Eleven Lectures on the Book of Job

William Kelly

Public domain. As published on plymouthbrethren.org.

Also online at https://plymouthbrethren.org/series/6171

KEE Ministry Library · Faithful Men
kee-ministry-library.netlify.app

Preface

Preface

Owing to the Author’s decease within a comparatively short time of their delivery, these “Eleven Lectures,” reported in shorthand, were denied the advantage of the Lecturer’s careful revision for which they were waiting before being committed to the printers. Under the circumstances, the Editor has thought it best to depart as little as possible from the reporter’s transcript, and counts therefore upon the reader’s kind indulgence in regard to any imperfections that may appear in the work. Repetitions there are throughout, as must be, more or less, in the case of oral delivery.

It may interest the reader to know that the Author’s “Notes on the Book of Job” appeared in 1879; his “Three Lectures” on the same Book in 1909; and now his latest commentary. in the Volume here put forth. They will be found mutually complementary, and most helpful. May the Lord richly bless these Addresses to His own for their comfort and encouragement in trial, that they may, from the heart, be able to say with the apostle: “Ye… have seen the end of the Lord; that THE LORD IS VERY PITIFUL, AND OF TENDER MERCY” (James 5:11).

Lecture 1 - Job 1-3

Chap. 1:1-12. Now I have only read the introduction, and indeed but a part of the introduction, because the first two chapters comprise the introduction. And then follows the impassioned and vehement opening speech of the patriarch Job. It is clear that here we have got a Book of patriarchal time. All the circumstances point to that time and no other; and further, it is as well to state even now before we go on, that the Book appears to have been written in the time of Moses, and probably by Moses. But some people are a little perplexed by the fact that it comes after the Book of Esther in the Bible. That has nothing whatever to do with the date of it. The Historical Books are given from Genesis to Esther — that is the end; then we begin the Poetic Books — Job, the Psalms, Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, and the Song of Solomon. Therefore it is that we necessarily go back here; because poetry was written certainly not after history, but concurrently with it; and we can easily understand that the Book of Job carries us back to the very same time that the first Book of the history goes back to. Everything concurs to show that.

For instance, Job offered burnt offerings; it was lest his sons should have sinned, but it was not a sin offering, which would have been the natural thing if it had been after the law; but it was before the law, and the offerings that were habitually offered by Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, under all circumstances, were burnt offerings. So that here we find a very simple mark in the very first chapter; and again, we find that there is a very peculiar idolatry at this time. The Book of Job was written after

the deluge; there was no idolatry before the deluge. Of course, the theologians say what they like about the subject, and they very often say what is entirely unfounded; and they are pleased to think there must have been idolatry, and therefore there was; but that is no reason at all — it is merely their imagination. The fact is, the earliest idolatry was the worshipping the sun, moon, and stars; and in the course of this Book we shall see that this is the only idolatry that Job refers to. It was what was common at that time, and they were getting afterwards into much more degraded forms of it.

Therefore, it would seem that the writer of the book was a good while after Job, but that Job lived in a time when there was idolatry. Yet this thing is what alone he notices; it is in his defence of himself — that he was not guilty — which is one of the thoughts that governed the minds of his three friends. I suppose they were the orthodox people of that day; but like the orthodox people of many a day, it was a poor, human, contracted notion of God. Orthodoxy is merely the popular opinion of religion, as a general rule; and although there are elements of truth, and orthodoxy is certainly much better than heterodoxy, still it is not faith; it is not spiritual judgment, which is a deep acquaintance with God’s mind. Only we must remember there was very little written at the time that this Book was written, perhaps no more than the Book of Genesis. I judge thus because there is no reference to the law. If it had been written after the law was given on Sinai, we might expect to find some allusion to that, but there is none.

There is another thing that contributes also to help us to the date, and that is the age of Job. He was 140 at least. There are some people who seem to think that he lived

140 years after all his troubles; but there is no ground for that. It is merely the manner of speech in the last chapter, and I presume it really means that that was his entire age, the period of his life — not the time after these disasters purposely fell upon him — for reasons that I am going to explain in a moment. Now, if that age be the age of Job, it shows we need not imagine more than what God's word declares, and he would therefore be rather a younger man when he died than Jacob. Jacob lived less than Isaac or Abraham. So that this would appear to point to the time of the patriarchal age, and all the circumstances fall in with that.

Again, there is what is very remarkable and separate in the Book. It is entirely outside Israel. There was certainly the nucleus of Israel then; Abraham, Isaac and probably Jacob, had been living, and it is clear that this pious Gentile, Job, had profited a good deal from the knowledge of what God had revealed in His dealings not only with those patriarchs, but the traditions of those who had lived before. I say "traditions," because Scripture was not yet written. If there was any Book of Scripture written at this time, it could only, in my opinion, have been, possibly, the Book of Genesis. That was but very little. Only the Book of Genesis is one of the most instructive Books in all the Bible; and it is remarkable for being a kind of seed plot (as it has been compared to before now), where all the germs, all the plants afterwards grew up into, you may say, shrubs or trees, or whatever it might be — there you have them all in their beginning.

It answers very much in that respect to the Book of the Revelation; Genesis is the proper preface to the Bible, and Revelation the very suitable conclusion of the Bible;

and you will find that there are links of connection between Genesis and Revelation that are more striking than in any other two Books of the Scriptures. For instance, the Garden, the Paradise of God, and the Tree of Life — these you have very early in Genesis, and very early in the Revelation. In the second chapter of Genesis we have it, and in the second chapter of Revelation we have it again. This is a revelation of a higher character, founded upon that Paradise which all readers of Genesis knew. Then that terrible personage Satan, the Serpent — in the Revelation he is called the “old serpent,” evidently pointing back to Genesis. The Serpent, the Enemy, is spoken of in various ways. We find him spoken of as “Satan” in Psalm 109, and we find him spoken of also in 1 Chronicles 21. There Satan tempted David, and succeeded in it, and brought David into a great sin, and which brought deep suffering upon the people of whom he was too proud; and so the people were shorn down and deprived of that strength because David was proud of their strength. Well then, again, in Zechariah, too, we have them all. So that the notion that there is anything very peculiar in the province given to Satan in this Book of Job is a very absurd one. It is a very proper thing, exactly what is needed, and it is the great truth which is about to be propounded and discussed throughout the Book.

