputations, and in this section He seeks to impress him with his ignorance as to the *origin* of the material world. In the text there is a Divine challenge in relation to the *when* and *how* of the origin of the world.

I. THE WHEN. Did he know *when* He began His creation? “*Where wast thou when I laid the foundations of the earth?*” (1) *The world had a beginning.* There was a period when this world did not exist, when no world existed, when not an atom floated in infinite space. An eternal creation is a contradiction. (2) *Its beginning is very remote.* Geology teaches that it has been in existence for innumerable ages, that its commencement is lost in the awful abysses of the past. (3) *Though remote its beginning, it commenced with God.* Where wast thou, then, when it commenced? A few years ago and thou wast not. I wrought innumerable ages before thou appearedst on the stage of life. How canst thou judge, then, of My government? What is thy

intellect to Mine? A dim spark to the central fires of the universe. What is thine experience to Mine? "From everlasting to everlasting I am God." Thou art the mere child of an hour; do not contend, but submit. Do not criticize, but trust.

II. The *HOW*. "*Who hath laid the measures thereof, if thou knowest? or who hath stretched the line upon it?*" How was it brought into being? How were the first primary elements produced? How were they brought into their endless combinations? How were globes by millions rounded, burnished, balanced, and set agoing? How came the myriad forms of life from the frail blade to the majestic cedar, from the animalcule to the leviathan, from the babe to the archangel? Who shall tell *how*? Some scientists speak of the universe as a clock; but how is the clock constructed? Some, as a tree. But who planted the tree? Who formed it? Who struck its roots into infinite space? As to the *how* as well as the *when* of the origin of the world, men are as ignorant to-day as ever.

CONCLUSION.—The subject serves—(1) *To rebuke all disposition to pronounce an opinion upon the ways of God.* What captious questions the sceptic is everlastingly propounding—questions about the introduction of sin, the reign of wrong, the suffering of innocence, the tardy march of Christianity. To all such questions we have one answer: "Who art thou that repliest against God?" What is thy intellect to His? what is thy experience to His? what is thy sphere of observation to His? Where wast thou when He laid the foundation of the earth? This subject serves—(2) *To suggest that our grand effort ought to be to cultivate a loving trust in the Divine character, rather than to comprehend the Divine procedure.* To comprehend Him we never can. "Who by searching can find out God?" &c. He will always be the Infinite Unknown.

"A climbing height it is without a head,
Depth without bottom, way without an end;
A circle with no line environed,
Not comprehended—all it comprehends;
Worth infinite, yet satisfies no mind,
Till it that infinite of the Godhead find."—Greville.

But even a child can trust Him. To trust is natural and easy; and the greater, the truer, the kinder, the holier the being, the more easy to trust him. "Trust in Him" therefore "that liveth for ever." This subject serves—(3) *To enable us to appreciate the glorious service of Christianity.* The question, "Where wast thou when I laid the foundations of the earth?" confounds and crushes me. I feel powerless before it; it overwhelms me with a sense of my own insignificance. I feel that God is too great to notice me; that my existence is only that of a wretched atom, to be tossed about by the furious winds or trodden down by the iron heel of resistless fate. Before the voice of God I am all dark; I tremble in horror with the feeling of my own nothingness. Blessed be His name! Christianity comes to my relief. It tells me that although I am insignificant, I am still a child, a beloved child of the Everlasting, and that it is not the will of my Father that any, even of His "little ones," should perish; nay, that it is His good pleasure that I should have a kingdom. It speaks to me in tones of inspiring, bracing, uplifting, music. "Let not your hearts be troubled, ye believe in God, believe also in me: In my Father's house," &c. Like the force which links the floating atom to the Sun, the Cross, the blessed Cross, binds my poor spirit to the heart of God.

HOMILY No. LXXXI.

JEHOVAH'S ADDRESS. (*Continued.*)

(2) A CHALLENGE TO JOB'S POWER IN RELATION TO THE WORLD OF WATERS AND THE INTERCHANGE OF DAY AND NIGHT.

"Or who shut up the sea with doors," &c.—CHAP. xxxviii. 8-15.

EXEGETICAL REMARKS. *Ver. 8.* He allotted a space on the globe, and shut it in with doors, lest it should break forth and deluge the world. "When it brake forth, as if it had issued out of the womb?" All the images are taken from child-

—"*Or who shut up the sea with doors?*" This is a poetic representation of the Creator's agency in relation to the great world of waters. To the vast and tumultuous mass

birth. The ocean is represented as being born.

Ver. 9.—“*When I made the cloud the garment thereof, and thick darkness a swaddling-band for it.*” This huge child of God, carrying out the figure, is represented as being wrapped up in clouds and enfolded in the swaddling-band of darkness. The image is one of great beauty. “It is that of the vast ocean just coming into being, with a cloud resting upon it and covering it. Thick darkness envelops it, and it is swathed in mists.”

Ver. 10.—“*And brake up for it My decreed place, and set bars and doors.*” Margin, “and established My decree upon it.” The idea is, God fixed the boundary, settled the exact space it should occupy, and barred it up within that space.

Ver. 11.—“*And said, Hitherto shalt thou come, but no further: and here shall thy proud wares be stayed?*” Who has not felt the force of this majestic utterance, as he has stood upon the beach when the ocean, lashed by the tempest, came rolling in, and threatening to overflow the earth? The rocky barriers drove its billows back. The Divine voice seemed to say as they approached, “So far shalt thou come, and no further.”

Ver. 12.—“*Hast thou commanded the morning since thy days?*” Or, as *Delitzsch* renders it, “Hast thou in thy life commanded a morning?” “*And caused the day-spring to know his place?*” This perhaps may mean the exact place

in the heaven where the sun would appear in the morning.

Ver. 13.—“*That it might take hold of the ends of the earth.*” That is, “spread itself over the earth to its utmost bounds.” “*That the wicked might be shaken out of it.*” The idea is, that the wicked perform their deeds in the night, and when the morning breaks upon them, for fear of apprehension, they flee away.

Ver. 14.—“*It is turned as clay to the seal; and they stand as a garment.*” “As the plastic clay presents the various figures impressed on it by a seal, so the earth, which in the dark was void of all form, when illuminated by the day-spring, presents a variety of forms—hills, valleys, &c. ‘Turned’ (turns itself, Hebrew) alludes to the rolling cylinder seal, from one to three inches long, such as is found in Babylon, which leaves its impressions on the soft plastic clay, as it is turned about: so the morning light rolling on over the earth.”—*Fausset*. See also *Barnes* and *Canon Barry* on this verse.

Ver. 15.—“*And from the wicked their light is withholden, and the high arm shall be broken.*” The idea perhaps is, that the wicked, frightened in the light lest they should be detected, hurried into darkness, and thus the “high arm” of their purpose was broken. Cheerful as is the light, and beautiful as the objects which it reveals, the wicked cannot enjoy it, because they must hide themselves in darkness.

HOMILETICS.—Here is a challenge to Job’s *power* in relation to the world of waters, and to the interchange of day and night—

I. THE WORLD OF WATERS. “*Who shut up the sea with*

doors, when it brake forth?" Perhaps there is no object in nature so calculated to impress man with his utter insignificance and feebleness as the mighty ocean. How vast its area, covering two-thirds of the surface of the globe! How fathomless its abysses, and how incessant its motion! How savage its aspect, how terrific its roar, how gigantic its billows in the storm! Yet its mighty mass, even when wrought to the highest fury, is kept within bounds, like a lion in his cage. Man, if thou wouldst feel thy utter insignificance and thy impious folly in contending with thy Maker, climb some lofty cliff, and behold the ocean in the wild grandeur of a tempest.

“Thou vast ocean! ever-sounding sea;
 Thou symbol of a drear immensity!
 Thou thing that windest round the solid world,
 Like a huge animal, which, downward hurled
 From the black clouds, lies weltering and alone,
 Lashing and writhing till its strength be gone.
 Thy voice is like the thunder, and thy sleep
 Is as a giant's slumber, loud and deep.
 Thou speakest in the east and in the west
 At once, and on thy heavily-laden breast
 Fleets come and go, and shapes that have no life
 Or motion, yet are moved and meet in strife.”

Here is a Divine challenge to Job's power in relation to—

II. THE INTERCHANGE OF DAY AND NIGHT. “*Hast thou commanded the morning?*” What power hast thou over the morning? Thou hast never been able during thy life to quicken or retard the march of the sun as he comes rolling up the East, runs his circuit, and sinks beneath the horizon. Day and night, light and darkness, are all independent of thee. In thine agony thou mightest long for the morning; but thou canst do nothing to bring it on. Not a beam will fall in thy chamber one moment before the time. In the perpetration of nocturnal crimes thou mightest desire the darkness to continue until thy depredations are completed; but the sun will not tarry. He will pour his rays upon thee not a moment later on thy account. How powerless we are in relation to this interchange of day and night, and the revolution of time! We cannot prevent the day coming, nor the night departing. Thus our days come and go, bear us away to the awful future, and we can neither hasten nor

retard the progress. The last morning of our day of life will dawn, and we cannot prevent it; the last night will spread its dark shadows over us, and we are helpless. Who are we, then, that we should contend with God? It is not for us to criticize the Divine procedure, but loyally submit to the Divine will.

CONCLUSION.—Apart from the direct purpose of the challenge contained in these verses, they suggest the following points. (1) *The restraining power of the Divine government.* God keeps the ocean within its bounds; not a billow, not a drop, goes beyond the line which He has drawn. He exercises a restraint in the moral domain, as well as in the material. He breaks the purposes of the Herods, of the Alexanders, and of the Napoleons. He says to the most turbulent spirits, "*Hitherto shalt thou come, but no further.*" Wickedness has its limits. Hell has its "*bars*" and "*doors.*" (2) *Nature's independency of man.* The earth performs its diurnal revolution and brings round the day and night, irrespective of man's power or choice. Vain man oftentimes imagines himself to be of great importance in the universe. But nature cares nothing for him. She proceeds on her majestic march amidst the battling of armies, the wreck of governments, the crash of kingdoms. Shah, Sultan, Emperor, who are ye in the universe? Flakes of foam on the billows, wretched bubbles.* "*Nothing, and less than nothing, vanity.*" (3) *The power of wickedness to turn the blessing into a curse.* The greatest blessing in nature is the light of the sun; it vivifies, beautifies, gladdens the world, sets all to music. But it is ruin to the wicked. "*When it spreads itself to the ends of the earth, it is that the wicked may be shaken out of it.*" "*Men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil.*" Light breaks the purposes of the nocturnal desperado, exposes him to the public eye, and thus often proves his ruin. The sun has a moral as well as a physical influence upon the world.

* Written during the Turko-Russian War, 1878.

HOMILY No. LXXXII.

JEHOVAH'S ADDRESS. (*Continued.*)

(3.) A CHALLENGE TO JOB'S KNOWLEDGE IN RELATION TO THE HIDDEN ABYSSES OF THE WORLD.

"*Hast thou entered into the springs of the sea?*" &c.—CHAP. XXXVIII.
16-21.

EXEGETICAL REMARKS. *Ver.* 16. — "*Hast thou entered into the springs of the sea? or hast thou walked in the search of the depth?*" "*Hast thou reached the fountains of the sea? and hast thou gone into the foundation of the deep?*"—*Delitzsch*. "There exist in the sea immense currents, which may be regarded as veritable rivers in the bosom of the ocean. Members of a great arterial system, they play a highly important part in the harmonies of the globe. They establish a kind of interchange between the extreme temperatures of different climates, transporting towards the poles the warmer water of the tropics, and carrying the cold water of the glacial regions towards the torrid zone of the equator. Christopher Columbus was one of the first to record observations on the marine currents; he recognized, after his second voyage, that the waters of certain parts of the Atlantic followed the apparent motion of the stars. 'The waters,' says the great navigator, 'march with the sky.'"

Ver. 17.—"*Have the gates of death been opened unto thee? or hast thou seen the doors of the shadow of death?*" Sheol is referred to. The ancient Orientals believed that beneath the ground was the abode of the dead, that all departed men

were there enclosed by gates and bars. The idea of the passage is, that living man was unable to penetrate those gloomy abodes.

