Job - Commentaries by Samuel Ridout

Book of Job, Job 42:7-17

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“The End of the Lord;” the result of the divine ways with Job, restoring him to greater blessing than before.

Job has learned his lesson, and we might well leave him sitting in the ashes, still afflicted but happy in his newly found joy—the full knowledge of God. He might have “halted upon his thigh” for the balance of his days, and he would not have needed our pity.

But it is not like God needlessly to chasten even in this life of sorrow. “He doth not willingly afflict.” We must therefore see “the end of the Lord,” the outward recovery and restoration of the sufferer. It is this which is set before us in this brief concluding division of the book.

Brief as it is, it is most important. Job having already taken his place, Jehovah makes the three friends take theirs, not merely before Him, but before the one whom they had so unjustly suspected and so grievously maligned.

Then the restoration of health, wealth, family and honor are described in a few words, and we get our last glimpse of the patriarch in a happy old age, reaching the close of his life. The divisions are simple:

(1) The friends restored (vers. 7-9).

(2) Job’s captivity turned (vers. 10, 11).

(3) Restoration to prosperity (vers. 12-15).

(4) The end (vers. 16, 17).

(1) God must first maintain His own honor. This is the basis of all blessing for the creature. Were it possible to conceive of His honor being overthrown, all would lapse into hopeless chaos. This is ever prominent in Scripture: “In the beginning, GOD.” The first part of the law is devoted to His glory; the opening petitions of the “Lord’s prayer” are concerned with that. The gospel is founded upon it, and in eternity heaven and earth will display it to an adoring universe.

We need not therefore be surprised that God turns to Eliphaz and his friends with stern rebuke for their part in the controversy which has, for Job, so happily closed. Addressing Eliphaz, as the leader of the three, Jehovah declares His wrath against them all, because they had not spoken of Him the thing that is right, as His servant Job had. And yet their entire contention had apparently been for God’s righteousness! Had they not maintained this from the very outset, with many a noble description and many a scathing denunciation of evil? Had they not fastened the charge of iniquity upon Job in spite of absolute lack of proof, and in the face of well-known facts to the contrary? Zealous for God’s honor!—it had been their one theme.

At least apparently so. But God does not accept honor at the expense of truth. It is His glory that all His attributes blend in one harmonious light. Can He then accept a vindication of His character and ways that is based upon a false charge? That puts the stigma of wickedness and hypocrisy upon a man of whom He Himself had declared, “There is none like him in the earth, a perfect and an upright man, one that feareth God, and escheweth evil.” Can He allow so monstrous a theory of suffering to pass as that formulated by these men—that suffering is always the unerring finger pointing to wickedness? That it is all in wrath? What then becomes of His testing His own, of the sanctifying effect of chastening?

Truly these men in speaking against Job as they had, were really defaming the character of God. He cannot accept it, nor allow them to go unrebuked. He will have nothing to do with them until they make it right, by confession and sacrifice.

“As my servant Job hath.” When had Job thus spoken “the thing that is right?” Surely not when pouring out bitter charges against God. Nor indeed do we chiefly think of the flashes of faith expressed in the intervals— “I will trust in Him,” “I know that my Redeemer liveth;” nor in the noble words as to wisdom. All most true, excellent and beautiful; all falling in their proper place after the confession and repentance we have just dwelt upon.

This is the speaking of Jehovah “the thing that is right;” it is the taking and keeping of the sinful creature’s place who cannot understand the least of those perfect ways—ways which are right when they seem most wrong. It is the declaration that God is God—Jehovah, the self-existent, perfect One; most wise and just and good as well as most powerful; righteous and holy in all His ways, whatever they may be. “Clouds and darkness” may be round about Him, but, blessed be His name, “righteousness and judgment are the habitation,” the foundation, “of His throne.”

Here then is the lesson Job has learned—learned for himself and for others as well. Let these wise men show their wisdom by coming humbly before God on this ground. He has not banished them, but would have them draw near in the only way man can come, through the sacrifice. Let them take the seven bullocks—perfect submission and service unto death; and seven rams—complete devotion of all energy, and offer these as a burnt offering. Nor is the poor misunderstood Job lost sight of; he will intercede for these, lest they reap the fruit of their folly, “for him will I accept.”

How complete the rebuke; how gracious the restoration; how tender the association of Job with it all!

And we who have the full light of God's grace, how perfect a picture we have of it here. Man's honor is laid low, his excellent things are seen to be folly, and he is turned from it all—from its good as well as its bad—to the Burnt Offering; to that One who is our perfect, all-sufficient Substitute. As the bullock, we see Him in all the strength of lowly service, "obedient unto death, the death of the cross." As the ram, we see a devotion of energy leading Him to the "supreme sacrifice." Oh, where is human righteousness, human obedience, in the light of that "wondrous cross!"

Notice, it is not a sin-offering the friends are to bring, though it includes the putting away of sin; nor the peace-offering, though it calls into the highest communion. It is the first great offering, provided in God's ways in patriarchal times, in which all is for Him. Thus He who came, displacing all "sacrifice and offering," could say, "Lo, I come to do Thy will, O God. By the which will we are sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ, once for all" (Heb. 10:10).

And with that all-availing sacrifice is linked the intercession of the man who had learned his lesson, and in figure, gloried only in the Cross. Let us think of him, standing hand in hand with these friends and confessing their sin as he intercedes for them. No longer does the sharp accusation, "Miserable comforters are ye all" smite them; nor the bitter sarcasm, "Doubtless ye are the men, and wisdom will die with you." Accused and accusers look away from one another to that Burnt Offering, and see their common acceptance in it.

It is most significant that the book closes, as it had begun, with the Burnt Offering (chap. 1). Christ is the End as He is the Beginning. CHRIST IS ALL.

(2) Now Jehovah can lift His hand from the sufferer, and turn all the grievous captivity into full and prosperous recovery. Job can say, I "have received of the Lord's hands double." The kindred and acquaintances who had fled from him and despised him, return with gifts and condolences.

We need not think of it as heartless or formal. God put it into their hearts to recognize His approval and acceptance of His servant. All his wealth is doubled—cattle, sheep and all the rest. What are such details to Him who is the Possessor of heaven and earth!

Does some suffering child of God whisper, "Oh, that it were so with me, that I could see health and prosperity and dear ones restored." Ah, what have we even now? The knowledge of God in Christ, the indwelling of the Spirit, the full and complete Word of God. And just beyond the sufferings of this "little while," the "far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory." Can we repine? Let us rather wait with patience till "the redemption of the purchased possession." As surely as the captivity of Job was turned, so surely shall every suffering child of God enter into the inheritance "incorruptible, undefiled, and that fadeth not away."

(3) We now see the full manifestation of this restoration. Not only are all his possessions doubled, but seven sons and three daughters are given him. Is this an exception to the double endowment, or is it a hint that those other children, seven sons and three daughters, are not lost, that he will one day have them restored, and in the resurrection find that everything has been doubled.

The names of the daughters are given, no doubt with divine significance. Jemima, "a dove;" Keziah, "cassia;" Keren happuch, "a horn of paint," or adornment. These are the fruit of Job's trials. The dove, suggesting the gentleness and love of the bird of sorrow. Cassia, telling of the fragrance that has come from his bruising; and the horn of cosmetic, of the "beauty for ashes" that is now his. Love, fragrance, beauty—these come of our sorrows. Truly there are no daughters so fair as these. Their children cluster about Job's knees to give him the joy of youth even in his old age.

(4) And so the dear man passes from view— "old and full of days." He would once have said, "full of nights," but the light has shone upon him, and he walks in it until the "perfect day." We need not be surprised at the apocryphal ending of some interpreter, "It is written however that he will rise again with those whom the Lord raises up."

"Hast thou considered my servant Job?"

"Ye have heard of the patience of Job, and have seen the end of the Lord; that the Lord is very pitiful, and of tender mercy."

Book of Job, Job 38-42:6

Jehovah's testimony from Creation, testing Job and bringing him into the dust.