Some divines are very fond of talking about the Book of Job as a drama — a kind of sacred drama. Well, I think they had better keep the drama to themselves, and leave the Book to its own simplicity and beauty, and not introduce mere terms of a very low and earthly kind. It is an authentic discussion; it is a grand debate. It is not the problem of how it is the wicked are allowed to

flourish now, sometimes, and to await the judgment of God afterwards; but here we have the far more serious question: ‘How is it that the righteous suffer now so much; is it consistent with God’s justice that a righteous man should suffer more than any other man?’ Well, that is the very thing discussed in this Book, and the object is to show that it is not only that there is a God perfectly righteous and good, but there is an enemy perfectly malicious and subtle and active. Now this is all brought out in a Book entirely outside Israel. The wonder is as to the Rationalists and the Jews — for they had their Rationalists quite as much as Christendom has its Rationalists now; they were the persons who were always lowering the word, humanizing the word, and, further, attaching tradition to it, and all sorts of stories invented to improve the word of God, and make it palatable to the readers, who were not satisfied with the truth, but were as fond of anecdotes then as people are now, who cannot be happy with the gospel unless they have these stories about men.

Here we have the Spirit of God in this wonderful Book bringing out fact. The Jews did not like it; and you can quite understand that. What! a Gentile spoken of in stronger terms than Jacob, our father Jacob, Israel! Scripture shows Jacob to have been a very uncertain man; a true child of God, but a man whose flesh was very little broken, and a man who was naturally prone to the sly ways — ‘slim,’ I believe, is the modern word for it — the sly ways of his mother and her brother, and all connected with the chosen race. Jacob inherited a little of that blood, and in consequence of not being self-judging, submitting to God and confiding in God, he

often brought himself into very great scrapes, and tried to get out of them by very uncomely ways.

All this indeed reads us a very important lesson, but it is quite a different one in the Book of Job. Here is a man whom God Himself brings before Satan. We have a most remarkable scene — that which I have read to you to-night — where “the sons of God” came together, we may say, to show their homage to God Himself in heaven. You know “the sons of God” are employed as messengers; and according to this we have a very graphic view of a particular day when they came — the day, not merely a day. It is not either in the Revised, or the Authorised Version, but it is the word that is intended. Now these “sons of God” were clearly angels, and these angels were busy with their mission of God’s goodness and mercy; for He loves to employ others; we have that now blessedly shown. Why, we every one of us have our work; every one of us has his mission; we have all a mission from Christ, the most simple brother and sister too. We are members in the body of Christ, and each member has its own function. It is a very interesting thing that God employs the members of Christ’s body to do what He could have done without them. He loves to trust them; He loves to exercise them; He loves that they should learn their place, and that they should fulfil their mission during this little while that we are waiting for Christ. That gives a great dignity to the place of the Christian, and also a very solemn responsibility. That is a part of God’s way.

Now it appears that there was a day when the angels came, and Satan was allowed to come among them. That is an astonishing fact not at all confined to this scripture. We have it even in the Revelation, the last

Book of the New Testament. There we find the day is coming when Satan and all his host are to be turned out of the heavens. And we find it is a doctrine laid down in the Epistle to the Ephesians that we have to contend with these powers of evil not merely on the earth, but having that great advantage against the believer of possessing a place in the heavens. Why is it that Christians generally do not believe that? Because they believe themselves and not God. Because they listen to what they call theology instead of the Bible, and the consequence is they are getting to lose all touch of divine truth; they are getting more and more into the belief of not only men's notions of the Bible, but of fables and ideas that are entirely unfounded. The fact is there is nothing that shows more the power of God and the patience of God than this, that the great Evil One and his emissaries are allowed still access to the heavens. They are not cast into hell yet; they are not merely thrown down to be only on the earth. We know that is a thing that will be, but not till we have ascended to heaven. Some people have the idea that they are turned out of heaven to make way for us, but that is quite contrary to Scripture. The removal of the glorified saints to heaven is before God overthrows the Evil One and his host, before He turns them out and casts them down to the earth, never allowed to get back to heaven again. And it is because God has absolute power to do it in a moment that He does that; because He is carrying on a grand work; and a part of that which brings out His wonderful ways is the allowed presence of sin. He gives Satan every advantage because He turns all his malice and all his power to the furtherance of His own way with His children; and the remarkable thing is that which we find in this Book of Job.

There is a very strong confirmation of it in a scene that is described in the first Book of Kings, and I only refer to that to confirm it, namely, where it speaks (1 Kings 22) of Micaiah, the man that the wicked king could not endure because he never had a good thing to say to him. That is, Micaiah was not a flatterer. Kings do not like any but flatterers as a rule, and this prophet greatly vexed the wicked king. And alas I the good king Jehoshaphat failed in that very thing that we are apt to fail in now. Fellowship between light and darkness! Fellowship between the right people and the wrong! Fellowship with that which is utterly opposed to God, in a kind of amiable way that does not give us any very great trouble! We like the easy path, we do not like the strait path, we do not like the path that requires faith, and it is to our own loss. Well, in this case, Micaiah, when he is brought to the point, speaks of a similar scene to what you have here. There God puts the question: “Who will go and deceive Ahab?” — that was the idolatrous king of Israel, “Who will deceive him?” — the one Jehoshaphat made his friendship with, to his own sorrow and to the dishonour of the Lord, and with no good to Ahab, for he fell; he was not won a single inch into that which pleased God. The good conduct of Jehoshaphat in no way did good to Ahab, but on the contrary Ahab drew Jehoshaphat into what was unworthy of God and of a child of God. The evil spirit said that he would go and deceive Ahab. He wrought, no doubt, by Ahab’s false prophets.