Ver. 18.—"*Hast thou perceived the breadth of the earth? declare if thou knowest it all.*" Although modern science has measured with mathematical accuracy the earth, its circumference and diameter, the ancients, who were ignorant of its form, had no clear conception as to its dimensions.

Vers. 19, 20.—"*Where is the way where light dwelleth? and as for darkness, where is the place thereof, that thou shouldest take it to the bound thereof, and that thou shouldest know the paths to the house thereof?*" "The meaning is," says *Dr. Barnes*, "that God only could know what was the great fountain of light and where that was. Indeed, even to this day, science can give us no satisfactory information on this subject. What is light? Is it a substance streaming from some central orb, or is it an undulation of the ether? If it streams from some central source, where is that source?"

Ver. 21.—"*Knowest thou it, because thou wast then born? or because the number of thy days is great?*" This sounds like withering irony.

HOMILETICS.—Here we have a challenge to Job's intelligence in relation to the hidden abysses of the world, and the phenomena of light and darkness.

I. A challenge to his knowledge in relation to the HIDDEN ABYSSSES OF THE WORLD. “*Hast thou entered into the springs of the sea? or hast thou walked in the search of the depth?*” Who can tell what is in the depths of the sea? We know there are mountains and valleys and table-lands there, and ravines and hills on a scale even larger than on the continents of the earth. We know that there untold myriads, from infinitesimal shapes to creatures of huge proportions, dwell. If the sea were to retreat, leaving bare the terrestrial surface, what relics would not be discovered amid the ripples of the shallow water! “There,” says Maury, “would be brought to light that array of dead men's skulls, great anchors, mighty vessels, heaps of pearl, which, in the poet's eye, lie scattered at the bottom of the sea, making it hideous with the sights of hideous death.” Under those billows there is a strange universe hid from the most piercing glance of man. But who can tell what is in depths deeper than the deepest depths of the sea? “*Have the gates of death been opened unto thee? or hast thou seen the doors of the shadow of death?*” What is down in the depths of Sheol—the dark abode of the dead—that deep, starless, vast realm to which all past generations are gone, to which the present is going, and into which all coming men must go? Who can tell the numbers there, and their exact condition and pursuits? What “*gates*” are those? (1) They are in *constant motion*, no sooner closed to one than another enters. (2) They are open to *all*, admitting kings and beggars alike. (3) They are never opened to *admit any back*. They are for ingress, and not egress. They “shall return no more.” Thank God! the Cæsars, the Alexanders, the Napoleons, the great butchers of mankind, will not come back. (4) They are under *supreme authority*. No one can enter them by accident, no one can force through them, for Omnipotence guards them. Near those gates we all live; through them we must all enter, and—

“Our hearts like muffled drums are beating
Funeral marches to the grave.”*

Here we have—

II. A challenge to his knowledge in relation to the PHENOMENA OF LIGHT AND DARKNESS. “*Where is the way where light dwelleth? and as for darkness, where is the place thereof?*” Apart from the question, What is light?—which no science has yet determined,—the question here is, Whence comes it? Where is the way? In what part of infinite space is its great primal font, whence it streams forth on all worlds and systems? It travels with a velocity, we are told, that baffles all calculation; but where does it come from, and how? †

“*As for darkness, where is the place thereof?*” Darkness is here personified, and represented as taking the place of the light when it is gone. Where is darkness? In scenes whence the light has been withdrawn, and on scenes where light has never fallen. But who knoweth those scenes? You may know certain spots; but the immeasurable realms in which darkness reigns you know not.

Thus the Almighty challenges Job’s intelligence as to the hidden abysses of the world and the phenomena of light and darkness. Job makes no reply; but he must have felt that he knew little or nothing concerning these things, and ignorance sealed his lips. Why then should he presume to find fault with the dispensations of Divine Providence with which he was visited? Why should he expect, nay, why should he strive, to interpret God’s moral procedure? His duty was to submit, not to reason; to trust the Divine character, not to cavil at the Divine procedure. And this is the duty of all men. The world we live in is a mystery to us. Do not let us be confounded by speculations, but let us rest in faith.

* See *Homilist*, vol. ix., p. 252.

† See *Lectures on Natural Philosophy*, by Young; and *The Wave Theory of Light*, by Lloyd.

HOMILY No. LXXXIII.

JEHOVAH'S ADDRESS. (*Continued.*)

(4.) A CHALLENGE TO JOB'S KNOWLEDGE IN RELATION TO METEOROLOGICAL AND ASTRONOMICAL PHENOMENA.

"Hast thou entered into the treasures of the snow? or hast thou seen the treasures of the hail," &c.—CHAP. XXXVIII. 22-38.

EXEGETICAL REMARKS. *Vers.* 22, 23.—*"Hast thou entered into the treasures of the snow? or hast thou seen the treasures of the hail, which I have reserved against the time of trouble, against the day of battle and war?"* Some read *reached for entered*, and *treasuries* for *treasures*. These alterations are scarcely emendations. In these verses the Almighty points to meteorological phenomena. Here is snow—frozen water descending from the atmosphere when the temperature is 32° or lower. Every flake is exquisitely beautiful when carefully examined. Each has six pointed stars of about 1000 different kinds. Hail differs from snow in this, that the latter—snow—is vapour congealed in the clouds before it is collected into drops, and hail is vapour collected into drops and then frozen. They are, however, both frozen water, and they are here represented as laid up as treasures kept in reserve until the Almighty requires them for a specific purpose, *"which I have reserved against the time of trouble,"* or, as some read it, *"time of need:"* Jehovah has fought His battles with hailstorms before now. *"They were more which died with hailstones than they whom the children of Israel slew with the sword"* (Josh. x. 11).

Ver. 24.—*"By what way is the light parted?"* Which is the way

where the light is divided, where the east wind is scattered over the earth? *"The manner in which the light is 'parted,' or separated from its great solar centre, is as much a mystery now as in the days of the patriarch. It is known to occupy a certain time in reaching the earth; its rate of travel is ascertained to be about thirteen millions of miles a minute, and the period required in reaching the earth about eight minutes. Some of the laws according to which light operates, in recent times have been satisfactorily ascertained. It is known to be composed of different-coloured rays, red, yellow, and blue; their composition affording the white light, and their parting or separation and partial blending, giving the various colours presented by different objects. Exhibited in their pure and blended form in the rainbow, the rain drops separating the rays and refracting them at different angles after the manner of a prism, and so producing the three primary and four secondary colours. The light emanating from the fixed stars generally like that of our own sun, but in some cases coloured, different stars appearing to be different colours."*—*Robinson.* *"Which scattereth the east wind upon the earth?"* Probably the *"east wind"* is here referred to because the sun rises in the east, and is the source,

therefore, from which light seems to come.

Ver. 25.—“*Who hath divided a watercourse for the overflowing of waters, or a way for the lightning of thunder.*” Torrents of rain do not descend in promiscuous confusion; but each drop has a way, or channel, prepared for it. So have the lightning and the thunder. They have their way appointed, and from their path they swerve not.

Ver. 26.—“*To cause it to rain on the earth, where no man is; on the wilderness, wherein there is no man.*” “That it raineth on the land where no one dwelleth, on the tenantless steppe.”—*Delitzsch*. Or, as it has been rendered, “To cause it to rain on a land without men, a wilderness wherein is no man.” “This is designed to heighten the conception of the power of God. It could not be pretended that it was done by man; for the rain was caused to fall in the desolate regions where no one dwelt. In the lonely desert, in the wastes remote from the dwellings of men, the rain is sent down, evidently, by the providential power of God, and far beyond the reach of the agency of man.”

Ver. 27.—“*To satisfy the desolate and waste ground; and to cause the bud of the tender herb to spring forth.*” “The Lord’s tender mercies are over all the works of His hands,” even the earth, the unconscious earth, He attends to; when parched and thirsty, He pours on it refreshing showers, and thus quickens its million germs into life and beauty. God works in desolate prairies, as well as in densely-crowded cities.

Ver. 28.—“*Hath the rain a father?*” “There are,” says Richard Proctor, “perhaps few

natural phenomena which appear less indicative, at first sight, of the operations of nature’s giant forces than the downfall of rain. Even the heaviest showers, at least, of those we are familiar with in England, are not phenomena which suggest an impression of power. Yet the forces actually called into action before the rain can fall are among the most gigantic experienced on our earth. Compared with this, terrestrial gravitation is more feeble than is the puniest infant compared with an army of giants.” “*Or who hath begotten the drops of dew?*” Whether the dew falls upon the ground or radiates from it, or both, does not matter. We know what it is, we see it, we feel it, we know its beneficent influence.

Ver. 29.—“*Out of whose womb came the ice? and the hoary frost of heaven, who hath gendered it?*” The meaning is, Who has caused the ice and the hoar frost?

Ver. 30.—“*The waters are hid as with a stone, and the face of the deep is frozen.*” Ice is water that has lost its natural heat, and become condensed into a hardened substance. Take away the natural heat from the waters of the globe, and they become hard as granite.

Vers. 31, 32.—“*Canst thou bind the sweet influences of Pleiades, or loose the bands of Orion? Canst thou bring forth Mazzaroth in his season? or canst thou guide Arcturus with his sons?*” “Canst thou join the influences of the Pleiades, or loose the bands of Orion? Canst thou bring forth the signs of the Zodiac at the right time? And canst thou guide the Bear with his children?”—*Delitzsch*. Pleiades, a cluster of stars in the neck of Taurus, of which seven are the principal; they rise in the spring, and are therefore identified with the season.

"Orion," a constellation whose situation is on the equator, midway between the poles of the heavens; it comes to the meridian about the 23rd of January, and is one of the most magnificent of all the constellations. The "*bands of Orion*," mean the rigours of winter binding on vegetation. "*Mazzaroth*," in the margin, is the "twelve signs," the twelve signs of the Zodiac, appearing successively through the twelve months of the year. "*Arcturus*," that is the Ursa Major, the Great Bear of the northern heavens.

Ver. 33.—"*Knowest thou the ordinances of heaven?*" That is, the laws that govern the world. Scientific men in modern times—Newton, Kepler, Laplace, and others, are supposed to have found some of these "*ordinances*," which they call gravitation, *vis inertiae*, conservation of force, &c., &c.; but what these are, after all, is a mystery. Who knoweth the thing itself, that which gives these laws their efficacy? "*Canst thou set the dominion thereof in the earth?*" Or, as *Delitzsch* renders it, "*Canst thou define its influence upon the earth?*" Perhaps the idea here is, Dost thou understand the influence of the heavenly bodies on the earth?

Ver. 34, 35.—"*Canst thou lift up thy voice to the clouds, that abundance of waters may cover thee? Canst thou send lightnings, that they may go, and say unto thee, Here we are?*" How utterly powerless man feels himself in a long season of drought, where rain is needed! How powerless when lightnings are needed to clear the dull, impure, enervating atmosphere!

Ver. 36.—"*Who hath put wisdom in the inward parts? or who hath given understanding to the*

heart?" This verse has received many different renderings. "Who hath put wisdom in the reins, or who hath given wisdom to the cock?"—*Delitzsch*. "Who hath put wisdom in the reins, or who hath given understanding to the mind?"—*Revised English Bible*. "Who hath put wisdom in their inward parts, or who hath imparted understanding to their mind?"—*Bernard*. "Who hath imparted understanding to their inward parts, or given intelligence to their minds?"—*Barnes*. "Who placed wisdom in the dark clouds, who gave understanding to the dark forms of the air?"—*Umbreit*. I am disposed to think that, as the last is a good translation, and accords with the connection, it is the most admissible. There is no reference in the context to the human mind, but to atmospheric phenomena, which, in consequence of their order, appeared to be endowed with intelligence.

Ver. 37.—"*Who can number the clouds in wisdom?*" "Clouds" are mentioned as if they were composed of fine dust, and hence the word number is applied to them. And who can "*number*" the particles that make up the "*clouds?*" "*Or who can stay the bottles of heaven?*" The rain-filled clouds.