We have already called attention to the intimate connection between the addresses of Elihu and those of Jehovah which follow. Viewed merely as a piece of literary work this portion is one of matchless beauty and grandeur. Elihu had begun his address in all deference and quietness; he had carried forward his arguments in a masterly way, convincing both to intellect and conscience, which, from the silence of Job when repeatedly invited to reply, we may judge did not fail of their purpose. As he proceeds Elihu passes from the didactic style into the descriptive, setting forth the wisdom and greatness of God as seen in His great creation. So vivid do the descriptions of the storm become that we are constrained to think of it as actually impending—the lightnings flash, and the terrific thunder-peals fill him with dread, while the trembling herds show their fear. A golden glow is seen sweeping down in the dark storm-clouds from the north. In a few words of awed reminder to Job of the goodness as well as the majesty of God, Elihu closes his address, and Jehovah, out of the whirlwind just described utters His awful voice.

The voice of Jehovah! We are no longer listening to the gropings of the natural mind, as in the discourses of the friends; nor to the wild cries of a wounded faith, as in Job; nor even to the clear sober language of Elihu—we are in the presence of Jehovah Himself, who speaks to us. That voice caused our guilty first parents to hide amid the trees of the garden. It bade Moses remove the shoes from off his feet at the burning bush, and later caused him to say, "I exceedingly fear and quake," amid the terrors of Sinai, while the people removed to a great distance. Later, that Voice— "a still small voice" —penetrated Elijah's soul with awe, as he realized that he was standing in the presence of the Lord.

The voice, perhaps more than the appearance, seems to reveal the person. If we could see the form and features of a man, mark the changes of his countenance and every gesticulation, without hearing his voice, it would not impress us as under reversed conditions. So the voice that

came to Job out of the whirlwind brought him into the presence of One of whose character he had until now been greatly ignorant. He had spoken many excellent things about God, but His actual presence had never before been known. This, it will be found, furnishes the key to the amazing change wrought in Job.

When God is personally recognized as present, He is thus recognized in the entirety of His being. It is not merely His power that is seen, or His greatness or even His goodness, but Himself, the One in whose presence seraphim veil their faces as they cry, “Holy, Holy, Holy.”

Peter caught such a glimpse of Him by the sea of Galilee (Luke 5), and was constrained to cry, “Depart from me, for I am a sinful man, O Lord.”

And Paul fell to the earth under the same revelation, as also John in the Apocalypse. The outward display in each of these cases was different, passing from a lowly Man in a fisher-boat to the enthroned Majesty in the heavens; but the essential fact is that it is Himself, and however much He may veil His glory and meet man in mercy and grace, it is God who thus speaks and acts. If this is not realized, no grandeur of setting, no splendor of natural phenomena, can convey His message to man.

This is pitifully apparent in the use men make of the majestic panorama of nature daily spread before their eyes. The heavens as an infinitely spacious tent are arched overhead, resplendent by day and by night; the drapery of the clouds, the greatness of the mountains, the beauty of forest, field and sea—what do these tell to one who hears not the Voice? The heathen makes his image, or bows to sun and moon; the scientist sweeps the heavens with his telescope, and pierces the penetralia of earth with his microscope; he talks learnedly and interestingly of “laws of nature,” of “principles of physics and of chemistry,” of gravitation, cohesion and affinity: but unless he has heard the Voice of Jehovah, he knows Him no more than the poor deluded idolater groveling before the hideous Vishnu.

This ignorance is a guilty ignorance, “for the invisible things of Him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even His eternal power and Godhead; so that they are without excuse: because that, when they knew God, they glorified Him not as God,” etc. (Rom. 1:18-25). All men are in a measure conscious of this guilt and moral distance from God, and quite willing to remain in that condition. They stop their ears to the Voice of Him who is not far from every one of us.

If this is the inherent thought of this personal revelation of God, how important it was for Job to grasp it; how necessary too for us, as we speak of it, to realize His voice who speaks still in Nature and in His word. May it be ours, not to withdraw to a distance, nor to hide amid His beautiful trees, but to come near with unshod feet and veiled faces and hear what God the Lord will speak.

Looking at His words as a whole, we might be surprised at their character. They are not in one sense profound, as unfolding depths of theological truth. They are scarcely didactic in a moral sense, impressing upon man his duty. They are not so much a revelation of truth as a question to Job if he knows the truths that lie all about him in the vast creation of God. It is this which makes these words of Jehovah so wonderful. He speaks, not “in a tongue no man can understand,” but in the language of nature, about the earth, the sky, the clouds and rain, and beasts and birds.

The number of the Division, the fourth, is most appropriate. It is, as we know, the number of the creature, of creation; it suggests also the testing of man, and the weakness and failure which that testing so often brings out. How amazing it is to think that the Creator should thus veil His glory—that “light unapproachable” —and show Himself in the works of His hands.

For creation itself is, we would reverently say, a divine humiliation. It reminds us of Him who, “though He was in the form of God,” emptied Himself of His glory and took a servant’s form, being made in the likeness of men. Creation is the “lattice” behind which the Beloved hides Himself (Song 2:9). And yet He reveals Himself thus to faith. The swaddling bands of Ocean are but a figure of those bands which He who made all things took upon Himself, when He became flesh. The whole universe, immense and boundless, forms the garments of the infinite God, who thus reveals Himself.

So we may apply this fourth Division to Himself. He “humbles Himself to behold the things in heaven and in earth.” The significance of the number encourages us to believe that He is drawing near to us, that the message He has to give is one of mercy.

But this message tests and humbles man. He who boasted in his righteousness, who seemed to consider his knowledge all sufficient, is obliged to own his ignorance, weakness, and his unrighteousness. It is divinely done, and done so effectively that the lesson brings Job to his true place for all time. Creation, we may say, is like the clay which the Lord put upon the eyes of the blind man. Like him Job can say, “Now mine eye seeth Thee.”

God lays His hand upon His vast creation—the heavens, earth and sea—as though to say He is Master and Lord of all; as though to say to Job, “Canst thou doubt the power of such an One? or His wisdom? Nay, canst thou doubt the goodness of One who sends His rain to render fertile the earth for man’s need, or His faithfulness who brings day by day His mercies to His creatures?”

This leads us to ask whether we may not expect a deeper meaning to all these questions as to nature—a moral and spiritual significance in them. Creation is a vast parable, and we fail to gather its lessons if we do not find, as we have already indicated, rich typical truth lying just beneath the surface. We cannot pretend to dogmatize; all that may be said is subject to correction; but we have no hesitation in saying that we should seek to find God’s

“Secret meaning in His deeds.”

We are encouraged to do this, for has He not said, “He that seeketh findeth?”

But let us take up our subject in an orderly way. This testimony of Jehovah may be divided into two main parts, marked by Job’s response to each.

The attributes of God seen in the universe (chaps. 38-40:5).

His control over His creatures (chaps. 40:6-41:34).

Each portion has a character peculiar to itself, while both are closely linked together. The first dwells largely upon Jehovah's power, wisdom and goodness as displayed in the works of creation and providence; the second shows His control over those untamable beasts which defy man's power.

The entire address is largely in the form of questions. Job had presumed to sit in judgment upon Jehovah and His ways; his competence for this is tested: what does he know? What can he do? Shall the creature—so puny in power, so ignorant, and withal so filled with vain pride—presume to instruct God as to His duties, to point out to Him His failures, in fact to usurp His prerogatives? The effect upon Job is seen in his two answers: he abases himself and lays his hand upon his mouth, in the first reply. In the second, he makes full confession of his sinful pride, and abhors himself, thus preparing the way for the outward recovery and restoration to prosperity.

We may say that the second part of the Lord's address is devoted to the humbling of Job's pride, by setting before him the creatures in which this pride is exhibited, in a typical way. The divine purpose can be seen throughout, and the effects are most blessed and complete.

Part I is devoted to the unfolding of the divine attributes of power, wisdom and goodness, in contrast to Job's weakness and ignorance. He is constrained to acknowledge his own lack of goodness in his confession— "I am vile." This portion falls into four sections.