Peter speaks of “false teachers” doing the same bad work that the false prophets did in Israel. False “teachers” because the truth has come. They were false “prophets” when the truth was not yet come, when

Christ had not yet appeared, when all was in the future. But now the solemn and blessed truth is, the Son of God has come and has given us an understanding to know Him that is true. It is therefore a question of teaching now. There is nothing so destructive as what is false, what is contrary to God and His word. Morality, a man of the world can judge, and what is more, he may be a bad specimen in outward appearance; but that is altogether different from the character of Job.

Here we have Job spoken of not merely by the writer, but by God Himself in the strongest terms. The writer says, “There was a man in the land of Uz” (which you know was near Edom, on the borders of Edom, and apparently the friends of Job all came from that quarter more or less), the great desert on the eastern side of Palestine, between Palestine and the Euphrates, where the Bedouins are constantly moving up and down — the nomad races, some of them descendants of Abraham, indeed some of Ishmael. And it is said, “that man was perfect” — meaning by that, not that there was no evil; that is not the meaning of “perfect” in Scripture at all, but in the Old Testament it is the word for a man being thoroughly sound — a sound man, not merely a moralist, but a man who was right with God. And besides being sound in that way, he was “upright” with man. “Perfect and upright” showed relations, one to God, and the other to men. Both ought to go together. The great feature of it was, “fearing God.” Another great feature was that it answered to these other terms — refusing or shunning evil. “Eschewing” you know is the old English for shunning. He avoided it; he would have nothing to do with it. So that there you have the fear of God, the great root of his being sound or “perfect”; and refusing evil,

the great mark of his being “upright.” And then we have his family description.

But the remarkable thing is this great trial — and very comforting to us it is — the most remarkable that ever took place upon the earth, except the trial of Christ. With that the Book of Job stands in contrast. What we have here is a man greatly tried by Satan. But what were all the temptations of Job compared with those of the Lord? And I take it not merely the temptations of Job, but the end — the end of Job was that he found God full of pity, and of tender mercy; but the end of the Lord Jesus in this world was the cross. Job was brought down to the dust in agony, but Christ was brought down to the dust of death. The Lord speaks of Himself (Ps. 22) as a worm; and what was that judgment that fell upon Him when on the cross? What was all the frightful state of Job’s body compared with the judgment of our sins?

Between the two there is another thing. We shall find in this Book — I am anticipating now, but in an introductory lecture you must expect that — Job allowed himself language and thought about God that was the greatest dishonour to Job. It was not only that he cursed his day, which was, of course, extreme failure, and a failure that is very profitable for us to note. What was Job more remarkable for than any man upon the earth of his day? Patience. “Ye have heard of the patience of Job”; that is the very thing in which he broke down. He became impatient with his friends — and I must admit they were a most trying set, those three men, and there was everything to fill Job with indignation at their bad thoughts of him; because what they were thinking all through was that he must have been guilty of some terrible unknown sin, unknown to them, that was the

cause of all this suffering. That was the orthodox idea of that day, and it is so still. If there is any thing very trying that happens, there must be something wrong with that man! If he is very ill spoken of, ‘Oh, well, with smoke there must be a little fire’ say these sages of evil.

Now it is remarkable that God gave this Book for the purpose of uprooting all that superficial folly; all those utterly unkind, ungracious thoughts of men, in order to make another thing totally different, manifest, namely, that whatever may be the power of Satan, God is the one that is at the helm, and God is the one that makes it all turn, eventually, for the blessing of the tried man, and for the glory of God. So that it is only the beginning of a circle in its own way, in very early days. Because, as I have already observed, only, perhaps, one book, the Book of Genesis, was then written — certainly no more, in my opinion; and yet for all that, in Job we have one of the grandest books that ever was written. I mean even in the Bible. I do not count it with other books; what are they to be accounted? — but the Bible even. There is nothing more astonishing for those who will fairly look into that Book; and therefore I hope there may be some who will become more intimately acquainted with it than they have been.

It is no use my speaking unless that should be the result. That is the object I have; and, along with that, blessing to our souls. Here it is eminently God on the one hand, man and Satan on the other. You must not think of an old tract that used to be in circulation amongst us, written by a very dear christian, but under a very great mistake, which maintained that Job was only converted at the end of his life. Nonsense! Job was converted from the very first time that God spoke. Do you think that God would

speak of an unconverted man in the terms that I am about to read now? “Hast thou considered my servant Job, that there is none like him in the earth?” (ver. 8). You can understand that the Jews did not like that. None like Job, a Gentile! According to the story, according to the book, according to the truth; none like him! Yet it was so.

It is not, beloved friends, the amount of truth that any man knows, on which his state before God turns, but the using of it excellently. You will find men who know a great deal of truth utterly without principle; utterly without the fear of God. You will find men who know a great deal, and all they use it for is merely to exalt themselves. Sometimes for money, sometimes for a name. But all that is most hateful to God. Here we find a man that did not and could not know much in these days, but still he made the best use of it. He lived in the faith of it, in the faith of God Himself; and the result was there was none like him in the earth — a perfect man and an upright man, “one that feared God and eschewed evil.”

There you have God’s endorsement of what the inspired writer said about him. The idea that he was not a converted man! It just shows how when people get a notion into their head it governs them. They get the idea that conversion means justification. Now that is not what conversion means at all. Conversion properly and truly means the first turning to God; at the time when we are still a great deal behind, when we may have no proper faith in redemption, when we may not know that our sins are blotted out. But really we have a new light; we hate our sins; we acknowledge our sins, and turn to God. It is the beginning; it is not the end. There is, of

course, another use of the word, that is when we turn back again after we leave Him; but that does not apply to Job, for Job had not left God up to this time; and he did not turn away from God at this time either. He was in the direst trouble, and no wonder; because Christ was not come; the work of redemption was not accomplished. How could he have that peace and that liberty which we are entitled to through faith not only in Christ, but in the work of Christ?