Ver. 38.—"*When the dust groweth into hardness, and the clods cleave fast together?*" "When the dust is poured into a hard mass, and the clods cleave fast together." The idea is, that when the bottles of heaven are poured forth, and when the clouds of heavens are discharged, the dust on which they fall flows together and becomes hard. The rain operates on clay as heat on metal; it forms one mass of the same consistency, and is baked hard by the sun.

HOMILETICS.—Here we have a challenge to Job's knowledge in relation to *meteorological and astronomical phenomena*. Here is a challenge in relation—

I. TO METEOROLOGICAL phenomena. Each meteorological object mentioned here,—“rain,” “dew,” “hail,” “snow,” “lightnings,” “thunders,” “ice,” “hoar frost,”—is a subject for a scientific treatise, and not a few interesting articles have from time to time been written on each. We refer our readers especially to the last edition of “*Cyclopædia Britannica*.” Job's attention is here called to them, in order to impress him with his utter ignorance and insignificance. And with all the light which modern science has thrown on this subject, the wiser the man the more deeply conscious is he of his ignorance. What does he really know about these phenomena? In the meteorological references here, three solemn facts are brought out,—

First: That meteorological phenomena are ascribable to the *agency of God*. When I inquire how “snow,” “rain,” “hail,” “wind,” “frost,” “lightning,” “thunder,” “dew,” are produced, my intellect is not satisfied by the answers of scientific men, referring to certain abstractions, which they call laws; but when I am told,—as I am here,—that all is the result of Divine agency, I am satisfied, for I find a cause *adequate* to the results. He hardens and whitens the particles of water into snow and hail; He divideth the water-course for the overflowing of the waters, makes channels for the showers, and a way for the lightning and the thunder. He creates the dew-drops as well as kindles the lightnings and forges the thunder-bolts. Oh for that true philosophic faith that would enable me to trace His hand in all the forms, and hear His voice in all the sounds, of nature! The world is an organism; some say like a clock, wound and directed by an outward force; others say like a tree, shaped, swayed, and sustained by its own inward life. To me, it is a Cosmos, filled and moved with God, as the human body is filled and moved by the soul. Another fact here is,—

Secondly: That the agency of God in meteorological phenomena is *inscrutable to man*. “*Hast thou entered into the treasures of the snow? or hast thou seen the treasures of the*

hail?" "Hath the rain a father? or who hath begotten the drops of dew?" &c. Until men can trace God in the ten thousand operations of nature, it may be well for them to hush their complaints of the mysteries of Providence, and the difficulties of inspiration. The fact is, it comes not within the province or the capacity of a finite creature to trace the procedure of God. But it is the duty and the interest of all to settle down with an unbounded trust in His character. The other fact is,—

Thirdly: *That man is not the only object on the earth for whose good the agency of God is employed.* "To cause it to rain on the earth, where no man is; on the wilderness, wherein there is no man." As the ancients regarded this planet as geocentric, around which sun and stars revolved, man, even to this day, has the vanity to hold the anthropocentric idea, viz., that he is *everything* in the world, that the world was made for him. But here is one of the thousand facts that expose this absurdity. God pours His blessings upon the regions of the earth "*wherein there is no man.*" In those vast, undiscovered regions, pathless deserts, illimitable prairies, where the human eye has never pierced, and where the human foot has never travelled, fertilizing showers and sunbeams descend as bountifully as on cultivated meadows and flowery gardens. Where man is not, worlds of other creatures exist, which require His attention, and in which He is interested because He made them. In truth, before man existed, when no human being moved on the face of this earth, it was visited abundantly with fertilizing showers and quickening sunbeams. Numerous races of creatures, the last of which has been extinct for millenniums, were all ministered to by their Creator; and the races of creatures that will be here when the human race is extinct will receive the same kindly ministries from their Creator. Man, thou art but a small creature on this little earth, after all—a mere bubble on that great river of existences, that has been flowing through the earth for unnumbered ages! Suns shone, showers descended, oceans rolled in grandeur, landscapes bloomed, and majestic rivers flowed through continents when thou wast not, and will do so when thou art no more.

Here is a challenge in relation—

II. To ASTRONOMICAL phenomena. “*Canst thou bind the sweet influences of Pleiades, or loose the bands of Orion? Canst thou bring forth Mazzaroth in his season? or canst thou guide Arcturus with his sons?*” * What art thou in the presence of these constellations, that march and blaze, roll and radiate, throughout the immensities? Thou canst exert no influence upon them, thou canst not quicken or slacken their speed, thou canst not increase or diminish their size, thou canst not brighten or dim their lustre. “Lift up your eyes on high, and behold who hath created these things, that bringeth out their host by number: he calleth them all by names by the greatness of His might, for that He is strong in power; not one faileth.” A wonderful study are these heavens! Who can compute the number of yon flaming orbs? The telescope has discovered 100,000,000 fixed stars, each of which is supposed to be the centre of a system like our own. But these are only a few sparkling sand-grains on the shores of immensity. Think of their infinite variety. No two alike. Think of the swiftness and regularity of their revolutions. Consider the heavens! Man, thou art the only being on earth that can do so. They are stretched over thee like an open volume for the purpose: and their proper study will exert a goodly influence on thine heart. It did so with the Psalmist, and he said, “When I consider Thy heavens, the work of Thy fingers, the moon and the stars, which Thou hast ordained; what is man, that Thou art mindful of him? and the son of man, that Thou visitest him?” (Psalm viii. 3, 4).

CONCLUSION.—How far transcending all human thoughts are God’s works and ways! How absurd, not to say impious, is the conduct of the wisest man in presuming to criticize His procedure! Let us therefore, in the words of the Communion Service of the Church of England, “submit ourselves wholly to His holy will and pleasure, and study to serve Him in true holiness and righteousness all the days of our life.”

* See a very able, interesting, and instructive article on these constellations, in a work by Dr. Macmillan, entitled *Bible Teachings in Nature*.

HOMILY No. LXXXIV.

JEHOVAH'S ADDRESS. (*Continued.*)

(5.) A CHALLENGE TO JOB'S INTELLIGENCE IN RELATION TO ANIMAL LIFE.

“*Wilt thou hunt the prey for the lion?*” &c.—CHAP. xxxviii. 39-41.

GENERAL NOTE.—Here the Almighty passes in His appeal from the origin of the world, from the abysses of ocean, and the immeasurable and shadowy realms of Sheol; from light and darkness, from meteorological and astronomical phenomena,—to a higher sphere, the sphere of animal life in its boundless variety of existences. This verse should have been the commencement of a new chapter. All the animals referred to, with the exception of the “*war-horse*,” are wild creatures, and selected, no doubt, to show that man’s intelligence is nothing whatever in training them in their wonderful feats of sagacity and motion.

EXEGETICAL REMARKS. *Vers. 39, 40.*—“*Wilt thou hunt the prey for the lion? or fill the appetite of the young lions, when they couch in their dens, and abide in the covert to lie in wait?*” Canst thou by thy intelligence do for the lion what he, by his instinct, does for himself?—capture the prey which will supply him with his food. “The meaning here is, Wouldst thou undertake to supply his wants? It is done by laws and in a manner which thou canst not explain.

There are, in the arrangement by which it is accomplished, marks of wisdom which far surpass the skill of man to originate; and the instinct and power by which it is done are proof of the supremacy of the Most High. No one can study the subject of the instincts of animals, or become in the least acquainted with natural history, without finding everywhere traces of the wisdom and goodness of God.”

Ver. 41.—“*Who provideth for the raven his food?*” This thought is suggested also in Psalm cxlvii. 9: “He giveth . . . to the young ravens which cry.” It is thought that the raven is mentioned here rather than other fowls, because man regards it as an offensive bird, and that the Almighty would express the idea that the creature most despicable in man’s sight is not beneath His notice and attention. “*When his young ones cry unto God, they wander for lack of meat.*” It has been said that “*ravens*” expel their young ones from the nest as soon as they are able to fly, and thus thrown upon themselves, their sounds of hunger reach the ear of God, and He attends to them.

HOMILETICS.—Job’s intelligence is here challenged by a reference to the *animal* world, and the words are suited to suggest three mysteries to him—

I. THE MYSTERY OF ANIMAL INSTINCT. This is seen in the "*lion and the raven*." That principle which guides every sentient existence, from the smallest insect to the largest beast of the forest, the fowl of the air, and fish of the sea, to that particular food which its nature requires to sustain and strengthen it, to the place where it is to be found, to the way of appropriating it—which guides it to the best means of protection and to the most congenial scenes for action and repose, is that which no philosophy has ever yet been able to define or understand. In numerous cases it so closely resembles reason as to be almost identical with it. It reveals memory, foresight, deliberation, choice. What is it? Is it a spiritual entity or a material substance? Is it mortal or undying? Now, if man cannot understand the nature and workings of instinct, how is it possible for him to understand the proceedings of God? If he cannot find out instinct, how can he find out the Infinite?

II. THE MYSTERY OF PREDATORIAL LIFE. Both the "*lion*" and the "*raven*" live by devouring other existences. Throughout the animal creation the carnivorous instinct is all but universal: one creature hungers for the life of another, and by devouring it is kept alive. Is not this a mystery? Why did Infinite Goodness create teeming crowds of existences only to be devoured by others who hunger for them and require them for their sustentation? It is no explanation to say that the victim feels no pain by the paw, the tooth, the beak, or the talons of the devourer. Is not all life felt to be dear to its possessor? Does not even the worm struggle to retain it?

III. THE MYSTERY OF DIVINE GOODNESS. The Almighty feeds the ravens, the birds of bad omen, creatures regarded as despicable by mankind. That He to whom the universe is as nothing should condescend to feed the "*raven*" and the meanest creatures of the earth, is a fact that transcends all human comprehension.

CONCLUSION.—This subject should teach us—

First: *Dread not death*. Death is the law of the world, and out of death comes life.

Secondly: *Distrust not God.* To interpret Him is impossible, to trust Him is imperative.

Thirdly: *Be not unkind to animals.* They have instincts, sparks from the Infinite, to guide them. Ill-treat them not.

Tennyson expresses a trust—

“That nothing walks with aimless feet;
That not one life shall be destroyed,
Or cast as rubbish to the void,
When God hath made the pile complete.

That not a worm is cloven in vain;
That not a moth with vain desire
Is shrivelled in a fruitless fire.”

HOMILY No. LXXXV.

JEHOVAH'S ADDRESS. (*Continued.*)

(6.) A CHALLENGE TO JOB'S INTELLIGENCE IN RELATION TO ANIMAL LIFE. THE STUDY OF ZOOLOGY A RELIGIOUS DUTY.

“*Knowest thou the time when the wild goats,*” &c.—CHAP. XXXIX. 1-30.

GENERAL NOTE.—The last three verses of the preceding chapter began that appeal to the animal creation, which this and the following chapter continue.

EXEGETICAL REMARKS. *Vers.* 1-3. — “*Knowest thou the time when the wild goats of the rock bring forth? or canst thou mark when the hinds do calve? Canst thou number the months that they fulfil? or knowest thou the time when they bring forth?*” &c. These wild creatures of the craggy rocks and the deserts, away from the superintendence and the sight of men, brought forth their young ones at regular periods, with comparative ease and safety.

Ver. 4.—“*Their young ones are*

in good liking, they grow up with corn; they go forth and return not unto them.” “With corn” is an error, it should be “in the desert.” Their young ones grow up, become strong, and go forth for themselves, independent of their parents; and they flourish. And all this takes place under the kind care of the Benevolent Creator. His loving providence is over them.

Vers. 5-8.—“*Who hath sent out the wild ass free? or who hath loosed the bands of the wild ass?*” &c.

“Whose house I have made the wilderness,
And the barren land his dwellings.
He scorneth the multitude of the city,
Neither regardeth he the crying of the driver.

The range of the mountains is his pasture,
And he searcheth after every green thing."