1. God's call to Job (ch. 38:1-3).

2. Questions as to the works of creation (vers. 4-38).

3. The manifestation of His care over His creatures (chs. 38:39-39:30).

4. The effect upon Job (ch. 40:1-5).

1. Gods Call to Job.

Out of that whirlwind, or golden storm-cloud (ch. 37:22), Jehovah replies to the vain questionings and lamentations of Job. It is sufficient to notice that it is not a reply to Elihu, which effectually disposes of the thought that the darkening of counsel was by him. Elihu had been God's spokesman, leading up to the divine manifestation which is now upon us. As Elihu had addressed Job throughout, so Jehovah follows up the words of His servant. "My desire is that the Almighty would answer me," was Job's closing word (ch. 31:35). He is now to have his wish granted; but how different the effect! "As a prince would I go near unto Him" (ver. 37), he had declared. "I am vile" is what he has to say when he hears His voice. Jehovah asks, "Who is this that darkeneth counsel," that hides the purposes of God and the truth, "by words without knowledge" Job had poured out a flood of words—lamentations, protestations, accusations. There was much that was true and excellent, but all was vitiated, so far as God's purposes were concerned, by the exaltation of his own righteousness at the expense of Jehovah's. Instead of light, the clear flame of divine truth, all was a lurid smoke-cloud of unbelief which darkened the sun in the heavens. Who is this? Is it some divine being, Jehovah's equal, who was calling in question the other's acts? Was it some mighty angel, gifted with heavenly wisdom, that dared lay a charge against his Maker? No, it was a man, frail, ignorant, sinful. The Lord's question turns Job's thought from all his fancied wrongs to himself. The psalmist, as he beholds the heavenly creation (Ps. 8), asks, "What is man?" Abraham, in God's presence, had declared he was but "dust and ashes" (Gen. 18:27). Paul closes the opposers mouth by asking, "Nay but, O man, who art thou, that repliest against God?" (Rom. 9:20). Man—the finite, fallible, fallen creature—shall he be more just than his Maker?

This is God's question to all the vain words of men. They may be the cries of fancied wrong, or the empty attempts of human reason to explain the condition of the world about us, and of the human family in particular; but whatever form they take, they do but darken true wisdom. Over the doorway to all libraries, filled with volumes of human science, history and philosophy, willfully or ignorantly excluding the revelation of God, may be written this divine question.

And yet Jehovah is not seeking to crush Job, but rather to bring him to a true knowledge of himself and of God. Let him gird up his loins like a man. God will not ask questions which a man cannot understand. If his loins are "girt about with truth," he can answer—as indeed he does—these questions. The very fact that Jehovah thus addresses Job shows His purposes of mercy for him. His appeal is to reason, and thus to conscience. He leads Job through the vast, and yet familiar, scenes of creation. Can he solve one of ten thousand of its riddles? Can he open the hidden secrets of nature? If not, why does he attempt to declare God's counsels, and intrude into the purposes of One who giveth not account to any of His matters; of whom the worshiping apostle declares, "How unsearchable are His judgments, and His ways past finding out!" (Rom. 11:33).

2. Questions as to the Works of Creation (chap. 38:4-38).

We come now to these questions as to God's creation, which give us a complete cycle of divine truth as exhibited in His works, fittingly grouped in seven parts.

(1) The foundations of the earth (vers. 4-7).

(2) The bounds of the sea (vers. 8-11).

(3) Day and night (vers. 12-15).

(4) Unknown depths (vers. 16-21).

(5) The elements (vers. 22-30).

(6) The heavenly bodies (vers. 31-33).

(7) The clouds and their control (vers. 34-38).

There is, in one sense, a simplicity in these questions that might lead to ready, though superficial, answers. We can imagine the youthful college student, with a smattering of geology, physical geography and astronomy, sitting down with complacence to such an "examination paper."

And yet let not modern science proclaim its ability to answer as Job could not. Advancement in outward knowledge there has been; discoveries of great laws and principles of nature; but can the scientist of the present day give more true and satisfying replies to these divine questions than could the patriarch of old? What after all is human knowledge but a knowledge, as Socrates said, of our ignorance? Job's own noble words (chap. 28) show that he had glimpses of this great fact, when for the moment he was at leisure from his own troubles. What is the key to all these questions? It is God, the true knowledge of Himself. Knowing Him, we know the Author and Source of all knowledge. Leave Him out of account, and the sum of all science is a blank wall, beyond which still lies the hidden truth.

(1) Jehovah begins with the earth, the abode of man. Does Job know the history of his own dwelling place? Where was he when the great Architect laid its foundations, sunk, not in the shifting sands, or upon the lasting rock, but in the empty space of apparent nothingness?

Present day knowledge can talk learnedly of nebulae and the solar system, of attraction and the laws of gravitation, and explain that the reciprocal action of these laws has given the earth its form and stable relation with heavenly bodies. It can explain that by the laws of cohesion and of chemical affinity the particles of the earth cleave together. But law means a Law-giver. Who has established these laws? How do they act unfailingly? Revelation, and that alone, gives the answer— "By Him all things consist" (Col. 1:17). Where was Job, where was man, when the Lord established and set in motion these laws and principles? The form of the question met Job's knowledge at that time; it equally meets man's advanced knowledge at the present. Indeed, its form was calculated to lead on his thought to wider fields of truth.

Who, Jehovah further asks, has laid down the measures of this great fabric and set His line upon it? The question suggests the possibility of another Presence, of One who was associated with Him, was His agent in laying down and carrying out the whole vast plan. Who was this? "The Lord possessed Me in the beginning of His way, before His works of old...Before the mountains were settled, before the hills was I brought forth" (Prov. 8:22, 25). Or in the language of the New Testament, "All things were made (came into being, eyevero) by Him" (John 1:3). Here was a truth more wondrous even than creation; it tells of the divine Associate who, while putting into being His Father's plans, and delighting in them, had His eyes upon other objects: "My delights were with the sons of men." God in nature, as in all else, is ever saying, "This is My Beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased; hear ye Him."

The corner stone, the foundation of the earth, who laid it? Where is it? What is the basic law of physics or of chemistry? Does science know now, any more than Job did then? Atoms, ions, are grouped together, clasped and unclasped, as ether great laws are brought to bear upon them. Where is the foundation law? "Other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ" (1 Cor. 3:11). To be brought to God, to know Him, is the object of all facts, and nature is only in harmony with the great mediatorial law when it thus leads us to Himself. Only as seen thus do we hear the morning stars sing together. Only thus do the sons of God shout aloud for joy.

Most beautiful are these words describing the joy accompanying the establishment of the first creation. All nature was in harmony, and the heavens declared His glory. If discord has come in, it is not in any failure on His part to uphold all things by the word of His power. So too the heavenly intelligences, "the principalities and powers in the heavenly places," shouted in exultant joy as the marvelous panorama of nature opened out before them.

Who can limit the beauty of this wondrous creation? Our limited senses grasp some of its perfections; but their interlacing one with another, their heights and depths, who can fathom? Who can say, were we as keen of sight and hearing as those "ethereal virtues" but that we too might catch "the music of the spheres?" If light and heat and sound are vibrations, who shall say that color has not a music all its own, that music has not a fragrance answering to the sweet melody?

How easily we pass beyond our finite knowledge! Even of this wondrous first creation we are profoundly ignorant. What we know but makes us realize the vast ocean of what we do not know. The light we have exposes the intensity of the surrounding darkness.

But this stable earth, with its unknown or partially known laws, is but the ante-chamber of God's moral universe. The physical is typical of the moral and the spiritual. Laws of gravitation, of numerical proportion and chemical properties, are types of deeper things. That two and two make four, always and everywhere, declares the unvarying righteousness of Him who has established that basic fact. Combustion, in all its various stages, is a reminder of that all-devouring holiness of "our God," who is "a consuming fire." As we dwell upon these attributes of God's moral universe, we must again be overwhelmed not only with the sense of our ignorance, but of our unlikeness to His established order.

If we pass on in thought to the new creation, how grand, varied and infinitely perfect is all that passes before us. The stable earth, with its great laws, is a shadow of that new earth wherein dwelleth righteousness—of that new abode of truth and love into which sin can never come. God hath revealed to us these things by His Spirit; but "we know in part," and that knowledge will produce in us true humility, breathing forth its worship and praise.

For, blessed be God, He has given us to know Himself in the person of His beloved Son. This is life eternal, which links us with the coming glories which shall never fade. Can we not in fuller, higher way, join in the melody of the "sons of the morning" —for we are children of the day—and shout aloud with and beyond "the sons of God?"

No need to ask those whose eyes and hearts have thus been opened what part they have contributed to all this greatness, goodness and love. We hide our faces, and ascribe all the glory unto the Lamb.