And this is one of the great objects of the Book; to show that no matter how good a man may seem, if he is put to the proof about what he is himself, in his own heart, he will break down. It will be my lot to show the particulars of this another day; but now we have merely passed before us here this great truth; and it is quite a key to difficulties of all kinds. It is God that really takes the initiative, not Satan. God is the one that moves in this; and if it led to Job's being so terribly tried, yet what a comfort to have known this! Job did not know it; that is what we know; this is what the word shows here; but Job had no idea that before all this trial came upon him in the earth there was a scene in heaven about him!

Do you think it is only of Job that God thinks? Do you think that God is not thinking of every one of you now, and that in the presence of the evil angel? Do you suppose that this was something entirely exceptional? The account of it was, the allowance of it was, the special circumstances of it were peculiar; but the principle is the same for every believer. God in His sovereign love and grace takes a pleasure in His children, far more than we take in any of ours. And you know what that is for a parent. Well now, God takes more pleasure in you — not merely in Job — in you. I

grant we do not deserve it; that is another thing altogether. Love does not count up deserts at all. Love goes out because God is love, and for His own glory in Christ the Lord. Now He is able to do it righteously; able to do it effectively. But here there was tremendous suffering before Christ came in, and before the full light of God came. God allowed all that; nevertheless it was He that began it; and, if God begins, how will He end? Worthily of Himself. It is not merely patching up; it is not merely repairing, but a radical work of self-judgment in the soul.

God, in His wonderful ways, is not one that waits for the devil at all. He begins. God had a child of His; and when this subtle, active, malicious foe came, in his restless roamings backward and forward on the earth to do mischief, God said “Look at my servant Job.” The enemy felt that as a challenge to him, as it were. God first of all laid down a certain restriction, and this He always does. He allows it only to a certain extent; and in this case it was to be to a very remarkable extent, that it might be a lesson for ever after this Book was written; that it might cast a light on all the great struggle of good and evil, for every child of God from that day to this.

“And Satan answered Jehovah and said, Doth Job fear God for naught?” It is only a bit of selfishness; it is only for his own ends. How did he judge that? From himself. Oh, it is a dangerous thing to judge anything from ourselves. It is a blessed thing to judge from God’s word. “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. But put forth thine hand now, and touch all that he hath, and he will curse thee to thy face.

And Jehovah said unto Satan, Behold, all that he hath is in thy power." God allowed him to try. "Only upon himself put not forth thine hand."

That was the first trial. Here we have light upon a very important thing. Satan showed himself to God, but he hides himself from men, to deceive all the more. We read that a messenger came, when everything was prosperous. No man in that part of the East was so prosperous as Job; he was the man that must be brought down to the dust. The same thing with his sons and daughters. There they were. We have a beautiful picture here of social happiness and family enjoyment, which is a thing that God takes pleasure in, but it all came to naught, and it all came to naught also as to his substance. Everything — children, the dearest of all that Job had — and also all his property. "The oxen were plowing, and the asses feeding beside them, and the Sabeans fell upon them" — they were a people in that part of the country who used to keep moving upwards from the south to the north — "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 that man was speaking, word came — and this was not the Sabeans, nor the Chaldeans — "The fire of God is fallen from heaven, and hath burned up the sheep." The flocks, of course, were vast compared with the herds, and they were all consumed, and the servants too. And while he was speaking, there came one and told him about the Chaldeans. They were enemies, plunderers at that time from the east, as the Sabeans were from the south; and they fell upon the camels, a very valuable part of Job's property, and carried them away. He only was escaped to tell the sad tale. And then came the last stroke of all

— a whirlwind that attacked the house on all four sides. No ordinary wind would do that. And it fell upon and destroyed all assembled there on that very day — the festal day that they were holding together.

And how did it affect Job? Very few converted men now would act as Job did then. “Then Job arose, and rent his mantle, and shaved his head, and fell down upon the ground and worshipped.” Now he was a most affectionate man, and he was a man full of graciousness even to strangers. What was it for him to lose all, not merely his property, but every soul of the family, outside his own house? And he said “Naked came I out of my mother’s womb, and naked shall I return thither: Jehovah gave, and Jehovah hath taken away, blessed be the name of Jehovah.” You cannot conceive a more happy and decided expression of entire godliness from a deeply tried soul. “In all this Job sinned not, nor charged God foolishly,” that is, in a way that was contrary to all propriety.

The next chapter (Job 2) brings the further trial. Satan came again; he had failed the first time; now he says ‘Ah! it is himself. He does not mind his family; he does mind himself a great deal. Himself is a nearer thing than all his property and all his children.’ There you have this untiring wicked one turning everything to malice and falsehood. I need not go into the details, but we have there the terrible effect. Now said he, ‘A man will do anything for self. Skin for skin. He may not mind this or that, however close it may be to him.’ The skin is, you know, just outside. ‘But only just touch his flesh and his bones; touch him thoroughly, to the quick, inside, and then see what all his piety will come to!’ And the Lord allowed it. Only, He said, ‘You must not kill him.’ If God

had allowed Satan to kill him it would have put an end to all the trial. It was not at all that God forbade the killing to spare Job; it is exactly what Job would have liked; for he expresses his deep grief that he was not allowed to die. It was, he said, a terrible thing that he was allowed to be born, to come into all this. It he were born, why would not God allow him to die? That would be the greatest relief. He had fully the thought of going to be with God — no other. But it was God allowing all this tremendous trial, which was a picture of the most complete suffering and bitter agony and pain, night and day. And there he was, as people have presented him, on his ash heap; for he was scraping himself in this awful agony from head to foot.