The wild ass is a well-known inhabitant of the deserts of Arabia, and is still met with in Tartary and in other parts of Asia. It is a far more dignified animal than our domestic ass. It is not only beautiful and excessively swift, but it is distinguished by its passion for liberty. Thus it is presented here, "*the wild ass free.*" For the sake of liberty, he prefers the barren wilderness for his habitation to the noise and hurry of the crowded city. His driver's voice he disregards, and sets the whip at defiance. At the appearance of coercion or control he sniffs at the wind, casts a wild look to the barren hills, content to live on a few tufts of grass, amidst saline waters, so long as he is free.

Vers. 9-12.—"*Will the unicorn be willing to serve thee, or abide by thy crib? Canst thou bind the unicorn with his band in the furrow? or will he harrow the valleys after thee? Wilt thou trust him, because his strength is great? or wilt thou leave thy labour to him? Wilt thou believe him, that he will bring home thy seed, and gather it into thy barn?*" The word "unicorn" here is translated by some *oryx*, by others *buffalo*, by others *wild bull*. It does not matter what we call it, for it is here pretty fully described. It is represented as untamed, strong, and unuseable by man. The word "unicorn" is found in Numb. xxiii. 22; Deut. xxxiii. 17; Psalm xcii. 10. It is generally described as untameable strength.

Vers. 13-18.—"*Gavest thou the goodly wings unto the peacocks?*" &c., or, as in margin, "the feathers of the stork and ostrich." "The

wing of the ostrich exulteth, but it is with fanned wing and plumage." — *Revised Bible*. Another translates thus: "The wing of the exulting fowls vibrates joyously, is it the wing of the stork?" With these renderings it is not easy to determine the meaning; nor does it matter. The translation of *Delitzsch* seems more faithful to the original, and more full in its description of the bird than our version. It runs thus:—

"The wings of the ostrich vibrate joyously.

Is she pious, wing and feather?

No, she leaveth her eggs in the earth,
And broodeth over the dust;

Forgetting that a foot may crush them,
She treateth her young ones hastily as
if they were not hers.

In vain is her labour without her being
distressed;

For Eloah hath caused her to forget
wisdom,
And gave her no share of understand-
ing.

At the time when she casteth herself
aloft,
She derideth the horse and the horse-
man."

Vers. 19-25.—"*Hast thou given the horse strength? Hast thou clothed his neck with thunder?*" &c. The original for "*thunder*" means trembling or quivering. It does not stand for noise but feeling. "This description is acknowledged to be unequalled anywhere for sublimity. It is sufficient in itself to place the writer among the first of poets. The war-horse is referred to as an example of courage and noble bearing. The reference is intended to impress Job with the majesty of Him whose creature this noble and courageous animal is." His strength, his streaming mane, his noble boundings, his snorting, "the glory of his nostrils," his eagerness for the fight, as his highly sensitive frame catches the spirit of

his dauntless rider; his behaviour on the battlefield, amidst the clash of arms, the shouts of the victors, the groans of the dying, are all set before us in language unmatched for its sublimity and force:—

“He mocketh at fear, and is not affrighted;
Neither turneth he back from the sword.
The quiver rattleth against him,
The glittering spear and the sword.”

Every line indicates how thoroughly the spirit of the warrior was sympathized with by his horse. The Greek and Latin poets have exerted their talents in similar descriptions. See the *Argonautics*, b. iii.; *Virgil's Georgics*, b. iii. 13; *Homer's Iliad*, b. iv. 506; b. xv. 263; *Oppian on Hunting*, b. i. 206; also *Lucan*, in the following lines;—

“So when the ring with joyful shouts resounds,
With rage and pride the imprisoned courser bounds;
He frets, he foams, he rends his idle rein,
Springs o'er the fence, and headlong seeks the plain.”

Ver. 26.—“*Doth the hawk fly by thy wisdom, and stretch her wings towards the south?*” This is amongst the most rapid of all the birds in its flight. It is said that a falcon which belonged to Henry IV. of France, having escaped from Fontainebleau, was found twenty-four hours afterward in Milan, a

distance of 1350 miles, and must have travelled at a velocity of not less than fifty-seven miles an hour.

Vers. 27-29.—“*Doth the eagle mount up at thy command, and make her nest on high?*” &c. No bird hovers so high as the “eagle”; and usually she builds her nest in the inaccessible cleft of the rock; and from her lofty eyrie she descries with her far-seeing vision her prey, and pounces down upon it with the rapidity of lightning.

Ver. 30.—“*Her young ones also suck up blood: and where the slain are, there is she.*” “They are too feeble to devour the flesh, and hence they are fed on the blood of the victim. The strength of the eagle consists in the beak, talons, and wings; and such is its power, that it is able to convey animals of considerable size alive to its places of abode. Eagles often bear away, in this manner, lambs, kids, and the young of the gazelle. Three instances, at least, are known, where they have carried off children. In the year 1737, in Norway, a boy upwards of two years of age was carried off by an eagle in the sight of his parents. Anderson, in his ‘History of Iceland,’ asserts that in that island children of four and five years of age have experienced the same fate; and Ray mentions that in one of the Orkneys an infant of a year old was seized in the talons of an eagle, and conveyed about four miles to its eyrie.”

HOMILETICS.—The chapter suggests that the *study of zoology is a religious duty*. God is here represented as calling the attention of Job to various orders of animal life. Elsewhere He sends us to the “ant,” the “ox,” the “raven,” &c. There are several good reasons why we should study zoology.

I. Because it SUPPLIES A GLORIOUS REVELATION OF GOD. Next to mental and moral philosophy there is no subject in nature that gives us so high a view of the Creator. There is more of Him seen in the humblest sentient creature, than in the orbs of heaven, the billows of ocean, the flowers of the field, or the trees of the forest. In these creatures we discover sensation, self-motion, choice; and these are not merely Divine productions, but rather Divine emanations. God feels, moves, chooses, and every animal existing does the same in his measure. Every insect is a wonderful Bible full of God. I rejoice that the study of natural history promises to become one of the most popular of human studies. Whilst I would not underrate the study of physics, chemistry, botany, astronomy, I hold that zoology is a grander, a more quickening, and a more religious study than either. It brings the soul into contact with much that is akin to itself, the "seeing eye, the hearing ear," the quivering sensation, and the guiding instinct. The other reason why we should study zoology is—

II. Because it TENDS TO PROMOTE OUR SPIRITUAL CULTURE.

First: It tends to *encourage our faith in the goodness of God*. The creatures specified in this chapter are all objects of His kindly regard. The "wild goat" in the abysses of the desert; the "wild ass" breaking from his fetters, and bounding away into the "wilderness;" the "unicorn," or the buffalo, untamed and strong; the "ostrich" lifting herself up on high and scorning the horse and its rider; the "war-horse" fired and filled with the spirit of battle; the "hawk" and the "eagle"—the great Creator takes an interest in them all, and guides them into scenes where they shall meet with the provisions they require, and be best preserved. Surely the God who takes care of these creatures will not neglect His human children! Will not He who feeds the young "ravens" when they cry, supply the wants of His own hungering offspring?

Secondly: It tends to *destroy our egotism*. What are we in the presence of some of these creatures? What is our strength to that of the "unicorn" or the buffalo, our courage

to that of the “*war-horse*,” our vision to that of the “*eagle*” or the “*hawk*,” our speed to that of the “*ostrich*” and the “*wild ass*”? Where is boasting, then? Our distinction is the possession of a moral nature; and unless we are morally good, we are contemptible in the presence of these creatures of the desert, the forest, and the air.

Thirdly: It tends to *promote a kindly feeling towards all sentient life*. Cruelty to dumb animals argues a low nature, and is a crime against Heaven—a crime, I fear, on the increase. In proportion as we study these creatures will our kindly interest in them increase. They are made to feel the power of kindness; there is no creature, perhaps, so wild and savage that kindness cannot tame. Most of them can appreciate the kind human touch and the kind human word. It is only the man whose moral nature is more or less numb or unrefined that can enjoy the gun of the sportsman or the line of the angler. Society may call them gentlemen, but spiritual philosophy must regard them as brutes. Another reason why we should study zoology is—

III. Because it SERVES TO SUPPLY ILLUSTRATIONS OF HUMAN CHARACTER. Let us look for this purpose at these creatures mentioned here—the “*wild ass*,” the “*ostrich*,” and the “*war-horse*.”

First: The “*wild ass*” may be taken as an emblem of the *genius of freedom*. So strong, we are told, is the passion of this creature for liberty that he will break through any bounds, brave any perils, and sacrifice even his necessary food. The passion of our ancestors for liberty has borne us so far on from the trammels of political despotism and ecclesiastical domination. Every day some fettering link it snaps asunder: some iron boundary it breaks through.

“What sovereign worthy of the name,
If doomed to breathe against his lawful will
An element that flatters him—to kill,
But would rejoice to barter outward show
For the least boon that freedom can bestow?”—*Wordsworth*.

The genius of freedom, when it takes possession of a man or nation, breaks through all restraints, treats despots as this “*wild ass*” his driver, and prefers living upon the scantiest fare

in the deserts, unfettered and free, to feeding on luxuries in cities, trammelled and coerced. The genius of liberty is one of the sublimest forces of the soul. It has wrought wonders ere now, and so it will again.

Secondly: The "*unicorn*" may be taken as an emblem of *untrainable power*. "*Will the unicorn be willing to serve thee, or abide by thy crib?*" This great oryx creature is represented as having prodigious strength—a strength that cannot be trained or turned to any useful purpose—a creature of dull untractable force. In this respect it is an emblem of a very large class of the human race—a class that abounds in all circles and in all stages of civilization, not merely the louts in rural life but the dull, untractable persons everywhere,—persons who possess an unusual amount of power, but power that is self-willed and incorrigible. "*Wilt thou trust him, because his strength is great? or wilt thou leave thy labour to him?*" You can make nothing of him. Lazy and loutish, strong but stupid. If he is a politician he will not move from the old track. If he is a religionist he is an intolerant bigot.

Thirdly: The "*ostrich*" may be taken as the emblem of *intense selfishness*. The description here given represents her as heartless, cowardly, and proud. How *heartless* she is! She "*leaveth her eggs in the earth, and warmeth them in dust, and forgetteth that the foot may crush them, or that the wild beast may break them.*" Her eggs, which she merely covers with the earth, are so disregarded by her that they often become a prey to the jackals, wild cats, and other animals. And when they are hatched, she pays them but little attention. "*She is hardened against her young ones,*" or treateth her young ones harshly. No creature seems so indifferent to its young. She leaves them to struggle for themselves. To some extent many human parents would do well to imitate her in this. Many a human mother exhausts her energies, health, and time in so fondling and pampering her young ones, that they become utterly indisposed rightly and nobly to discharge the duties of life. But *heartlessness* is here charged to the "*ostrich*," although it is her nature. In proportion to the selfishness of a human character is its heartlessness. Selfishness hardens the heart, and renders it

utterly indifferent to the claims of others. To an intensely selfish man, self is everything; neighbours, and even children, are sacrificed to self gratification. How *cowardly* she is! In her cowardice she illustrates a selfish character. Naturalists tell us that when danger appears, she puts her head into the sand, so as not to hear or see the approaching perils. She will not look danger in the face and grapple with it; but hides her head, afraid to believe in its existence. A selfish man is always cowardly, and that in proportion to his selfishness. In fact, there can be no bravery and intrepidity where there is not a generous love; it is love alone that makes the hero. Every sinner is essentially selfish, and every sinner is a coward. "The wicked fleeth when no man pursueth." The sinner will not see his danger, but like the "*ostrich*" hides his head in the sand, and shuts his ears to the awful mutterings of future retribution. How *proud* is the "*ostrich*!" "*She lifteth up herself on high, she scorneth the horse and his rider.*" This creature seems to be remarkably proud of its wings, although it cannot fly, and of its power of speed. When the fleetest horse with its rider approaches, she flaps her wings as if in proud scorn, conscious that she can leave the swiftest horseman behind. So in truth she can; it is said, with the help of her wings, she can run at the rate of sixty miles an hour. In this she seems to glory. Thus with the selfish, they are always proud. The more selfish a man is, the more he prides himself in a something that he has which others do not possess. All selfish men are as *heartless*, as *cowardly*, and as *proud* as the "*ostrich*" of the desert. These attributes in this irrational creature are innocent, but in man they are heinous deformities.