Such in some feeble measure is the great truth involved in Jehovah's first question. When that question shall have been fully answered as to man and as to God, we can join in the language of the psalm:

"Praise ye Jehovah.Praise ye Jehovah from the heavens;Praise Him in the heights.Praise ye Him, all His angels:Praise ye Him, all His hosts.Praise ye Him, sun and moon, Praise Him, all ye stars of light'' (Ps. 148),

"And every creature which is in heaven and on the earth, and under the earth, and such as are in the sea, and all that are in them, heard I saying, Blessing and honor and glory and power be unto Him that sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb forever and ever" (Rev. 5:13).

(2) Jehovah passes from the earth to "that great and wide sea," which is described not in its original creation, as part of the heavens and the earth, but as gushing forth from its mother's womb. It covered the whole face of the world, and "darkness was upon the face of the deep." Left to itself it would have enveloped all; but its Maker was its Master, and set bounds to it, breaking as it were into great mountain chains to

make a place for it, barred and closed to all egress. Its storms and fury in His almighty hands are but the wailings of a new born babe; He wraps it in the swaddling clothes of clouds and thick darkness, and hushes it to rest.

“The floods have lifted up, O Lord, the floods have lifted up their voice; the floods lift up their waves. The Lord on high is mightier than the noise of many waters, yea, than the mighty waves of the sea” (Ps. 93:3, 4).

Thus at the beginning, and again when in judgment He permitted it to engulf the earth, God has restrained this restless mighty ocean. Man gazes upon it with awe, but cannot control its power. His “thousand fleets sweep over it in vain;” he “marks the earth with ruin,” but his control stops with the shore.

How fittingly does this mighty ocean teach man his helplessness and ignorance! What secrets do its hidden depths hold! God alone has controlled it; He holds back its proud waves with bars that they cannot pass.

So too in the ocean of evil—the pride of Satan which burst forth in rebellion against God, when the angels kept not their first estate. God’s restraining hand holds all in check. The wicked, like the foaming sea, seem to rise higher and higher in their violence and pride, but God says to them, “Hitherto shalt thou come, but no further.” Thus His restraining power over evil is seen. As Job witnessed iniquity seemingly triumphant, as he looked into the dark surging of his own self-willed heart, he might well have been appalled; who but God can control evil?

We look forward to the time when this control shall be absolute in that new heavens and new earth, when “there shall be no more sea.” In anticipation of that day, when evil shall be banished to its eternal abode away from God’s redeemed creation, we can own Him as supreme alone.

The earth and sea include the two great material factors which are thus put before man’s eyes.

(3) Jehovah passes next to the great recurring features of nature, as seen in the day and night. Has Job ever commanded a single morning to appear, or caused the dawn to know the place of its appearing? With all his supposed knowledge and power, man cannot command the forces of nature to do his bidding. Day by day the light appears in its appointed place, flooding the earth with light from which the guilty flee. Evening falls, and no word of man can arrest or quicken this constant action. Only One gave His command at the beginning, “Let there be light,” and since that time evening and morning have known their appointed time and place. Joshua, speaking in the word of the Lord can arrest the course of the day, and the prophet gives Hezekiah a divine sign in turning back the shadow upon the sun-dial; but these only emphasize the fact that none but God can command the light. “I form the light, and create darkness” (Isa. 45:7). Let us gaze with rapture at the glorious sunset, or watch with awe the dawning of a new day, and say from the depths of our hearts, “The day is thine, the night also is thine: Thou hast prepared the light and the sun” (Ps. 74:16). The dawn knows its place—in the east, and yet varying daily as the year progresses. Astronomy marks these varying changes of place, and of time as well. All is perfect, and all sings His praise who commanded and maintains it. “Thou makest the outgoings of the morning and evening to sing” (Ps. 65:8, marg.) Our wisdom is to see and own it all as divine, to say with the poet: “On the glimmering limit, far withdrawn, God made Himself an awful rose of dawn.”

With the dawning of the light evil men hide themselves. Literally as well as figuratively is this true of “the unfruitful works of darkness.” As the mark of the signet-ring upon the formless clay, so the light stamps upon the face of the earth the varied forms and colors of all things. They stand out like a lovely garment—or the reverse, a scene of ruin—under the light. The light shows all things as they are: “Whatsoever doth make manifest is light” (Eph. 5:13). The night is the light of the wicked; they hate the light, and will not come to it, lest their deeds should be reproved. The entrance of the light arrests their deeds. Their uplifted arm is broken.

Thus the light of God’s presence detects evil. When He causes the dawning of a new day— “The day of the Lord” —evil doers shall be shaken out of the earth. For this cause, His people who are “children of the light and of the day,” order their life by the light. For this cause, in that fair land where there is no night, nothing that defileth can enter. It is the home of the light. None could remain there but the sons of light. “The Lamb is the light thereof.”

This appeal to day and night is most effectual. Shall Job accuse One who is Light, who sees all things as they are? Shall he doubt One who knows the secrets of his heart, and the reason for these chastenings? Do not these questions give a hint that God will cause Job’s night to end, and at the appointed time cause His dayspring to visit the poor sufferer?

(4) In intimate connection with the all-manifesting power of the light, God probes Job further. Does he know secret things? — “which belong unto God.” The hidden depths of the sea with its countless dead; the gates of death and what lies beyond. Has Job searched this out? Has he fully known the breadth of the earth—all that it contains? Does modern science know it really? What is the “home,” or origin of light, or of darkness? Men have been inquiring into “the origin of evil;” what do they know apart from divine revelation? Modern science sees more clearly of late years that the sun is not the origin of light, which exists independently of that, or any other visible source. These questions of Jehovah are addressed not merely to Job, with his knowledge limited to that time, but to men of the present day. Whether we regard verse 21 as a question, as in our version, or as a statement in divine irony— “Thou knowest it for then thou wast born,” etc.—the meaning is obvious.

(5) Jehovah speaks next of the phenomena of snow and rain, of frost and dew, with their effects upon the earth and man. Here again man’s ignorance and helplessness are displayed in the presence of the wisdom, power and beneficence of God, as well as His chastening hand.

The snow and hail are laid up in storehouses—where? Not in some hidden locality, in vast masses, not merely in the viewless vapor filling the firmament, as science now would say, but back of all that, those storehouses of mercy and of judgment are in the hand of God. It is by His word they are produced—the snow, for protection of the grass in winter, and for cooling and refreshing in summer; the hail, in smiting plagues and sweeping judgments (Isa. 28:17). Snow, we are told, is produced by the action of cold upon vapor, turning its molecules into crystals of lovely and varied form. Those forms are planned—by whom? Whose laws are fulfilled by these tiny crystals? The working of whose mind do they display?

Next to its coldness, perhaps more striking than that, snow is the standard for absolute whiteness, of purity. Perhaps Job did not know that this whiteness was caused by the pure white light reflected from the countless faces of its crystals. But what “treasures” of whiteness are reserved by God? He is light, and the snow reflecting the sunlight, suggests how completely His essential righteousness is displayed in that work of redemption which enables Him to say: “Though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow” (Isa. 1:18). Sins that once

cried for vengeance, now, through the precious blood of Christ, reflect the glory of God's character! "To declare His righteousness, that He might be just, and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus" (Rom. 3:26). In the "redemption that is in Christ Jesus," He has exhaustless stores of whiteness and protection for the sins of the world. What fearful judgments will follow the rejection of that grace! "The wrath of the Lamb!" —the "snow" now falling in a pitiless storm of destruction.

This thought is emphasized in the hail, the frozen drops of rain. Those gentle showers which water the earth that it may bring forth its fruits, turned into death-dealing wrath! For a Christ-rejecting world there is laid up "wrath against the day of wrath," of which the hail is a figure (Ex. 9:22; Hag. 2:17; Ps. 18:12; Rev. 16:21).

And yet these fearful judgments—God's "strange work" —will tell forth the glory of a righteousness, inflexible as well as full of love. "Praise Him... fire and hail; snow and vapors; stormy wind fulfilling His word" (Ps. 148:8).

Let Science tell us all it can discover of the laws and effects of the snow crystals, of the varied temperature of the air currents, of electric discharges and equalizations; let us penetrate as deeply as we may into these second causes, and we shall find them to be the outer court of His tabernacle, the display of His attributes, leading us on into the holiest of His revealed Person, as seen in Christ Jesus.