Many of you know what it is to have a raging toothache; that is a very small thing comparatively — the tooth only. And yet many a one has found it very hard to bear, and has made tolerable outcry, and all the house, perhaps, has been troubled about that toothache. Well, think of this. It is not as if all the teeth were raging; that would be nothing, comparatively; it is not as if all the toes were troubled with gout, although that also is a thing very trying to bear; but the whole body from head to foot in every part of it; not an exception; the most tremendous disease known, among the diseases of a terrible character in the Eastern world. This most pious of men was allowed of God to come into it for the purpose of doing him far greater good than if he had never had any of these trials. That is what comes out in the Book. And, accordingly, even then Job did not sin. He had been even now not only marked by the greatest grace in his prosperity, but by the most exemplary patience in his adversity. If God had stopped there, there would have

been no lesson at all, comparatively. It would only have turned to Job's glory.

But there was something with God (now that all this had taken place) which Satan knew nothing about, which Satan had no idea of whatever; but God knew it. There was something in the heart of Job that needed to come out, and the object of that appears. We see God orders that three devoted friends of Job should come. They heard of it. In the Eastern world news spreads very fast, especially bad news. They all knew that something terrible had happened to their dear and respected friend Job, and from different parts of the country they appoint, and they come together simultaneously. And the awful plight of Job so struck them that they could do nothing but weep and rend their clothes, and sit upon the ground, as we are told, for seven days, with not a word to Job. They came there to console him; but they were so shocked that they began to allow in their hearts that Job must be guilty of something terrible. How was it possible that God would allow this if there were not some shocking sin that they knew nothing about!

There they were all wrong. But this very thing brought a great shame to Job. The lack of one word of pity; the lack of anything of consolation from his friends, brought out what very often happens. A man will bear grief and bow under it when he is alone, but when other persons come from whom he expects sympathy, who on the contrary show distrust — well, Job was quick enough to show that he could not stand that. Job then did not curse God. Oh, no, he did not then fall into what the devil thought he would do, but he cursed his own day, cursed his own lot. I do not say that that was proper; I do not say so, far from it. But still, that was the issue of this,

that Job then opened his mouth After seven days of silence, seven days of utter stupefaction at the enormity of his sufferings on the part of his dearest friends! Well, we must not be surprised that he broke out.

I need not go into every word of the chapter, but it is all to this effect: “Let the day perish wherein I was born, and the night in which it was said, There is a man child conceived. Let that day be darkness” (Job 3:3, 4). And so he speaks in highly poetic language, and in language of deep emotion. That is the real character of poetry of the best kind; it is the language of deep feeling and emotion. And Job breaks out into that language — a kind of poetic prose which the Book carries out till very nearly the end. But the great point is the mourning over this terrible lot of his, that he was ever allowed to come into the world to bear such awful suffering. Where do you find that in Christ? “For this cause was I sent.” The Lord accepts it; He felt, deeply felt; was troubled in spirit. He felt it, but also He accepted it. For this cause He had come. But not so Job. He could not understand — although his sufferings were not to be compared with those of Christ — why a holy God should allow such suffering. It was inexplicable to Job.

So we have in a very beautiful manner, to the end of the chapter, this idea in various points of view. You observe therefore that I am not going to enter into every phrase minutely in this Book; that would take me a very considerable time; but I am going to give what I think is a substantial view of the mind of God, as far as I have learnt it, to help my brethren who may not have fully weighed the lessons of God in it. And I shall take, therefore, each part of the remainder of the Book, ‘the attack’ I may call it, the insinuation, the blame of these

friends of Job; their expostulation because of his grief, and their suspicion of something wrong at the bottom of it; and Job's answer. I shall take these throughout the rest of the Book until we come to a part where they are all silenced. Job has the last word; the friends are silenced and a new man enters the scene; and then after that Jehovah appears as the Arbiter of this great debate; and finally the grand winding up and solution of it all; Job vindicated after he owned his fault; Job acknowledging it fully, which his friends did not. They were not broken down as Job was; but they were sorry to be found altogether wrong; and there they were, biting their lips or their tongues through vexation; and they had to be prayed for, they had to be delivered at the intercession of Job; we shall see that at the close. But this may now suffice.

Lecture 2 - Job 4-7

Chap. 4:1-8. I shall not read more now, because we shall have it gradually before us. But here the great debate commences, founded upon Job's outbreak, who was now perfectly overcome through the calamity that God had allowed to fall upon him. As a pious man, Job knew very well that God could have prevented it, if He had not a purpose in it of which he himself was wholly ignorant. But it is well to take notice of this before I say more, that Satan completely disappears. He had been utterly foiled. He had been allowed first of all to destroy all that Job possessed, even to his children — his sons and his daughters — all his property was completely swept away. There is hardly a Christian who would not feel that to be a tremendous trial. And there was a greater trial to follow; for when Satan saw that he failed to move Job against God by the destruction of all his possessions and of his family, he was allowed another opportunity for his malice, and that was to inflict the deepest agony upon the person of Job. It would have been a great relief to Job if Satan had been permitted to kill him. Job had no fear at all of what would be after death, but the trial was to be made in this world.

It was not at all a question of what would be hereafter; but Job had to learn — and to teach others by the lesson — that things are not all according to God now; that the foundations are out of course; that some things that are allowed of God are not at all the will of God. Nor are they for the glory of God, except that God, in result, makes them always to subserve His wisdom and His goodness, though outwardly everything appears to go

wrong. Now the friends of Job took the totally opposite ground, that it was not at all a bad sort of world, and that on the contrary what happened now was a very good means of judging how God felt about it; that if they were walking well, nothing could harm those who professed to be His followers and servants. No doubt they were men in a comfortable position of life themselves, and did not know much about trial; in point of fact they would not at all have served the purpose of God. God chose a much better man than all three put together. God chose a man whom He loved specially for his integrity; but nevertheless Job had to learn what he was. It was not to be a question of what he had done. They never could get beyond “what a man has done.” In their minds there must have been something very bad. Nobody, it is true, could see it; but that only showed — they did not like to say it at first — that he must be a hypocrite. They judged of Job by the trial that he was called to endure; whereas the truth emerges, gradually, very slowly, but at last it comes out very fully; though Job had no idea what the end would be. Job’s one thought now was to die, no longer to be put to this torment. It was breaking a man upon worse than a wheel; it was wearing him out with the most dreadful tortures and agony; and how could such a God as he knew do such a thing? Yet he believed it was God, so that all this made him writhe; and what brought it out was not Satan — it was his friends!