Fourthly: The "*war-horse*" may be taken as an emblem of the *sympathetic worker*. The "*war-horse*" here presented in such majestic poetry as bounding and quivering with the spirit of the campaign, fairly represents those *noble workers* in the cause of human progress, who are filled with the spirit of their mission. They go not into their work from the cold sense of duty, proceeding with the measured steps of caution; but bound into it under the impulse of enthusiastic zeal. Difficulties to them are nothing. They laugh at

impossibilities; for dangers they care not; opposition they defy. Such was Paul; under the spirit of his noble mission, he conferred not with "flesh and blood," nor counted his life dear unto him, but rose to higher heroism as dangers thickened around him. Such was Luther in the Reformation. Like the "*war-horse*," he went on to meet the armed men; "*he mocked at fear*," and "*turned not back at the sword*." The thunders of the Vatican were no more to him than the howlings of the idle wind. Such is Garibaldi, the grandest man in Europe to-day. With a patriotism that became a passion, swelling and surging within him like a fiery sea, he delivered his countrymen from the ruthless tyranny of foreign despots. Can any man fulfil his mission that glows not with its spirit?

Fifthly: The "*hawk*" and the "*eagle*" may be taken as an emblem of the *ravenously ambitious*. "*Doth the hawk fly by thy wisdom, and stretch her wings toward the south? Doth the eagle mount up at thy command, and make her nest on high?*" What are the warriors but hungry "*hawks*" and "*eagles*," struggling upwards in order to command a view, and obtain a power over their victims? Thus brutes mirror men. Many a man may see in some irrational creature some of his own leading characteristics. Indeed Holy Scripture calls some men "*vipers*," "*swine*," "*sheep*," "*dogs*," &c.

HOMILY No. LXXXVI.

JEHOVAH'S ADDRESS. (*Continued.*)

(7.) IT SILENCED CONTROVERSY AND GENERATED REPENTANCE.

"Moreover the Lord answered Job, and said," &c.—CHAP. xl. 1-14.

EXEGETICAL REMARKS. *Vers. 1, 2.*—"Moreover the Lord answered Job, and said, Shall he that contendeth with the Almighty instruct Him? he that reproceeth God, let him answer it." Again, "out of the whirlwind," if not objectively, yet subjectively in Job's consciousness, Jehovah speaks, and His words thunder with apparent satiric reproof. "Will now the censurer contend with the Almighty? let the instructor of Eloah answer it."—*De-litzsch*. The first verses of this chapter (1-5) merely clench the appeal of the previous chapter to the ignorance of man in respect to the laws of the physical and animal world, as preventing him from being fit to "instruct" and to reprove God in His dealing with the higher world of humanity. Job acknowledges the appeal, and is silenced. Then follows a second appeal to the power of God, as a needful instrument of His moral government. Till man can wield the power, can he determine its right use? (6-14). To this appeal is appended a remarkable description of two types of brute force, the behemoth and leviathan, as laughing to scorn the powers of man (ch. xl. 15-24; and xli.). Job's answer is contained in xlii. (1-6). — *Canon Barry*.

Vers. 3, 4.—"Then Job answered the Lord, and said, Behold, I am vile; what shall I answer Thee? I will lay mine hand upon my mouth."

As if Job had said, I am so impressed with meanness in Thy majestic presence, that I have not a word to say. I have been reasoning with men, but I cannot reason with Thee. Job had more than once expressed his desire to be brought into the presence of the Almighty, in order to vindicate himself. He is now in His presence, and he can say nothing but "*I am vile*," or mean.

Ver. 5.—"Once have I spoken; but I will not answer: yea, twice; but I will proceed no further." This means, I have spoken several times concerning Thee, but I cannot speak to Thee, and I will speak no more.

Vers. 6, 7.—"Then answered the Lord unto Job out of the whirlwind, and said, Gird up thy loins now like a man: I will demand of thee, and declare thou unto Me." Here is another terrible appeal in the form of a challenge. The meaning is, "Rouse all thy energy, gather up all thy force and answer Me. I will ask thee questions and demand an answer."

Ver. 8.—"Wilt thou also disannul My judgment? wilt thou condemn Me, that thou mayest be righteous?" "Wilt thou altogether annul My right? condemn Me that thou mayest be righteous?"—*De-litzsch*.

Ver. 9.—"Hast thou an arm like God? or canst thou thunder with a voice like Him?" "Arm," symbol

of strength. Hast thou strength equal to Mine, the Almighty. What is thy voice to Mine? A faltering whisper to rolling thunder.

Ver. 10.—“*Deck thyself now with majesty and excellency; and array thyself with glory and beauty.*” If thou wouldst argue with Me, array thyself in majesty equal to Mine.

Ver. 11.—“*Cast abroad the rage of thy wrath: and behold every one that is proud, and abase him.*” Show that thou canst do what I can accomplish.

Ver. 12.—“*Look on every one*

that is proud, and bring him low; and tread down the wicked in their place.” “Behold all pride and bring it low, and cast down the evil-doers in their place.”

Ver. 13.—“*Hide them in the dust together; and bind their faces in secret.*” Crush them and bury them in secrecy.

Ver. 14.—“*Then will I also confess unto thee that thine own right hand can save thee.*” If thou canst do all this, it will prove that thou art able to contend with Me, able to criticize My procedure in the government of the universe.

HOMILETICS.—In these fourteen verses we have one of the most powerful reproofs ever addressed to mortal man. It was addressed by the Almighty to Job, in circumstances the most stirring, and in language the most impressive. This Divine reproof had a power which did two things—

I. SILENCED CONTROVERSY. What could Job or any man say to these words? It did this—

First: *By appealing to the ignorance of man.* “*Shall he that contendeth with the Almighty instruct Him?*” Who can “*instruct*” Omniscience? (1) It is to the last degree impossible. Were all created intelligences in the universe to unite in order to increase the intelligence of God, or to give Him one single idea, the attempt would be as futile as if one sought to brighten the orb of day by setting a match in flames. “*Who being His counsellor hath taught Him?*” (2) Were it possible, it would be to the last degree inexpedient. Were the Eternal to be in any measure influenced by the thoughts and wishes of His creatures, would not the order of the universe be disturbed; ay, destroyed? It is a blessing to the universe that the Eternal carries out His own ideas about the creation, and the ideas of no one else; therefore all controversy in relation to Him should be hushed. “*Who art thou, O man, that repliest against God?*” “*Be still, and know that I am God.*” Infinitely more absurd is it for the highest created minds

to criticize the Almighty than for insects to hiss against the thunders that shake the globe. It did this—

Secondly: *By appealing to the weakness of man.* “*Gird up thy loins now like a man. . . Hast thou an arm like God? . . . Cast abroad the rage of thy wrath,*” &c. Could any language be more suited to overwhelm man with his utter impotency than this? What are we in His presence? “*I will demand of thee, and declare thou unto Me.*” What is thy power to Mine? “*Hast thou an arm like God?*” What is thy voice to Mine? Canst thou speak in a voice of thunder? What is thy greatness to Mine? “*Deck thyself now with majesty,*” &c. What is thy wrath to Mine? “*Cast abroad the rage of thy wrath.*” What art thou in My presence? The only effective way of hushing the murmurings of men in relation to the Divine procedure, is by producing an impression of the infinite disparity between man and his Maker.

Thirdly: *By appealing to the superior power of some brutes.* “*Behold now behemoth,*” &c. This may mean, not only, What art thou to *Me?* but, What art thou to some of the beasts of the field? “*Behold now behemoth.*” Study this huge creature, and thou wilt find in many respects thou art inferior to him. Therefore be humble, and cease to contend with *Me.* “*All nations to Him are nothing, and less than nothing, and counted less than a drop in a bucket.*” Absolute submission to the Divine will, and not criticism of the Divine conduct, is alone rational and right. This Divine reproof had a power which—

II. GENERATED REPENTANCE. Job was not only struck into silence, but humbled into penitence. (1) He received an impression of his moral unworthiness. “*I am vile; what shall I answer Thee? I will lay mine hand upon my mouth.*” This is the first feeling a man has when he is thoroughly convinced of sin, not merely my actions are vile, my thoughts vile, but I myself am vile. Abraham felt this when he said, “*I am but dust and ashes;*” Isaiah, when he said, “*Woe is me,*” &c.; Peter, when he exclaimed, “*Depart from me, for I am a sinful man.*” (2) He made a resolution to change his conduct. He would contend no more. “*I will lay mine hand upon my mouth.*” And again, “*Once have I spoken;*

but I will not answer; I will proceed no further." Thus he loathes himself, he regrets the past, he resolves to improve in the future. This is what every sinner should do, and must do in order to rise into purity and blessedness.

HOMILY No. LXXXVII.

Jehovah's Address. (Continued.)

(S.) THE HUGE ANIMALS OF THE WORLD USED BY THE ALMIGHTY TO MAKE MORAL IMPRESSIONS ON HUMANITY.

"Behold now behemoth, which I made with thee;" &c.—CHAP. xli. 15-24; xli. 1-34.

EXEGETICAL REMARKS. *Verses* 15-24. — "Behold now behemoth, which I made with thee; he eateth grass as an ox," &c. This very poetic description of the behemoth I am tempted to present in the translation of *Delitzsch*, which the reader is requested to compare with the A. V.

"Behold now the behemoth, which I have made with thee; he eateth grass like an ox. Behold, now, his strength is in his loins, and his force in the sinews of his belly. He bendeth his tail like a cedar branch, the sinews of his legs are firmly interwoven. His bones are like tubes of brass; his bones like bars of iron. He is the first-ling of the ways of God; He, his Maker, reached to him his sword. For the mountains bring forth food for him, and all the beasts of the field play beside him. Under the lote trees he lieth down, in covert of reeds and marsh. Lote trees cover him as a shade; the willows of the brook encompass him. Behold, if the stream is strong, he doth not quake; he remaineth

cheerful if a Jordan breaketh forth upon his mouth. Just catch him while he is looking, with snares let one pierce his nose! Dost thou draw the crocodile by a hoop-net, and dost thou trick his tongue into the line? Canst thou put a rush ring into his nose, and pierce his cheeks with a hook? Will he make many supplications to thee, or speak flatteries to thee?—Will he make a covenant with thee, to take him as a perpetual slave? Wilt thou play with him as a little bird, and bind him for thy maidens? Do fishermen trade with him, do they divide him among the Canaanites? Canst thou fill his skin with darts, and his head with fish spears? Only lay thy hand upon him, remember the battle; thou wilt not do it again."

Vers. 1, 2.—"Canst thou draw out Leviathan with an hook? or his tongue with a cord which thou lettest down? Canst thou put an hook into his nose? or bore his nose through with a thorn?" The description just given of the "behemoth" is not more graphic than this of

"*leviathan*," which whether crocodile, dragon, whale, or some unknown monster of the deep, still existing, or extinct, matters not. The description here, which is minute and graphic, impresses us with its tremendous power. These two verses imply that this huge monster of the deep was beyond the power of man to seize and bring from the vast abyss. As the Authorized Version of this chapter is tolerably correct, with the exception of verse 25, which should be, "Before his rising up heroes are afraid, they miss their way from fear,"—and the description tolerably intelligible, it is unnecessary to comment on words and phrases. Are the "*behemoth*," and "*leviathan*," mentioned in these verses, mere poetic creations, or have they an actual existence? In answer to this question three things should be remembered. (1) That no creatures have been discovered answering in all points to the de-

scription here given. The elephant, the rhinoceros, the hippopotamus, and the extinct mammoth have been compared with them; but none of them agree on all points with the picture. (2) That although no creatures have been found answering to the description, it does not follow that such creatures did not exist and do not exist. Geology shows that monsters have been here that are now extinct; and the progress of science suggests that there may be millions of creatures, in the caverns of the earth and the depths of the sea, in unpenetrated, and perhaps impenetrable, regions of the earth, undiscovered. How little we know of the world we live in! (3) That whether these creatures are a poetic creation or a material existence, it matters but little for the purpose of moral impression. The Infinite could create hundreds of creatures a thousand times larger.