Passing from these phenomena of winter and of storm, the Lord asks as to the method of distribution of the light (for this seems the thought of ver. 24). How amazing are the "partings" of the light—permeating every part of the earth where its rays fall. How unthinkably swift are "the wings of the morning," flashing from sun to earth in a few moments. How beautiful are those "partings," as seen in the spectrum, the rainbow painting in living colors the whole landscape. Why and how is one object green, another blue, another red? Is it sufficient to say that each substance reflects certain rays? That these, in turn, are produced by varied vibrations of inconceivable rapidity? We ask about the "X-rays," with their penetrating power; about the ultra-violet and red rays, of chemical and heating power. Science has much to tell us that might well fill us with wonder and amazement, and with awe and worship—of WHOM?1 The more we know merely of His displays, the less we really know of Himself, save as He makes Himself known in Christ.

From the east, the apparent source of the light, comes also the sweeping east wind, distributed over the land in the storm—a picture of wrath, His wrath—who in the light had spoken so silently. But even the east wind is held in His fists, controlled by His will.

But storms and storm clouds are but the prelude to the rain. Here, too, God is seen, bringing refreshing after the storm. So with Job, his chastening will be followed by the showers. Who knows how to "divide," to distribute, these refreshing showers? Man would distribute them unevenly, or out of due time. God knows when and how to send the welcome relief. Nay, the very lightning and thunder are but the vehicles upon which the showers come, as Science now declares.

How widely distributed is this rain, reaching out beyond the abodes of man, to the waste places of the earth. Where the tiniest blade of grass grows, there is seen the truth that, "His tender mercies are over all His works."

Nor are these things merely acts; they are, so to speak, the offspring of God's love and care. Rain and dew, ice and frost, are all the children of the great and good God.

Can we doubt Him? Shall we misjudge Him? How our unbelief and discontent witness against us, as Job's complaining's did against him.

(6) Pointing next to the heavenly host, the Lord almost takes the words of Job (chap. 9:9). He names special constellations, Pleiades and Orion, the groups making the Zodiac, and the Great Bear, ever pointing to the north. Commentators suggest varied meanings to these verses. Some think the allusion in the Pleiades is to a cluster of brilliant jewels: "Canst thou fasten the shining brooch on the bosom of the night?" Others point out that Pleiades is the constellation that belongs to the Spring, as Orion to the Winter. To loose the bands of the latter would be to break up the Winter, as binding the sweet influences of the former would be to delay the Spring. Canst thou hinder the coming of Spring, or cause Winter to come to an end? Canst thou change the ordered and onward march of the hosts of heaven, or cause the North to change its position? It has been pointed out that Kima, the Pleiades, means a "hinge," or pivot—that upon which all the heavenly bodies turn. Science points out that the whole visible universe is slowly, to our view, (yet with what inconceivable swiftness!) turning round an unknown center, apparently not far from the Kima, or hinge, of Pleiades. What if God were giving a hint to Job of this great center which held all things to itself? —if He were seeking to show him the One who holds all things in His hand, and pointing him forward to that

One thing we do know, He, and He alone, can hold the stars in His hand, number and call them all by name, and bring them forth in due order, "for that He is strong in power, not one faileth" (Is. 40:26). The prophet reminds afflicted Israel that this One knows their affliction and their way. The greatest human power will grow weary, but "they that wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings like eagles; they shall run and not be weary; they shall walk and not faint" (Is. 40:27-31).

As we gaze into those heavens, our feebleness might appall and overwhelm us. But when we ask, "What is man?" He shows us Him who was made "a little lower than the angels for the suffering of death, crowned with glory and honor, and set above the works of His hands" (Ps. 8; Heb. 2)—we see one like unto the Son of Man, yet the Ancient of Days. He it is who holds the seven stars in His right hand, yea, to whom all power in heaven and earth has been given. He can bind and loose. He can break the bonds of the long wintry night of sin, and bring on the eternal springtime. Already we can hear His voice: "The winter is past, the rain is over and gone; the flowers appear on the earth; the time of singing is come" (Song 2:11, 12). He has not given to us to change the order of nature, or to ascend up into those heavens, but He teaches us to give the true answer to His questions, and that answer is, "We see Jesus."

(7) Jehovah concludes this portion of His address with fresh questionings as to the clouds, storms, and rain. Can Job bring down rain, or speak to the lightning flash? Has he that understanding heart that knows the reason for the clouds—whether of rain or of grief—that can bring the refreshing showers upon the dusty earth. What food for reverent meditation we have in all this. May the spirit of the Psalms, the 8th, and the, 9th, the 104th, and the "Hallelujah Chorus" of the closing psalms, be upon us as we survey it all.

3. The Manifestation of His care over His creatures (chaps. 38:39-39:30).

We have thus been brought face to face with our weakness and ignorance in view of the infinite wisdom and power of God. We come next to the display of that as seen in His protecting and providing care over all His creatures. We pass, in this portion, from the glories of the Creator

to look at the wisdom and goodness of the God of Providence. He has not only devised the wondrous plan of the universe, but has filled the earth with living creatures, who are dependent upon Him for life and all things. This portion may be divided into the following parts:

(1) The beasts of prey (chap. 38:39-41).

(2) The wild goats and their young (chap. 39:1-4).

(3) The wild ass of the desert (vers. 5-8).

(4) The wild aurochs (vers. 9-12).

(5) The ostrich (vers. 12-18).

(6) The horse (vers. 19-25)

(7) The hawk and eagle (vers. 26:30)

The series opens with a declaration of God's provision for beasts and birds of prey, as seen in the lion and raven; next, the wild animals of the mountain and desert come under His all-wise care; then the control of those beasts confessedly beyond man's power in strength and swiftness; closing with the control of the migratory instincts of the birds. It is significant that the series opens and closes with mention of beasts and birds of prey. They might seem to be worthless, if not positively injurious, and yet He cares for them with unerring wisdom. Shall He fail to watch over His child who knows and trusts Him?

(1) To what distraction would man be brought if he had for a single day to provide food for even one class of these creatures. Only of God can it be said, "These wait all upon Thee, that Thou mayest give them their meat in due season." "The young lions roar after their prey, and seek their meat from God." "That Thou givest them they gather: Thou openest thy hand, they are filled with good" (Ps. 104:21, 27, 28). God not only tolerates, but cares for these creatures which prey upon others. They are part of His wise plan—once put under the hand of man and subject to him, but now turned against him as enemies. Thus Satan, whose assaults Job was feeling, was only the creature of God's will, working even by his enmity the purposes of God. If Job is ignorant of his devices, God is not, and will bring good out of all his ravening and roaring.

So also the ravens cry, the young and helpless ones, yet God feedeth them. These feeders upon carrion may seem worse than useless to man, but God takes care of them. In each case here it is the young of animals that are the objects of His care.

They are perfectly helpless, with nothing but their cry to attract attention; God does not turn a deaf ear even to the croak of a raven. "Consider the ravens: for they neither sow nor reap; which neither have storehouse nor barn; and God feedeth them; how much more are ye better than the fowls?" (Luke 12:24).

(2) What does Job know of the habits of the wild animals inhabiting the inaccessible mountains? "The high hills are a refuge for the goats" (Ps. 104:18). He might know in general the period of gestation of these elusive creatures, but does he know and watch over each parent animal, guard its life, safely bringing it through its time of peril? How amazing and uniform it all is, how utterly beyond man's knowledge or power. And these young, for a brief time sustained by their parent, then going off by themselves—who watches over them?

If God cares for these "rock-climbers," shall He not watch the steps of His timid people who are seeking to climb over the rugged rocks of adversity? Will He not be with them in the birth-throes of fearful experiences, and give them a happy issue out of all their troubles?

(3) Passing from the mountain to the plain, Jehovah points out the solitary denizen of those waste places, the wild ass. He is different entirely from the wild goats in ways and in habit, but one thing he has in common with them, he is absolutely dependent upon his Creator. What control has Job over a creature like this, who knows no bonds, serves no master? As he thinks of their freedom, Job might sigh beneath his burdens. God is able to loosen his bonds. Let him not doubt, but wait on God.