What a solemn lesson that is! Our friends may sometimes do us the worst turn possible. That is what they did to Job. Nevertheless God never fails; and God was going to make all this turn to Job’s greater blessing. But he knew nothing at all about it — how it was to be —

all he knew was that, as far as appeared, there never was a righteous man who was called to suffer as he did. And how was it thus if God loved him? and he had always thought so, he fully believed it, he was quite certain that he loved God — he could not make out how it was possible. And yet it was a very possible thing, because the world is what it is; because human nature is what it is; and because the devil is what he is; and also because even the dearest friends that Job had, only aggravated his misery instead of helping him in the very slightest degree. Well, that was a most complicated web, and that is really the Book of Job. So that it is a grand Book in its way, and peculiar, and all the more full of instruction because it was before the law. If the law had come in it would not have mended matters in the smallest way, because the law was a system of divine government for a people on earth, under which, if they walked well, all would be well, and if they walked ill, trouble would come upon them from God. That would have been very much like what the friends of Job insisted upon. But what we learn is that these thoughts are natural to the heart of man, which believes that God deals with us now according to what we deserve. Job perfectly well knew that it would not be so in the other world; he had no doubt about that. It is true that he had not anything like the same ground of knowledge that we have in having Christ — the same Christ who has made redemption a blessed and a fixed certainty, a condition into which we are brought by divine grace, and which abides for ever. But it is not merely that. Christ is the One who brings us to know God for every day — for everything that comes across our path every day, and for everything that can try the heart or the conscience every day. It is the same perfect law of God that is found

in Christ; and our great wisdom is to learn how to apply Christ to every difficulty.

Well, that could not be yet; but the remarkable thing is that it was his dear friends — for they were dear to him, and he had always been dear to them before — who began to look askance. They heard poor Job in his passionate outcry at this terrible suffering that came upon his person. Oh! he could have borne it if they had not been there; he could have borne it if there had been none to look upon him. He might have groaned and cried unto God, and he would surely have done so; but what formed the crisis was his three friends. There they sat for seven long days, looking at the unhappy man! listening to his shrieks, and thinking that after all he ought to be quiet! They had no idea what he was suffering; they were very cool indeed; they were very calm; and they thought they were the men! But God thought otherwise; and Job knew in his heart that they had made a profound mistake, and that they had misconstrued not only Job but God Himself. He was quite right about that; and one thing that he never allowed in all the debate was that it was because of any hidden wickedness, that it was because of the smallest tinge of hypocrisy. No, no, no; they were all wrong about that, and he would never give it up until cockle turned into barley. He knew perfectly well that that could not be. And so it was. He would stick to it, and fight for it; and so he did.

Now, all this brought out what was not at all comely, the deep resentment that Job felt against the injustice of his friends. He could not help knowing they were all wrong, and he could not help feeling that, unless indeed he was one who had no love for them and no respect; but it was

just exactly because he had, that it all came so painfully upon him. He knew perfectly well that their glum silence meant that there was no proper sympathy in their hearts toward him. There they were, thinking their bad and dark thoughts about Job all the time, and yet afraid to let them out. But at last Eliphaz picks up courage, and, being the eldest of them, he certainly has much more calmness and dignity and self-restraint than the others that follow. He ventures to speak with a kind of apologetic tone. He says when he hears of this, “If we assay to commune with thee, wilt thou be grieved? but who can withhold himself from speaking?” It was so very shocking that Job should let out so strongly! “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.” He allowed the excellent character of his dear friend in the past, but what was the meaning of all this violence new? Well, he was so changed that the first sight of him made them rend their clothes and cast themselves upon the ground. They were astonished at him. It appears that from head to foot he was covered with everything that showed the awful inflammation and the workings of what seemed to be deadly corruption covering his body — so much so that even worms were appearing all over, and clods of earth. Had he not thrown himself upon the ash-heap to get something or other to relieve this terrible sting? Besides, all his comforts were gone everything that he once had to alleviate him.

It was all very well for them; they were comfortable; they were not in pain; and they could not in the least degree enter into this terrible suffering of the godly Job. And now Eliphaz allows that he had been a good man

towards others, but how was it that he could not teach himself now? Now that this terrible affliction had come, he ought to be a model! Yes, we ought all to be models; we ought all to be like Christ; and we ought all to be like Christ particularly when we are in the depth of affliction, and when we are suffering in the most terrible way; but it is not always so even with the Christian. At any rate, Job could not avoid an expression of his agony — it must come out in some way or another — cries and tears and shrieks as the pain entered most deeply into his nature. Well, there was One who suffered without a murmur; One who always bowed submissively. There was One who accepted from God the most utter contempt and bitter persecution, even to being called Beelzebub; One who had not a house of His own; One who was entirely dependent upon other people — some of them poor fishermen, and others women who followed as they so often did, seeking in that way to serve Him.

So it was with the Lord. He would know what the feeling of a man is about that. You know very well that any man of what is called the least spirit likes to be independent, and that it is the most galling thing to be entirely dependent upon, what is called, other people's charity. There was the Lord of glory — and when it came to be the time of personal suffering, we can measure a little what it was going to be upon the cross by that which the Lord passed through in the anticipation of it, because He never hardened his heart to shut out what was coming; He went always through the trial before the trial came. We try not to think about it. Sometimes, also, people take means of strengthening the body against the feeling of these trials and pangs; but not so the Lord Jesus. No; He would take the vinegar, but He did not

take the potion that was meant to deaden feeling — that He refused. There was a cup given, out of human mercy for the ordinary criminal, to deaden pain, to be a kind of opiate, as we call it. But the Lord would not allow that. No, no; He allowed no anæsthetics for Himself. It is all very well; men and women try to get a little anæsthetic even for taking out a tooth, and yet there was all this unparalleled suffering that came upon the Lord Jesus. Nevertheless, there it is: “My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?” But there was in Him no such thing as the fighting spirit of Job.