HOMILETICS.—The description of the "*behemoth*" in the preceding chapter, and the "*leviathan*" here, suggests a few moral reflections.

I. THE PRODIGALITY OF CREATED MIGHT. With what amazing force are these creatures endowed! How huge their proportions! How exuberant their vital energy! Whence this prodigious force — force that seems to us redundant and unnecessary? How infinite must be the resources of Him from Whom such creatures as these derive their enormous proportions and powers!

We have here suggested—

II. THE RESTRAINING POWER OF THE DIVINE GOVERNMENT. What keeps those creatures in check? What prevents them from breaking forth from their caverns, their jungles, their rivers, and their oceans, and devouring man and all minor existences? They are under the spell of the

Almighty. He who keeps planets in their orbits, keeps them in their native regions. Here are creatures whose flesh is as hard as the "*nether millstone*," that "*esteemeth iron as straw*," and that "*laugheth at the shaking of a spear*," and "*maketh the deep to boil like a pot*," held back from going into the habitations of men. To all creatures the Creator has set a boundary beyond which they cannot pass.

Another reflection suggested is—

III. THE ABSURDITY OF MAN PRIDING HIMSELF IN HIS STRENGTH. There are those who glory in their physical power—the athlete, the pugilist, the wrestler, the pedestrian—they are vain of their muscular strength. But what is their power to that of this "*behemoth*," this "*leviathan*"? They are only insects in their presence. "Let not the mighty man glory in his might," &c.

Another reflection suggested here is—

IV. THE PROBABILITY OF MENTAL GIANTS IN THE UNIVERSE. May there not be in the spirit domain as great a difference in the power of its tenants as there is in the physical? Great as is the difference between the "*behemoth*" and the lamb, the "*leviathan*" and the minnow, it may not be greater than the difference between the human mind and other minds in the great mental empire. What is Satan but a great mental "*behemoth*," a mighty "*leviathan*"? Bunyan's description of Apollyon is partly taken from that of leviathan in the text. "Now the monster was hideous to behold: he was clothed with scales like a fish (and they are his pride); he had wings like a dragon, feet like a bear, and out of his belly came fire and smoke, and his mouth was as the mouth of a lion."

Another reflection suggested here is—

V. THE DIVINE MODE OF SOLVING MAN'S MORAL DIFFICULTIES. Great were the difficulties of Job in relation to God's government. These difficulties were the subjects of long contentions with his friends. But discussion served to strengthen rather than remove them. Logic was powerless. God does the work by making on the perplexed mind an

impression of Himself. He does not reason with Job, but shows Himself to him, and thus He will ever settle all dispute.

Another reflection suggested here is—

VI. GOD'S WORK IN NATURE SHOULD BE STUDIED, IN ORDER TO IMPRESS US WITH HIS MAJESTY. Speaking of these works of nature, these huge animals, Canon Cooke makes the following remarks: "What impression was such a description calculated to produce? We must remember the profoundly religious and serious character of the Eastern patriarch. When images were presented to his mind which spoke of tremendous power and purposes utterly beyond his conception, he could have no thought but of his own nothingness. It never entered into his spirit to doubt of God's wisdom; but when he reflected upon the marvellous care which God bestowed upon every part of an animal so utterly useless to man, he must have felt that the goodness, which was to him but another word for perfect wisdom, must be something far different from that which, in his narrowness and presumption, man is wont to assume."

HOMILY No. LXXXVIII.

DIRECT AND INDIRECT REVELATIONS OF GOD TO THE HUMAN SOUL.

"Then Job answered the Lord, and said, I know that thou canst do everything," &c.—CHAP. xlii. 1-6.

EXEGETICAL REMARKS. *Vers. 1, 2.*—"Then Job answered the Lord, and said, I know that Thou canst do everything, and that no thought can be withholden from Thee." (No plan is impracticable to Thee.) To this blessed state of mind Job,—who had been, as it were, contending with his Maker in argument,—

is brought by the direct manifestation of God to him. His soul is won from the region of theological controversy to that of implicit trust in the Almighty. In this verse he confesses God's omnipotence, His power of doing all things.

Ver. 3.—"Who is he that hideth counsel without knowledge? there-

fore have I uttered that I understood not; things too wonderful for me, which I knew not." Almost these very words Jehovah had addressed to Job (chapter xxxviii. verse 2). Job here takes them up and applies them to himself. I am the man that have "judged without understanding what was too wonderful for me without knowing."—*De-litzsch*.

Ver. 4.—"Hear, I beseech Thee, and I will speak: I will demand of Thee, and declare Thou unto me." The expression, "demand of Thee" should be, "I will ask Thee." It means, Oh, listen to me and give me instruction; I am no longer a debater but a learner.

Ver. 5.—"I have heard of Thee by the hearing of the ear." Heard of Thee with the hearing of the ear. Specially referring, undoubtedly, to what his friend Elihu had said. "But now mine eye seeth Thee." I am brought into conscious contact with Thee. Thou hast revealed Thyself directly to me. I see Thee with the eye of consciousness.

Ver. 6.—"Wherefore I abhor myself, and repent in dust and ashes." Although on the whole he was a good man, "a perfect and an upright man, one that feareth God and escheweth evil," yet in the presence of Infinite Purity he felt his moral vileness. "I abhor myself, and repent in dust and ashes."

HOMILETICS.—The passage suggests a comparison between a knowledge of God coming to the soul by testimony, and the knowledge coming by a direct manifestation of God to himself. Both kinds of knowledge are referred to: "I have heard of Thee by the hearing of the ear," &c. (verses 5 and 6). The following remarks are suggested in relation to these two knowledges, the one derived from testimony, the other from a direct manifestation of God.

I. THE ONE IS COMMON, THE OTHER IS RARE. Most men hear of God with the "hearing of the ear;" He is often the subject of general conversation and frequently of special discourse. All in Christendom,—most, perhaps, throughout the world, who have come to years of thought,—have heard something about the Supreme in some form or other. There is a deal said about Him in our age and land. Thousands upon thousands are *professionally* engaged in the work. In how many counsels from parents, conversations with friends, and sermons from ministers have we heard of Him by the "hearing of the ear." Something about Him every day falls on the ear. Very *common*, indeed, is this *second-hand* knowledge. But the other method by which man obtains knowledge is *rare*. Abraham, Moses, Elijah, Isaiah, Paul, in fact all the patriarchs, prophets, and apostles,

were brought into *conscious* contact with God. God came personally and directly to them, so now he came to Job. "*Now mine eye seeth Thee.*" Why is this direct knowledge so rare? Not because He is not everywhere manifest and ever prepared to reveal Himself to every human soul, but because souls are involved in such a dark atmosphere of depravity that it shuts Him out. "If a man love Me, he will keep My words: and My Father will love him, and We will come unto him, and make Our abode with him." No man can really know God, only as God reveals Himself. If the solar orb is to be seen, he must show himself. All the stars that blaze in the midnight heavens cannot reveal Him. No theologies can reveal God.

II. THE ONE IS MORALLY INSUFFICIENT, THE OTHER IS ALL-EFFECTIVE. The former may serve us intellectually and socially. In truth, as mere citizens of time, it may serve us in many ways; but *spiritually*, it is without value. There is no moral virtue, no godly life in it. It is a visionary, not a vital thing. Its influence on the soul is that of the lunar ray, cold and dead, rather than that of the solar beam, warm and life-giving. Look at the effect of these two knowledges on Job, as indicated in these verses:

First: *The one stimulates theological controversy, the other silences it.* Long, earnest, and vigorous was his disputation with his three friends and Elihu, concerning God's procedure. All along he seemed to feel a consciousness of competency to discuss questions concerning the Infinite. But when God came to him *direct*, hear what he says, "*I know that Thou canst do everything.*" Thou art absolute, and I am nothing, utterly unable to stand before Thee. Experimental knowledge of God disdains polemics. It is second-hand knowledge that breeds controversies. When He shows Himself to the soul, our intellectual theories of Him appear as contemptible as rushlights in the sun.

Secondly: *The one encourages self-sufficiency, the other leads to the profoundest humility.* "*Who is he that hideth counsel without knowledge?*" He means to say, This I have been doing all along, during the whole of this debate. I have spoken as if I understood these things, as if I were compe-

competent to pronounce upon the ways of my Maker. But now I feel that I am utterly ignorant. This humility inspires him with—(1) An earnest desire to be taught of God. “*Hear, I beseech Thee, and I will speak: I will demand of Thee, and declare Thou unto me.*” The man who has really seen God with his own spiritual eyes cries out for “more light,” “more light.” This humility inspires him with—(2) A profound sorrow for past conduct. “*Wherefore I abhor myself, and repent in dust and ashes.*” Even the pure angels, in the presence of the infinitely Holy One, seem to have some sense of imperfection; they cover their faces with their wings when they cry, “Holy, holy, holy, is the Lord of Hosts.” When Isaiah saw the Lord, he exclaimed, “Woe unto me, for I am undone.” When Christ appeared to Saul of Tarsus, he fell to the ground as a dead man; and when the Apostle John saw the Lord, he said, “I fell at His feet as dead.”

HOMILY No. LXXXIX.

JOB'S FRIENDS CONDEMNED AND HE ACQUITTED.

“*And it was so, that after the Lord had spoken these words unto Job, the Lord said to Eliphaz the Temanite, My wrath is kindled,*” &c.—CHAP. xlii. 7-9.

EXEGETICAL REMARKS. *Ver. 7.*—“*And it was so, that after the Lord had spoken these words unto Job, the Lord said to Eliphaz the Temanite, My wrath is kindled against thee, and against thy two friends: for ye have not spoken of Me the thing that is right, as My servant Job hath.*” Here begins the epilogue in prose. In this verse it is declared that neither of Job's friends had “*spoken*” of God “*the thing which*” was altogether “*right.*” They had undoubtedly said something con-

cerning His sublime majesty, incomprehensible greatness, and absolute authority, and the duty of man to submit to Him, which could not have been far wrong. But when they insisted that He dealt with man here according to his character, and because Job was a great sufferer concluded therefore that he was a great sinner, they did not speak “*the thing that is right.*” It is said, however, that Job did speak the right thing. He no doubt said many very wrong things, but in

maintaining that his great sufferings did not prove his great sinfulness, and that retribution was not adequate, we find, he said "*the thing that is right.*" His friends through the whole seem to speak as prejudiced dogmatists, but Job as an earnest inquirer.

Ver. 8.—"*Therefore take unto you now seven bullocks and seven rams,*" &c. "Here also, as in the introduction of the book, it is the עֹלָה which affect the atonement. It is the oldest, and, according to its meaning, the most comprehensive of the blood offerings. Bullocks and rams were also the animals for the whole burnt-offerings of the Mosaic ritual; the proper animal for the sin-offering, however, is the he-goat, together with the she-goat, which do not occur here, because

the age and scene are strange to the Israelitish branching off of the עֹלָה from the הַנֹּתֵן. The double seven gives mark of the profoundest solemnity to the offering that was to be offered. The three also obey the Divine direction; for although they have erred, God's will is above everything in their estimation, and they cheerfully subordinate themselves as friends to the friend."—*Delitzsch.*

Ver. 9.—"*Sō Eliphaz the Temanite and Bildad the Shuhite and Zophar the Naamathite went, and did according as the Lord commanded them.*" These three men seemed to render prompt obedience to the Divine command. "*The Lord also accepted Job.*" That is, He accepted his prayers and offerings on behalf of his friends.