(4) Still dwelling upon wild creatures, God asks if Job can control and cause the great aurocks to serve him, or the wild antelope of the plains. Will he plow and bear the burdens of domestic labor like the ox? That wild, untamed nature yields but to One. Can Job doubt that He will control all things, even the wild powers of evil, and make them the obedient servants of His will? Thus God will bring into captivity the wild and wandering thoughts of His poor servant, and bring a bountiful harvest of blessing through his bitter experiences.

(5) All things, be they never so wild and apparently senseless, are His creatures, not forgotten by Him. Here is another one, the ostrich of the desert, whose wings vibrate as she races with the speed of the wind. There is, according to scholars, no mention of the peacock here. The general thought of verse 13 is thus: the ostrich does not use its wings and feathers to protect and care for its young, but careless and neglectful of its eggs and its brood, flees from the real or fancied enemy. Here is a creature whom God Himself apparently has deprived of the ordinary maternal instincts. Yet some One—Who?—cares for the helpless brood.2

By a natural transition from the swiftness of the ostrich, Jehovah passes to that embodiment of swiftness, strength and grace, the horse, and more particularly the war-horse. Job is asked if he has given strength to the horse, and combined it with the grace and beauty expressed by his flowing mane. His prancing is as agile as the grasshopper, his neighing and shrill snorting striking terror to the heart. What more majestic and withal so terrifying as the pawing rage of the battle horse, eager for the fray? Nothing can turn him from his onward dash to meet the charging hosts. The arms and accoutrements of his rider clash against his sides as he rushes over the ground, "swallowing it" in his headlong speed. The noise of battle is music to him; he scents the battle from afar, the shouts of the captains and the clash of arms. Here is a beast, not exactly wild, but endued with all the strength and swiftness of the wildest. What part has Job had in devising and creating so remarkable a creature?

The horse, especially in the days of which our book speaks, and in the East, was chiefly used in war. God warned His people not to put their trust in this mighty agent of war: "The horse is a vain thing for safety." "Some trust in chariots and some in horses, but we will remember the name of the Lord our God" (Ps. 20:7). It is He who "hath triumphed gloriously; the horse and his rider hath He thrown into the sea" (Ex. 15:1). So infinitely exalted is Jehovah above all His creatures. Let Job remember how puny he too is, and humble himself before Him who is God over

all. His deliverance must come, not from horses, but from the Lord on high.

(7) Returning in the cycle to the creatures that prey upon others, Jehovah asks if it is Job's wisdom that directs the hawk to take its southward journey as the winter approaches. What mysterious power, called instinct, is that which moves the birds to migrate to warmer climes? If it is merely the lack of food, why do they fly when food is still in plenty, as the swallows? and why in flocks? and why to the South? "The stork in the heaven knoweth her appointed times; and the turtle and the crane and the swallow observe the time of their coming" (Jer. 8:7).

The eagle—does it rise to giddy heights at man's command, and build its nest on some high crag from whence its eye takes in the far distant prey for its helpless young? It follows that battle into which the horse has rushed, and "where the slain are, there is she." God uses these all to fulfill His will, and He sustains and cares for them. He will call them to one great feast at last, when the angel shall summon them: "Come and gather yourselves together unto the supper of the great God; that ye may eat the flesh of kings, and the flesh of captains, and the flesh of mighty men, and the flesh of horses and of them that sit on them, and the flesh of all men, both free and bond, both small and great" (Rev. 19:17, 18).

Let Job but learn his lesson, and he will be satisfied with good things; his youth will be renewed like the eagle, he will mount up with wings, never again to grow weary.

And so Jehovah descends to human level and points out these familiar objects in the scene about the suffering saint. Does he see that prowling lioness? Who gives it food for its young? Who hearkens to the hungry croak of the raven? Who watches over the mother-gazelle? Who controls the wild ass or the mighty aurochs? Who preserves the brilliant but stupid ostrich, the prancing battle-horse? Who guides the hawk in its homing flight, or the king of birds, the eagle, with its home on high? There is but one answer:

"O Lord, how manifold are thy works! In wisdom hast Thou made them all: the earth is full of thy riches." "My meditation of Him shall be sweet; I will be glad in the Lord" (Ps. 104:24, 34).

4. The effect upon Job (chap. 40:1-5).

Thus Jehovah closes His first testing of Job. He has taken, as it were, the clay of Creation and put it upon the eyes of the poor sufferer, who had been blinded by his own griefs to all the power, wisdom and goodness of God. Will Job "go and wash in the pool of Siloam?" Will he bow to the testing of his Creator?

"Shall he that contendeth with the Almighty instruct Him? He that reproveth God, let him answer it. "Here lies the root of Job's trouble: he had sat in judgment upon God; he had accused the Omnipotent of evil? God has drawn near, has made His presence felt, and lifted the veil from the face of Nature to reveal part of His character. What is the effect upon the proud man?

"I am vile; what shall I answer Thee?"

"I will lay my hand upon my mouth."

Many words had Job uttered: at the beginning of his sufferings, words of faith in God; even during his "crying in the night," many beautiful and noble thoughts had fallen from his lips, but no such words as these—music in the ear of God—confession, contrition, mute acknowledgment of the whole error of his thought.

Here practically closes the test of Job; and yet in faithfulness Jehovah will probe still further to the deepest recesses of his heart, and lay bare its potential evil. So we must listen further to what the Lord has to speak.

In His second address the Lord deepens the work already taking place in Job's heart. In the first, Job is silenced and convinced by the majesty, power and wisdom of God. Such a Being, whose perfections are displayed in His works, cannot be arbitrary and unjust in His dealings with man. If His wisdom in the care of beasts and birds was beyond Job's comprehension, it must also be the case in His afflicting hand. The great effect of this first address upon Job seems to be that Jehovah has become a reality to him.

In the second address these impressions are deepened. God will not leave His servant with his lesson half learned: He plows more deeply into his heart until the hidden depths of pride are reached and judged. The second address therefore dwells upon this pride so common to the creature. He invites Job, as it were, to see whether he can humble the proud and bring them low. The manifest implication is that Job himself is in that class.

The character of the address is very similar to the first as to its themes. God still would teach, from Nature's primer, the profoundest lessons of His ways. Thus we have in behemoth and leviathan, creatures like the aurochs or the horse, of immense strength and courage, the creatures of God, and preserved by Him. But there is a manifest typical and moral meaning connected with these creatures, which in that respect goes beyond the others. There the lesson was largely God's providential care; here it is rather His control of creatures whose strength defies man. They are in that way types of pride and of resistless strength, representing the culmination of creature power. Can Job subdue or control these? Nay, does He not find himself morally in their company, for has he not lifted up himself against God?

The address falls, as did the first, into four parts:

1. The call to Job to take the throne (chap. 40:6-14).

2. Behemoth—resistless strength (vers. 15-24).

3. Leviathan—creature-pride fully manifested (chap. 41).

4. Job completely humbled (chap. 42:1-6).

1. — The Call to Job to take the throne (chap. 40:6-14.)

God still speaks to Job out of the whirlwind, as He had already appeared to him. His divine glory and majesty are thus still before the patriarch. Yet in the call, "Gird up thy loins now like a man," we have encouragement as well as rebuke. God is not crushing His poor foolish servant, but

appealing to his reason as well as his conscience. Already Job has learned, as indeed he has in measure known, God's power, wisdom and goodness. But the present appeal particularly is to his conscience. Will he annul, deny God's righteous judgment, and condemn God that he may establish a petty human righteousness? For this is really what lay at the bottom of Job's complaints; he was suffering affliction which he did not deserve; he, a righteous man, was being treated as though he were unrighteous. The conclusion then was unavoidable—the One who was thus afflicting him was unjust! Elihu had already pressed upon Job these awful consequences of his thoughts: "I am righteous: and God hath taken away my judgment" (chap. 34: 5). "Thinkest thou this to be right, that thou saidst, My righteousness is more than God's?" (chap. 35:2). The Lord would press home upon Job the heinousness of this sin. He has presumed to judge God—upon what grounds? Has he divine power and majesty? Can he speak in a voice of thunder?