No doubt Job’s friends were exceedingly provoking men, and that was a thing that did provoke him; but still the Lord was the complete contrast of it all. And this is a very instructive thing to carry with us, as we read the Book of Job, and look at it more particularly than I can afford to do in the lectures that I now purpose — i.e., the reading of it privately, phrase by phrase, and word by word. I can only pretend to give a helpful sketch — time would not allow me to attempt more. But the contrast is very admirable between the best of men put into a position which was nevertheless nothing to be compared with the sufferings of Christ. And yet there Job was, an object of contempt in a measure and of deep suspicion to the three friends of his, who were not to be named with himself.

Well, now, Eliphaz comes to it; he says, “But now it is come upon thee, and thou faintest; it toucheth thee, and thou art troubled.” Yes, no doubt! it did not trouble Eliphaz very much. He was very sorry, no doubt — that is easily said. “Is not this thy fear, thy confidence, thy hope, and the uprightness of thy ways?” That is a phrase very badly given indeed in our version. It consists only of

two clauses. The true meaning of it is, “Is not thy fear, thy confidence” (i.e., “thy pious fear of God”)? “Is not thy fear [of God] thy confidence? thy hope, the uprightness of thy ways?” There are these two clauses, and only these two clauses in it, and that is the real connection. He is astonished that Job should forget his fear and also his hope which he formerly had. He could not speak about faith in redemption, because there was nothing at all of that; all the blessing for an Old Testament saint was in what was coming. But meanwhile the fear of God gave him confidence that God would take care of him, and there hope was something far better than what he said. “The uprightness of his ways” — yes, he was not a hypocrite; but that is a poor ground after all, when we think of a Christian. Why? Christ is our ground. It is not our upright ways that are our great spring of hope; it is not anything but Christ which gives us firm confidence before God. So that Eliphaz only speaks according to that mixture that was constant, unless God gave a revelation, in the Old Testament.

But there was always a mixing of their fidelity with the faith of the Christ that should come — the hope of Christ who was coming. That is the reason why there could not be certain peace. There are a good many people in that state now, they mix up their own personal fidelity with Christ; and what is the effect of it? The mixture of self with Christ has always a disintegrating effect — always injures and darkens the ground of our peace. I must have a peace entirely outside myself. I must have a confidence based upon Him who has no flaw at all, and who has done a work that gives me to be without a flaw before God. That is exactly what Christ has done.

Yet the time was not come to have that clear. But as the phrase stands in our version of 1611, I really could not pretend to understand it, and I very much doubt if anybody else could. In fact, it is very imperfectly rendered, and our translators, I am persuaded, did not understand it. That is not uncommon in the Book of Job, where are more of these misrenderings, I think, than in almost any other Book of Scripture. First of all, the language is very ancient. Of course, I know that the Germans say the contrary, but that is their fashion; they love to contradict what every true believer accepts; they love to unsettle all the foundations of the faith, and when that is done, they can say, 'Away with the Bible!' That is what is coming; that will be the end. So that they are not much help, whatever be their profession.

"Remember, I pray thee, who ever perished" — now he comes to his false comfort. "Remember, I pray thee, who ever perished, being innocent?" Well, what about Abel? I am beginning early enough in the Bible, and I am beginning with a clear example in the Bible. "Who ever perished, being innocent?" Well, there was Abel that perished. We are speaking about perishing in this world; Job never had a question about the next; and they were looking not at the next world but at this. It is not at all a question of faith; it was a question of sight; they were drawing all their conclusions from what they saw. That is always a false ground for a believer. "Who ever perished, being innocent? or where were the righteous cut off?" There it was again. Abel was righteous, and he was cut off by the unrighteous man; Abel was entirely guiltless; it was because Jehovah accepted Abel's offering, that Cain could not endure it. So, therefore, he perished as far as life in this world is concerned; and

that is the only question that is discussed in these passages of Job.

That was the great question between him and his friends. It was what was going on now; they drew from that that God had a very serious charge against Job. Nothing of the kind. God was the very One who looked with admiration on him; and brought out Satan's earnest plan and subtle way to try and make Job speak against God — to curse God, as it is called — but he failed, and he had to be off, and he never appears again. No, it was through another way, the last that anybody could expect; it was through his friends that God did bring Job into — not cursing God — but cursing his own day, that he had been allowed to live; and if he had not been allowed to die before this came upon him, that God should not now take him away — that was Job's complaint. He did not see what God was going to do; he had not yet learnt the lesson that God meant him to learn. Eliphaz shows in a very animated and striking manner what is a general modern principle — "Even as I have seen, they that plow iniquity, and sow wickedness, reap the same." But it is not an absolute rule. There are those who have sown and plowed iniquity too, and yet they have reaped a good deal in this world, and have laid up wealth and honour in the highest degree; they have become kings and emperors and all the rest of it. Well, that is the very thing. It was extremely short-sighted to talk as he did. "By the blast of God they perish" — sometimes. That is true, and Job never denied that, without making it an absolute truth or an absolute falsehood — "and by the breath of his nostrils are they consumed."

Then he brings in the lions as a figure to show that, however strong and great and matchless a lion may be,

still he may be broken — and so it is with men who play the lion in the world. And now he brings in a vision of the night. He was very serious. And God has often used visions of the night. It is true we have something a great deal better; we have the vision of the day; we have the great vision of Christ manifested in flesh; we have the vision of God showing Himself, and God speaking and acting for us in this world of sin and death. But he refers to what he saw or heard then. “Now a thing was secretly brought to me, and mine ear received a little thereof. In thoughts from the visions of the night, when deep sleep falleth on men. Fear came upon me, and trembling” — it was evidently not enough of grace that he had; grace does not make people fear in this kind of way. It is judgment that does so, and this is what these good men are full of; they were full of the spirit of judgment.