HOMILETICS.—These words suggest the following reflections—

I. GOD IS A LISTENER TO ALL THE DISCUSSIONS OF MANKIND. The Almighty here is represented as charging the friends of Job with not speaking the "*thing that was right*" concerning Himself. Hence it is implied that He heard the discussion. Though they saw Him not,—never perhaps dreamt of His presence,—He was with them, and heard every word from beginning to end. It is ever so. Whoever is absent in our social talk, or in our assemblies, He is present. Not a word escapes His ear. In relation to Israel, Jehovah said, "I hearkened and heard, but they spake not aright;" and again, "They that feared the Lord spake often one to another, and the Lord hearkened and heard it." Nay, not only does He know the words, but the very thoughts of mankind. "I know their works and their thoughts." Were men properly to realize this fact, all frivolous, ill-natured, deceitful, profane, irreverent, and untruthful speech would cease from the earth:—words would be things, and the things would be pure, lovely, and beneficent. Another reflection these words suggest is—

II. PROFESSED ADVOCATES OF RELIGION MAY COMMIT SIN IN THEIR ADVOCACY. These three men were engaged in an endeavour to vindicate the ways of God. They considered Job, not only a great sinner, but a great heretic; and they took on themselves to stand up for God and truth. Notwithstanding this, they "*have not spoken of Me the thing that is right.*" In all ages it has often been so, and it is so still. Are there not thousands of professed advocates of religion who speak not "*the thing that is right*" concerning God? Who are they who represent Him as *partial*, favouring some of His human children and neglecting others? Who are they who speak of Him as pouring His wrath upon the head of Christ on account of men's sins? Who are they who exhibit Him as holding men guilty for the sins of their progenitors; as dooming myriads to eternal torture on account of the delinquencies of a few years? Do these men speak the "*thing that is right*"? No; a thousand times, *no*. They calumniate the Infinite Father of the race, the Fountain of all Love. Another reflection these words suggest is—

III. PRACTICAL CONFESSION OF SIN IS THE DUTY OF ALL SINNERS. "*Take unto you now seven bullocks and seven rams, and go to My servant Job, and offer up for yourselves a burnt offering,*" &c. Why was this sacrifice required? Not to appease the wrath of God, nor to procure His favour; but to make a deep salutary impression upon the sinful heart of man. The holocaust as enjoined in Lev. i., and which this anticipates, was undoubtedly with this design. It illustrated and impressed the following great truths—

First: *That the great God requires from His creature man the whole of the best of his possessions.* All the creatures now offered were to be the purest, the cleanest, and the best. All were to be of the best. We have nothing that we can call our own. Everything is absolutely and indefeasibly His. He demands that everything should be consecrated to Him. The command to Abraham to offer up Isaac was perhaps the most powerful enforcement of this claim.

Secondly: *That such is the depraved state of man, that he*

requires to have this claim impressed upon him in the most powerful manner, every day of his life. Hence this daily ceremony so tragie, so awful, so soul-stirring. The groans of bullocks and sheep, the shrieks of birds, and the flowing blood of all. What means could be devised to impress man more with the power of this claim? A thousand lectures of a thousand Pauls would be powerless to it. All this, under the law, was going on every day; whenever the sun arose, some offering was to be made, and the offering was to be complete, the *whole* was to be given, burnt to ashes.

Thirdly: *That a devout, willing, and practical acknowledgment of this claim is well pleasing to God.* It was to be offered of a man's "own voluntary will at the door of the tabernacle of the congregation before the Lord." The offering was to be free and religious, in the presence of God. When this was done, the Almighty was pleased. It is a "sweet savour unto the Lord." It is moreover said, "It shall be accepted of Him to make atonement for him." The primary meaning of the word "atonement" is, to cover. It does not mean *compensation* for sins, nor *pacification* of anger. Another reflection these words suggest is—

IV. INTERCESSION OF ONE MAN FOR ANOTHER IS A DIVINE LAW. "Go to My servant Job, and offer up for yourselves a burnt offering; and My servant Job shall pray for you: for him will I accept." Intercessory prayer is—(1) An *instinct* of the soul. Nothing is more natural than to cry to Heaven on behalf of those in whom we feel a vital interest. How natural it is for the mother to breathe a prayer to Heaven for her sailor boy in the violence of a tempest. (2) Intercessory prayer is a *blessing* to the soul. By it the mind rises into the atmosphere of universal benevolence, and suns itself in the love of God. The stronger and the purer our love for others, the higher we shall mount heavenward, and leave all selfish interests behind. Hence it is a Divine institution. "My servant Job shall pray for you." "Pray for you," to show you that he was a true man, notwithstanding all the charges you brought against him—pray for you, to show that all his trials have failed to extinguish in him

the fire of disinterested love. Another reflection these words suggest is—

V. THE LIFE OF A GOOD MAN IS A BLESSING TO A COMMUNITY. “*My servant Job shall pray for you: for him will I accept: lest I deal with you after your folly.*” For Job’s sake these men were forgiven and blessed. God educates, saves, and ennobles man by man. One truly good and great man has often been a blessing to thousands. Abraham, Moses, Elijah, Daniel, Paul, Luther, Whitfield, Wesley, &c. A good man must be useful—useful, not only as the fruit tree while living, but as the cedar also when dead, and indeed more useful after death, for its salutary influence runs down the ages. The Psalmist says, the “righteous shall grow like a cedar.” The cedar is most useful after it has been cut down. It stands in the halls of science, in the temples of saints, in the palaces of nobles and kings, as contributing to their strength and their beauty, so firm in grain that it defies the tooth of the insect or the mildew of time. It takes the finest polish, and diffuses a delicious aroma all around. So with the usefulness of a good man.

HOMILY No. XC.

THE FRAILTY OF HUMAN FRIENDSHIPS, AND THE ULTIMATE TRIUMPH OF RIGHTEOUSNESS.

“*And the Lord turned the captivity of Job, when he prayed for his friends: also the Lord gave Job twice as much as he had before.*” &c.—CHAP. xlii. 10-17.

EXEGETICAL REMARKS. Ver. 10. —“*And the Lord turned the captivity of Job, when he prayed for his friends.*” The language is taken from restoration to country and home, after having been a captive in a foreign land. It was almost a proverbial expression among the Israelites, and for the same reason

it might have been the common expression amongst peoples in more distant times. “*When he prayed for his friends,*” that is, Job. “It may be,” says one expositor, “that when he prayed all traces of his terrible malady disappeared, and his frame became fair and strong as ever.” “*Also the Lord gave Job*

twice as much as he had before." [Margin, "added all that had been to Job unto the double."] Of course this was not done at once; for as he lived "one hundred and forty years" after his afflictions, he had ample time to accumulate his property.

Ver. 11.—"Then came there unto him all his brethren, and all his sisters," &c. They had forsaken him in his adversity. This to him was a great sorrow. In chap. xix. 13, 14, he deplores it with exceeding pathos. He regarded their alienation as a mark of God's displeasure.

Ver. 12.—"So the Lord blessed the latter end of Job more than his beginning: for he had fourteen thousand sheep, and six thousand camels, and a thousand yoke of oxen, and a thousand she asses." The possessions which are here enumerated are in each instance just twice as much as he possessed in the early part of his life.

Ver. 13.—"He had also seven sons and three daughters." The same number exactly as he had before his terrible trials commenced. Whether these children were by the same mother as the former ones, or

the result of a second marriage we are not told.

Vers. 14, 15.—"And he called the name of the first, Jemima; and the name of the second, Kezia; and the name of the third, Keren-happuch. And in all the land were no women found so fair as the daughters of Job: and their father gave them inheritance among their brethren." All the names are expressive of great beauty and grace, both of person and character. "Their father gave them inheritance." This fact is mentioned, perhaps, because it was not customary for daughters to inherit land, and because of his special interest in them.

Ver. 16.—"After this lived Job an hundred and forty years, and saw his sons, and his sons' sons, even four generations." As the age at the beginning of his calamities cannot be ascertained with certainty, it is not possible to state what age he died. Some, however, suppose that he died at the age of two hundred and forty.

Ver. 17.—"So Job died, being old and full of days." He died. Of all the millions who have been here and gone, this might be written—he died.

HOMILETICS.—Three facts may be drawn from these verses.

I. THAT HUMAN FRIENDSHIPS ARE NOT ALWAYS CONSTANT.

Here we read of Job's brethren, his sisters, and his former acquaintances, coming to him to "eat bread with him in his house:" and to comfort "him over all the evil that the Lord had brought upon him." But where had they been during the whole period of his tremendous trials? He seemed to have felt their absence intensely. "He hath put my brethren far from me, and mine acquaintance are verily estranged from me. My kinsfolk have failed, and my familiar friends have forgotten me" (chap. xix. 13, 14). (1) Adversity had driven them away. During the calm and sunny periods of

his life they were probably ever about him, participating in his enjoyments, and proud to own him as a friend or relative. But the storm came, and they flew. (2) Prosperity draws them back. His storms are hushed, his clouds are dispersed, and his sky is azure and bright once more, and they hasten to his presence. Not only did they favour him now with their presence, but they contributed to his possessions. "*Every man also gave him a piece of money, and every one an earring of gold.*" When he required their presence and their help, they were absent. Now that prosperity had set in, they clustered around him and lavished their kindness. Feltham has well said, "To find friends when we have no need of them, and to want them when we have, are both alike easy and common." And another remarks, "When I see leaves drop from their trees in the beginning of autumn, just such, think I, is the friendship of the world. Whilst the sap of maintenance lasts, my friends swarm in abundance; but in the winter of my need, they leave me naked. He is an happy man that hath a true friend at his need; but he is more truly happy that hath no need of his friend." *

"Dost thou know what friendship is?
 'Tis not the fawning cringe, the studied smile,
 The oil-smooth speech, big word, or solemn vow;
 It is a sacred ray of heavenly love;
 Like that, rejoicing in the good of others,
 It scorns the narrow bounds of selfishness,
 And knows no bliss sincere, but social joy;
 Simple and plain, it shines in naked truth,
 And opens all the sluices of the heart."—*Hackins.*

Another fact to be drawn from these verses is—

II. THAT A RIGHTEOUS LIFE, HOWEVER TRIED, IS NO FAILURE. Job had been greatly tried—tried in his circumstances, tried in his body. His trials perhaps were unmatched and matchless. Yet through the whole he held fast his integrity. "My righteousness," he said, "I hold fast, and will not let it go; my heart shall not reproach me, so long as I live." So he did; and hence his life, through its most agonizing stages, was no failure. In sooth, *rectitude alone makes life a success.* Without it, it is a miserable failure, with whatever wealth, fame, and earthly pleasure it may be

* See *Practical Philosopher*, p. 361.

associated. Believe me, *there is no successful life apart from righteousness.* Righteousness is its own glory, its own reward.

But whilst it is no failure even in the midst of its greatest trials, its end is crowned with glorious results. "*So the Lord blessed the latter end of Job more than his beginning,*" &c. The fact that the Almighty conducts a righteous life to such blessed issues is not to be held out as a motive to pursue it, but rather as a demonstration of His infinite interest in it for its own sake.

The great problem that men have asked in all ages, Will a righteous life answer in the long run? is here solved in the history of Job's end. Through the surging seas and beating tempests he is landed on shores of exuberant bountifulness, enjoyment, and peace. Verily, there is a reward for the righteous. "Mark the perfect man, and behold the upright, for the end of that man is peace." "Godliness is profitable unto all things, having promise of the life that now is, and of that which is to come." "Be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life."

Every one, says the Infallible Teacher of humanity, that "hath forsaken houses, or brethren, or sisters, or father, or mother, or wife, or children, or lands for My name's sake, shall receive an hundred-fold, and shall inherit everlasting life." The sacrifices of a life of righteousness are infinitely more than compensated. An hundred-fold shall be received in this life, and in the future state, everlasting life. The advantages of a religious life here are infinitely more than a counterbalance to all the inconveniences that may arise out of it. What inward tranquillity! What uplifting thoughts! What buoyant energy of soul! What high aspirations! What lofty hopes! What kindling aspirations! How delightful to feel that death is gain, that God is our Father, that the universe is our home, and that eternity is the sphere where we shall develop our powers, realize our desires, and fulfil our aims! But what is all this to the hereafter—**EVERLASTING LIFE?** Here are ages of enjoyment that no arithmetic can compute; oceans of pleasure, whose majestic billows rise from the depths of infinitude and break on no shore!

EPILOGUE.

“*So Job died, being old and full of days.*”—Job xlii. 17.