If indeed he is thus qualified, Jehovah as it were invites him to take his seat upon the throne of divine judgment. Let him put on his robes of pomp and dignity, array himself in grandeur and majesty, and let the outpourings of his wrath flow out upon everyone that is proud, and bring him low. What awful, holy irony! And yet how divinely just. If Job can sit in judgment upon God, he surely is qualified to administer all His affairs better than He! He can quell the proud rebellion of every evil doer, and bring men into the dust before him. Has he done so with his own proud and rebellious heart? Has he humbled even his friends? How much less the whole world.

Can such language be used of Job? "Thou art very great; thou art clothed with honor and majesty. Who coverest thyself with light as with a garment" (Ps. 104:1, 2). "Those that walk in pride He is able to abase" (Dan. 4:37). If so, then Jehovah Himself will be the first to praise him, and to confess that he is able to succor himself. But had his own right hand even arrested the hordes that had driven away his possessions? or averted the storm that had swept away his children? Alas, it had taken a potsherd wherewith to scrape himself; his garment was sackcloth, not glory and majesty; his seat the ashes of a blasted life, not the throne of glory.

Is it cruel of Jehovah thus to deal with a poor heartbroken creature? Rather let us ask, would it have been kindness to leave him holding his pride about him as a garment, and railing against the Almighty? Only thus can pride be abased, by being brought face to face with its nothingness in the presence of the majesty and boundless goodness of God. Until Job has learned this, and learned it to the full, all the dispensations of God with him in his afflictions, and the reasonings of his friends and of Elihu, are in vain, and worse.

2. — Behemoth—resistless strength (vers. 15-24).

We are brought thus to hearken to the application by Jehovah of the lesson of creature-strength and pride, as exhibited and typified in the behemoth and leviathan. Our present section deals with the former of these creatures; the next, with the latter. The first is primarily a land animal, the second is chiefly aquatic. Together, they embrace, in type, all creation.

Students are agreed that the first beast is the hippopotamus, the model of resistless force and strength. It is one of Job's fellow-creatures, but how transcendently mighty. Every portion of his anatomy speaks of strength—loins and body, legs and bones, and even tail, are instinct with this power. He is thus a chief of God's creatures, excelling in strength. With his sharp sword like teeth, furnished by his Creator, he mows down the grass like an ox—harmless too when not roused up, for the other beasts sport in the same pasture. He lies down in the shade, taking his ease; for he fears nothing, even if a raging flood should seek to engulf him. Can he be caught in a trap, like some lesser animal, or be held with a cord and ring through his nostrils?

In other words, he is an untamable, uncontrollable beast. He is of no use for man's service. The entire description gives the impression of absolute power used for utterly selfish ends. It lives for itself, refusing to yield its strength to the service of others.

And yet he is but a creature, endowed by God, for His all wise purposes, with superhuman strength. Let Job, let all who are tempted to trust in their own strength, whether of body, as here, or of heart and mind, consider this creature, self-sufficient and resistless. How puny will their own arm appear.

Some have thought this creature must typify Satan, in his character as primate among God's creatures (Ezek. 28), excelling in strength and pride. The same would be true as to leviathan, in the next chapter. Both beasts typify power and pride. It must be confessed therefore that it does not seem altogether fanciful to say with Wordsworth, "It seems probable that behemoth represents the Evil One acting in the animal and carnal elements of man's own constitution, and that leviathan symbolizes the Evil One energizing as his external enemy. Behemoth is the enemy within us; leviathan is the enemy without us."

But as "the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience," we may think of these creatures as figures of evil men energized and controlled by Satan, rather than Satan himself. Merely as a suggestion, it is asked whether in behemoth, the creature of earth, we do not have a figure of "the man of sin," the Beast that riseth out of the earth (2 Thess. 2; Rev. 13:11-18). He would stand thus for the Antichrist, the lawless one, who is the consummation of all evil in connection with the professed people of God.

But "even now are there many antichrists; and may we not trace in this hideous creature that "mystery of iniquity that already worketh?" —that insidious development of evil which, outwardly claiming a place among God's creatures, which live for man's use, is really exalting itself, even to the ultimate denial of all that is called God! This is that spirit of antichrist so rife in the profession of today, denying the Father and the Son; boasting in its own sufficiency, glorying in its own strength and achievements, living for itself. This is what is at work now, feeding itself along with the timid sheep and the serving ox, but utterly unlike them.

Nor need we be surprised that God should speak thus of evil in Job's early age. For sin has this character from the beginning, only it develops into the full display of its nature as revelation advances. To Job thus, behemoth would stand for that creature of pride which flourishes amid the professed people of God. If he asked who was the counterpart of that evil beast, he could not solace himself by looking at Eliphaz or his companions. In the pride of his own self-righteousness, "showing himself that he is God," he would catch glimpses of this evil thing one day to be developed in all the fullness of hideous apostasy. What more awful revelation of the evil of pride could he, or we, have? Self-righteousness, self-seeking, pride of conduct or of character, denies its need of Christ and of God. Such is sin in the flesh—incorrigible and hideous. Who can subdue it or change its nature?

And yet behemoth is controlled, though not by man. God is over all, and "He who now letteth, will let." The flesh will be controlled by the Spirit; and, as He abides in the Church, He does not permit the full development of iniquity. So, too in a more modified way, the Spirit controls and hinders the activity of the flesh. "Walk in the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfill the lusts of the flesh."

So also in Job's day; he could recognize an evil principle within himself which God alone could check, a principle which he learns to abhor and to judge as himself—leaving aside for the time all the conscious confidence in God, and the really excellent fruits of grace in his heart. But this will come before us more fully in a little while.

3. — Leviathan—creature-pride fully manifested (chap. 41).

Most interpreters are agreed that in "leviathan" we have the crocodile of Egypt, which is described in great detail. As the hippopotamus is largely a land animal, the crocodile is chiefly aquatic, and both are amphibious. This creature is described in a manner quite similar to the previous one, but at much greater length. We may therefore seek to recognize the various parts into which the description is divided. There seem to be three:

(1) His untamable ferocity (vers. 1-11).

(2) Analysis of his various parts (vers. 12-24).

(3) His preeminent strength (vers. 25-34).

Before however going into details, it will be well to inquire as to the significance of this beast, as compared with the former. That, as we have suggested, typifies the spirit of apostasy from revealed truth, culminating in the Antichrist, the man of sin. This, as arising out of the water, suggests the first Beast of Rev. 13, the great world-power, as seen in the various beasts in Daniel's vision of chap. 7. If in behemoth we have the spirit of apostasy in religion, in leviathan we see it in civil government. It is the world-power, rather than that of the false prophet; and yet the two are closely linked together. But this is looking forward to the culmination in the last days. The principle (independence of God), seeking to make itself a name, has been manifest since the days of Cain, who established a city, and of Nimrod, the founder of the first great world-empire (Gen. 10:8-10). Nor is this confined to national pre-eminence; the same spirit of strong self-will, brooking no contradiction, is seen in the individual as well, an untamable insubjection to authority. Who has ever bound and held the proud will of man? But this brings us to the details, as opened for us in our chapter.

(1) The closing question as to behemoth leads on to a similar one as to leviathan. Can he be captured with a net or hook, by a line pressing down upon his tongue? Can he be bound as an ordinary fish with a rush rope passed through the gills? Is he timid and fawning, or loyal and subservient? Can he be made into a plaything, like a bird, for the amusement of the household? Is he a staple commodity in the markets, bought and sold? If not caught as a fish, is he assailable with darts, with weapons? Whoever has attempted this will surely remember the fearful battle, and make no further attempt. He is the despair of all opposition; none dare stir him up or stand before him.

If this be so with this mere creature, who can stand before the Creator? (For thus should verse 10 be rendered, leading up to verse 11, "Who will stand before Me?") Who has first given to Jehovah, that he can demand it back again? Or, as the apostle asks, "Who hath first given to Him, and it shall be recompensed to him again?" (Rom. 11:35).

In all this first part of the description, we have the fierce, unapproachable, untamable character of this creature; the evident deduction is, as already indicated, if the creature be so mighty, what must the Creator be? But, as has been said, we are led to expect something more than this declaration of God's greatness and power. It is not only a mighty power that is described, but a power for evil. So Satan is spoken of as the dragon (Rev. 20:2), and as ruler of the earth, through his instrument the ruler of Egypt, it is said of him, "In that day the Lord, with His sore and great and strong sword shall punish leviathan, the piercing serpent, even leviathan that crooked serpent; and He shall slay the dragon that is in the sea" (Isa. 27:1, 12, 13). How remarkable that the world-ruler should thus be spoken of. Can we fail to see the connection with the power of evil seen in our chapter?