IN review of the whole of our studies of this remarkable book we are impressed with the following facts:—

First: *With the unconquerable force of an unselfish religion.* We have seen Job pass through a series of trials—trials so overwhelmingly severe as proved beyond all question that he did “fear God for nought,”—that neither love of gain nor dread of loss entered into the essence of his religious life. He loved the right for its own sake. His religion was not a means to an end, but the end itself, the centre of his affections, and the spring of his activities. How different this from the popular religions of the world! how different even from the conventional pieties of England! What are they for the most part but the modifications and developments of that selfishness which is the essence of sin and the source of all depravities! Were our church and chapel going population to be struck to-day with an unquestionable conviction that there are no heavens or hells in the universe, where would they be when the next Lord’s day came round? Would their pews be occupied, or empty? Albeit their duty to be religious would be as binding as ever. God would be, they would be, their relation to Him would continue, and their obligation to love Him with all their heart, soul, and strength would remain with unabated force. Now the religion which Job was proved to possess, being thus free

from all utilitarian considerations, had an *unconquerable force*. It proved stronger than the strongest social ties, stronger than the love of health, riches, worldly enjoyments, and even life itself. Nothing could crush it. "Though He slay me, yet will I trust Him." He was "more than conqueror." Men with such a religion are evermore willing "to suffer the loss of all things," brave even the horrors of martyrdom itself, and in the presence of the greatest tortures and the hottest flames, exclaim with Paul, "None of these things move me." A sublimer force is not found in the creation of God, than the force of a genuine religion. "God hath not given us the spirit of fear, but of power and of love, and of a sound mind." Again, in glancing back at our studies of this remarkable book we are impressed—

Secondly: *With the comparative worthlessness of theological controversy*. A discussion of several days' length was carried on between Job and his friends. Lengthened were the arguments and strong the speeches on both sides, the spirit of logical antagonism withal ran high. But what service did it answer? Did it reach a satisfactory solution of the difficulties connected with the Divine procedure? No; the clouds remained as dense and thronging at the close as at the beginning. Did it convince either party of its mistakes? No; Job remained unchanged in his consciousness, and his friends retired with their old opinions unshaken, peradventure more deeply rooted. Did it improve the moral temper of any of these disputants? No; they grew more bitter and acrimonious as the debate went on, until they could tolerate each other no longer. Did it afford any relief to the heart of the suffering patriarch? Nay, it intensified his distress, it goaded him almost to madness. Alas, theological controversy has seldom done good. Though it may sharpen the intellect,

elicit thought, and increase information, all this dwindles into worthlessness compared with the enormous evil it inflicts. How it distorts facts, misrepresents the opinions of opponents, tortures the word of God, and generates the spirit of intolerance and persecution! Let us rather battle with our own moral errors than with other people's opinions: struggle to get at the truth for ourselves, and maintain our own convictions with charitable modesty, remembering evermore that we are "of yesterday and know nothing." Again, in reviewing the whole we are impressed—

Thirdly: *With the absurdity of boasting of the march of intellect.* There is a pedantry amongst us in this age that is constantly vaunting the progress of intellect. Attend public festivities,—whether it be in connection with Sciences, Municipalities, Governments, or Churches,—and you will be dinned with its boasting words concerning the wonderful advance that our age has made upon the past. Undoubtedly we have gained some things which the ancients had not. We have the steam-engine, the electric telegraph, the mariner's compass, photography, the printing press, microscopes, and telescopes, of which, perhaps, our distant ancestors knew nothing, although, indeed, this book shows that they had a considerable acquaintance with the sciences of cosmogony, meteorology, zoology, &c., and with the arts of medicine, war, mining, music, &c. But advance in intellectual resources and material civilization does not necessarily involve the progress of humanity. The intellectual powers often grow where the moral man is dead, as you sometimes see the luxuriant branch grow upon the lifeless body of an uprooted tree. Intellectual growth is no more the growth of man than the growth of that branch is the growth of the sapless trunk. In mental and moral culture what are we

superior to the men who figure on the pages of this wonderful book? Will not Eliphaz stand comparison with your Tennysons in loftiness of conception and sublimity of language? Will not Job himself stand comparison with your greatest orators in Church or State? Bring forth from your Universities the most talented and cultured of your young men, and place them side by side with Elihu. In grasp of intellect, in loftiness of thought, in majesty of utterance, your University men shall find at least their match. Meanwhile, forget not that these men lived four thousand years ago. They had no written Bible, no Hebrew prophets had appeared, Grecian sages had not come on the stage, no Christ had crossed their path or spoken to them a word. Talk no more of the march of intellect. Believe me, that in all the higher qualities of mind and heart, humanity is moving but slowly, if at all. Further, a survey of our studies of this book impresses us—

Fourthly: *With the impropriety of deeming all outside the Gospel as morally worthless and lost.* Conventional Christianity and much “missionary theology” do this. They depict all the teeming millions of heathendom as without virtue, doomed to irremediable ruin. But here we find men who had no written revelation, no Gospel, not only theologically and ethically enlightened, but highly moral and profoundly religious. Job, it is emphatically said, was a “perfect man, one that feared God and eschewed evil.” There is a “light that lighteth every man that cometh into the world,” and he that lives up to the light, I can safely trust to the mercy of Him who willeth “not that any should perish.” Is the Gospel then a superfluity? By no means. Is the medical art unnecessary because vast multitudes in every generation never require either surgeon or physician? Are public

schools unnecessary because a few out of the millions of every age manage to educate themselves? Humanity needs the Gospel, deeply needs it. Needs it to quicken and develop its intuitive beliefs and spiritual faculties, needs it to clear that dense atmosphere of the heart that prevents the majorities of the race from seeing God in nature, needs it to enfranchise the will and cleanse the conscience, needs it to supply both a perfect ideal of excellence in human life and the means of attaining it. In reviewing our studies of the book we are further impressed—

Fifthly: *With the egregious folly of estimating man's moral character by his external circumstances.* This is what the friends of Job did, and this is what men have been prone to do in every age. In sooth, the tendency seems to be as old and universal as the race. As the barbaric Maltese concluded that Paul was a great sinner when they saw the venomous viper springing from the kindled faggots and fastening upon him, so men have ever concluded that where there is great calamity there is great guilt. This tendency implies the instinctive belief that there is a Supreme Intelligence that superintends human life—an Intelligence that concerns itself with the moral characters of men, and that is in practical antagonism with the wrong and in sympathy with the right. Antecedently, therefore, from such beliefs, it seems natural to infer that great sufferings imply great sins, and the reverse. But inasmuch as the system under which we live is probationary, not retributive, the stern facts of the world contradict such an inference. Nature in her operations pays no attention to moral distinctions. Her storms will shipwreck a Paul as well as a Nero. Vipers will sting apostles as well as apostates. Providence everywhere pampers a Dives and starves a Lazarus. Retribution here

is neither adequate nor final. Again, glancing back on our studies of the book, we are impressed—

Sixthly : *With the fact that to attempt to comfort the afflicted by discussion is to the last degree unwise.* For seven long days Job seems to have endured his overwhelming sufferings with comparative magnanimity. So long as his friends sat mute with him on the ground, and “none spake a word unto him,” we hear him say, “Shall we receive good at the hand of God, and shall we not receive evil?” It is true that immediately afterwards he breaks forth in a few sentences of lamentation and complaint, but this perhaps would have ended the whole had not his three friends, led on by Eliphaz, started the discussion. This brought a new agony into his soul, and led to outbursts of grief and complaint compared with which his first utterances were faint and subdued. The silence of unutterable sympathy, and not the speech of doctrine, is the best service that friendship can render sorrow. Wonderful is this power of sympathy. It is the Divinest thing in human nature; a moral electricity, by which wonders have been wrought in the world before now. One look of it has often struck new courage into drooping battalions. Silence is the best conductor of this force Divine. The tongue can reveal the ideas of the brain, but not the deep things of the heart. The tenderest and profoundest emotions refuse words. The tearful look, the quivering lip, the warm grasp, the convulsive embrace, the reverent air, that seems to clothe the whole being with a mystic mantle, alone can show the deep things of the heart. Brother, when Providence breaks up the fountains of grief in this heart of mine, shouldest thou in thy kindness visit me, do not talk—be silent. I shall catch by the instinct of the moment all that is true and valuable of the sympathy that is in thee. I shall not require

a word. The loving look, the sympathetic sigh, and the devout ejaculation will suffice. *Mere* wordy condolers are soul tormentors. The wounds of many a bleeding heart have been deepened and aggravated by the chatter of those who have assumed the sacred office of comforter. Be silent in scenes of sorrow ; overflow with genuine sympathy, but do not talk. Talk, which has well-nigh grown intolerable in every human scene in this hollow age, is most of all intolerable in the chamber of sorrow. In glancing back at the whole of our studies of this book we are impressed—

Seventhly : *With the fact that a man may have many imperfections of character and yet be good in the sight of God.* Very many expressions of temper come out in the speeches of Job which cannot be vindicated, but must be denounced ; albeit he is pronounced a “perfect” man, that is, a genuinely good man. Men are to be judged, not by occasional outbursts of temper or acts of impropriety, but by their fruits. “By their fruits ye shall know them.” Fruit is the natural production of the tree ; it embodies and expresses its essence. Hence *all* the acts of men cannot be regarded as the *fruits* of the inner life. Sometimes human actions have no vital connection with the governing principles of the heart. Men occasionally act against their will, and without their will ; they are sometimes the creatures of necessity, and sometimes they are the dupes of mistake. The actions, therefore, which alone can be justly regarded as the criteria of their character must be those which are *fruit*—the natural production, exponents, and embodiment of the moral principle. The *fruitful* actions of a man are the average and spontaneous doings of his life. We would not judge a tree by its occasional productions ; it may fail one year and yet be a good tree. So with man’s character ; you must strike

the average of his deeds. You must deal with it as the philosopher deals with nature, the theologian with the Bible, the judge with the evidence—look upon the whole. The average conduct, then, and not the occasional deed, is the fruit by which you are to test the inner principles of a man's heart. This is the tongue of his soul. There is yet another fact with which the review of our studies of this book impresses us—

Eightly : *With the fact that a righteous life will ultimately be victorious.* Job's life was a righteous one. Amidst all the poignant pangs of anguish and the beating billows of hostile discussion he held on with a tenacious grasp to righteousness. "Though He slay me yet will I trust Him." How sublime the issue of all! "*The Lord turned the captivity of Job,*" and gave him "*twice as much as he had before.*" "*Blessed the latter end of Job more than his beginning.*" And after this wonderful prosperity he "*lived one hundred and forty years, and saw his sons and sons' sons, even four generations. So Job died, being old and full of days.*" Emblem this of the destiny of a righteous life. The wicked may sail as on a glassy river surrounded by grand and inspiring scenery, but come they must at last to that moral Niagara, amidst whose rush and roar they tumble into the abysses of hopeless ruin. Not so with the righteous; though they pursue their voyage under starless skies, battling with fierce hurricanes and mountain waves, fail they never will to reach the calm and sunny shores of the blest. "TO HIM THAT OVERCOMETH WILL I GRANT TO SIT WITH ME IN MY THRONE, EVEN AS I ALSO OVERCAME, AND AM SET DOWN WITH MY FATHER IN HIS THRONE."

OTHER WORKS BY THE SAME AUTHOR.

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of the congregation appeared to follow with great attention the minister as he read the several passages allotted to him, and repeated the responses with promptitude and becoming seriousness. The Compiler deserves great praise for the judgment he has shown in introducing it. He has made his *Biblical Liturgy* so concise that it forms nothing more than an agreeable variety to the ordinary forms of congregational worship, and has so judiciously arranged the passages selected from Scripture, that they entirely harmonise with each other, and are calculated to excite devotional feelings in the minds of the assembled congregation. The *Biblical Liturgy* is evidently the result of great labour, and an intimate acquaintance with the Sacred Volume, and deserves the candid examination of all who desire to improve and perform its customary forms observed in the public worship of God."

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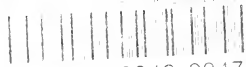
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