Man's rule, as opposed to God's—how common it has been! In Nebuchadnezzar we have this pride displayed, at the very summit of Babylon's greatness. And ever since his day, how kings have dreamed of world-empire—Median, Grecian, Roman, and all the lesser Caesars since that day. How fierce and cruel they have been—how intractable, how untamable. Who could dispute with them in the zenith of their power—"remember the battle, do so no more."

Is Job willing to be found in such company—of men who, to gratify their own ambitions, would cast Jehovah from His throne? What awful wickedness, and how appalling!

Coming to the individual application, we see in this "crooked serpent" a figure of the perverted will of man. All sin has its roots in disobedience. Smile at it as men may, what more awful thing is there than this self-will—the carnal mind. The mind of the flesh "is enmity against God, for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be" (Rom. 8:7). Of what avail is the effort to reform the world, to tame the crocodile? Men may dream and plan, and seek to banish misery from the earth—but even amid its groans, creation mocks at human efforts to subdue its own perverted will. Again, how awful for Job to find such possibilities of evil and rebellion lurking in his heart.

(2) Coming to details, Jehovah shows that not only is the beast irresistible, if looked at as a whole, but that each of its members declares the same all-conquering power. Beginning with its dreadful mouth, with sharp, cruel teeth set round, the Lord points out that all is of the same character. The scales upon his head and body are, like pride, an impervious armor—each scale linked to its fellow, and no "joint of the harness" where an arrow could pierce. The very sneezing of such a creature is like sulfurous light from hidden fires within (vers. 18-21); his eyes flash forth like rays of the rising sun. Like the horses of the sixth trumpet, his mouth belches forth "fire, and smoke, and brimstone" (Rev. 9:17). His neck is the embodiment of strength, causing despair, not joy, to dance before him—he is the herald of misery. His flanks, usually a vulnerable part in animals, unprotected by the ribs, are compact and impervious. Within is a heart like stone, indifferent to all fear.

Such is the description of the beast itself; we may well believe that the spiritual reality is inconceivably more dreadful. A Satanic emperor of the world! —fierce, resistless, "breathing out threatenings and slaughter!" Who dare defy him to his face? What weapon can penetrate his armor? The hidden fires of the pit flash in his very "sneezing," his threats and words, when "he opened his mouth in blasphemy against God, to blaspheme His name and His tabernacle, and them that dwell in heaven" (Rev. 13:6). What unbroken stiffness of neck, which causes all to bend before it, filling the earth with ruin and men's hearts with woe; an orgy of misery, a carnival of despair dances gleefully before him—sword and pestilence and death, the inevitable accompaniments of autocratic and Satanic power. There will be no vulnerable "flanks" in "the Beast," capable of being "turned" like the flanks of an army; nor will he know pity. From his adamant heart come hatred, scorn, death.

Those who have refused the tender pleadings of the Heart of Love, of Him who said, “Come unto Me all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest,” will be crushed by the hard heart of the world-conqueror who knows neither love nor pity.

And will Job harbor in his bosom even the germ of all this horror? Shall independence, self-will, pride, have a resting-place in his bosom to hatch out such offspring of hell? Such is self-will in its essence, and such its full development— “fierce as ten thousand furies, terrible as hell.” Beneath the fair exterior of man such possibilities lie hidden. Even in the child of God a nature lurks which has these features.

(3) Returning somewhat to the manner of the first part of the description, Jehovah dwells upon the invulnerability of this beast. Strong men are afraid of him, through terror and wounds their trembling hand misses its aim (ver. 25, lit.). Even if a sword should touch him, it fails to wound—no weapon, whether from a distance or close at hand, can reach a vital spot. Iron is trampled down as straw, brass as rotten wood. The arrow cannot make him flee, the hurtling slingstone is like harmless chaff; darts and spears are mocked by him. His under parts, lying flat upon the earth, are not weak, but like strong sherds. His foaming path through the waters leaves a wake like a ship. “Upon the earth there is not his like, who is made without fear. He beholdeth all high things; he is a king over all the children of pride” (vers. 33, 34).

This is the divine picture of the creature, and can we doubt that He would also draw from it the more dreadful description of “the Beast,” and of the self-will which makes him that? “Who is like unto the Beast? Who is able to make war with him?” (Rev. 13:4). The “deadly wound” that has been healed is but a fresh declaration of invulnerability. He “shall devour the whole earth, and shall tread it down and break it in pieces” (Dan. 7:23). The very “mire” of the people, for the time at least, protects him. The turmoil he creates in the earth, marking it with ruin, shows his pathway. He has no equal upon earth. As the crocodile is king over all proud beasts, so this beast is king over all the children of pride. Shall Job, shall we, do him reverence and help on his kingdom? If not, but one path was open for him, and for us.

4. — Job completely humbled (chap. 42:1-6).

This portion forms the connecting link between the present part and the last main division of the book. As showing the effect upon Job of Jehovah’s words, it belongs to the fourth division; as introductory to the conclusion of the whole book it belongs to the brief fifth division. Following the manner of his first response, we will look at it as an expression of the overwhelming effect which Jehovah’s words had upon Job.

Again Job responds to the piercing, humbling words of Jehovah. Again he repeats his confession in a complete way. He acknowledges God’s omnipotence, and that He cannot be thwarted in His purposes, which exhibit His power, wisdom and goodness as fully as do His works. There is a complete surrender and reversal of all that he had previously said against God.

Quoting Jehovah’s own words, he asks himself, Who is he who darkens counsel? —dares to throw a shadow upon the Almighty! Mysteries there are in His ways, as in all creation and providence; but nothing is gained by rebelling against these mysteries of divine counsel. He, a man without knowledge of the most elementary truths of nature in their “hidden meaning,” had uttered things beyond the scope of finite intelligence; had therefore spoken folly. How different he had been from the devout psalmist: “Such knowledge is too wonderful for me. It is high, I cannot attain unto it” (Ps. 139:6). He had intruded into the things of God, and had dared to speak evil of divine omnipotence and goodness!

Still applying Jehovah’s words to himself, Job himself asks, “Who is this”? “Hear, and I will speak.” It is as though he would abjectly bow to these questions by repeating them, and give his answer to his divine Questioner. And what an answer it is! The only answer human pride can give to God: “I have heard of Thee by the hearing of the ear,” —Job had in a general way been correctly instructed, but he had only learned about God; “but now mine eye seeth Thee” —he had been brought face to face with God, not indeed visually, though there was the awful glory in the sky, but he had had a soul-perception of God by his enlightened reason, and chiefly by conscience. God had drawn near, personally near, and Job was conscious of that ineffable holiness, as well as power, that belong to Him. Previously he had been in the presence of man, and could more than hold his own with the best of them. In God’s presence no creature can boast, and Job was at last in that glorious, holy Presence. All the “filthy rags” of an imagined personal righteousness dropped from him, and he stood in all the naked horror of pride and rebellion against God. “Wherefore I abhor” —what? The whole past, every unjust suspicion, every hot accusation, every despairing, restless lament? Yea, more, the author and source of these— “I abhor myself” For who can doubt that Job’s penitence goes beyond the mere judging of his words; he judged himself. Thus the very absence of the pronoun emphasizes the thought. “I abhor;” I stand out before all men, described by one word— “abhor.”

Thus he takes his fitting place—the place indeed which he had outwardly taken at the beginning—in dust and ashes. He is the true mourner, the real penitent, he mourns—himself; he repents of himself, a sorrow and a penitence vastly deeper than any mere acknowledgment of actions and words.

These are the words for which we may say the Lord had long been listening. He had not heard them in the days of the patriarch’s prosperity, though his piety was unquestioned. We may say, whatever Satan’s sinister object was in all these sufferings inflicted upon Job, God’s purpose was to elicit just this confession. And why? To humiliate him? No, but to give him the true glory—to privilege him, out of the dust, to behold the glory of the Lord, and never again to have a cloud upon his soul! Was the experience worth while? There is but one answer. May we all give it.

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