And yet that is the very thing we are called not to do. “Judge not, that ye be not judged.” When there is evil found on the part of one who bears the name of the Lord we are bound to judge him; but there was no evil found on the part of Job at all. And when evil is not found we are bound not to judge; we are not to yield to our own thoughts; we are to wait upon God to make it all plain. Look at the way the Lord bore with Judas. He knew it, but they did not; and the Lord would not act upon this; it came out for them to judge. Well, this spirit, he says, passed before his 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, Shall mortal man be more just than God? Shall a 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, whose foundation is in the dust, which are crushed before the moth? 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." Well, all that is very true, but it did not apply to the case at all. It was a very good lesson for Eliphaz; how ever he may have learnt it is another thing. But there is a great deal more to learn, and that is what had to come out — that behind all the trouble, behind all the affliction, behind everything that can be brought by the malice of the devil upon God's children in this world, there is a God of grace; and more than that, that God locks for the sense of grace to fill our hearts too; and that is what He accomplished with Job. How much more ought it to be in us, who have seen by faith the Son of God! who have learnt by faith what Jesus suffered that we might be brought into stable, everlasting and blessed relationship with God even now! That, of course, was beyond Job, or any in Old Testament times.

Well, Eliphaz pursues it. He says (Job 5), "Call now, if there be any that will answer thee; and to which of the saints wilt thou turn? For wrath killeth the foolish man, and envy slayeth the silly one. I have seen the foolish taking root" — he was an aged man and was fond of looking back upon his experience — "I have seen the foolish taking root; but suddenly I cursed his habitation." Ah, there it is! No prayer for him — cursing his habitation! No pity for him! Well, that was just the spirit that was produced by this readiness to judge, and to found the judgment upon appearance. "Judge not according to the appearance," said the law. We are bound to wait for solid fact. Take a person who has a

bad appearance. Sometimes a bad man puts on a good appearance. Well, we are not at all deceived by that. Sometimes a good man may be in such circumstances that appearances are very much against him. There we have to take great care. So that judgment according to appearance is a very dangerous ground. That is exactly where they were. “His children are far from safety, and they are crushed in the gate, neither is there any to deliver them.” That was a very painful word for Job to hear. Job had been most careful about his children. Job watched over them with much prayer to God, and burnt offerings, as was the nature of things at that time — the way in which piety expressed itself. Eliphaz did not make it personal; nevertheless there are many ways of giving a hint. “Whose harvest the hungry eateth up, and taketh it even out of the thorns, and the robbers walloweth up their substance.” Something very like that had happened to Job. I do not say that he imputed it to him, but still that was the spirit that was at work.

“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. I would seek unto God.” Oh, yes, Eliphaz, all right — you are the man! It was a word meant for Job. He did not think that Job was seeking unto God. But he — he was very calm; and he could say, ‘Yes, if I were in your case I would seek unto God, and unto God would I commit my cause, instead of crying out so loudly and complaining so bitterly’ (as poor Job did); ‘unto God would I commit my cause’ — “which doeth great things and unsearchable; marvellous things without number: Who giveth rain upon the earth, and sendeth waters upon the fields; to set up on high those that be low; that those which mourn may be exalted to

safety.” But does not God sometimes try people? and the rains are not merely for fruitful seasons, but to destroy the fruit. The rains may be such as to greatly try the poor farmer and the husbandman; and it may all turn out quite the other way It is entirely special pleading that we find in these men. It is not the whole case at all; it is never the full case. It is not the judge; it is the mere advocate; and in this case Job was the poor defendant. They were all on the side of hounding out Job, and finding where the secret iniquity was that they believed was at the bottom of all his trial. They were all wrong. “He disappointeth the devices of the crafty, so that their hands cannot perform their enterprise. He taketh the wise in their own craftiness; and the counsel of the froward is carried headlong.” Not a thought about the bad people that prosper; he only looks up certain ones that were punished; and the idea is, Job must be one of them.

Well, we find that he does at last fall upon a real truth, quite different from all this random talk. “Behold, happy is the man whom God correcteth” (ver. 17). He never thought that that was the case with Job. “Happy is the man.” He knew that Job was very unhappy, and therefore he did not count him one of these at all. “Therefore despise not thou the chastening of the Almighty” — there he does venture to exhort — “For he maketh sore and bindeth up; he woundeth, and his hands make whole.” There certainly is a milder vein running through these reproaches of Eliphaz as compared with the others, as we shall see at a later date. “He shall deliver thee in six troubles; yea, in seven there shall be no evil to touch thee. In famine he shall redeem thee from death; and in war from the power of

the sword. Thou shalt be hid from the scourge of the tongue; neither shalt thou be afraid of destruction when it cometh” — and so on. The end would be that “That shalt know also that thy seed shall be great, and thine offspring as the grass of the earth. Thou shalt come to thy grave in a full age, like as a shock of corn cometh in in his season. Lo this, we have searched it, so it is; hear it, and know thou it for thy good.” And the remarkable thing is that that was the end; and little did Eliphaz think that it would be verified in Job’s case. It was more a homily in a vague way; and although he called Job to apply it, he had no idea that God would apply it, and that God would bring out Job more blest than ever.

Now for Job’s answer (Job 6). “Oh that my grief were thoroughly weighed” — there was just where they were wrong; they only looked at the surface — “and my calamity laid in the balances together.” No, they had no proper balances, they were all one-sided. “For now it would be heavier than the sand of the sea” — and so it was — “therefore my words are swallowed up.” They were all confused. He admits his language was not what it ought to be. He was so put to it by inward suffering and desperate pain that his words were quite confused, not quietly uttered, but simply swallowed up in the violence of his emotion. “For the arrows of the Almighty are within me.” You see he entirely gives way to it. “The poison whereof drinketh up my spirit; the terrors of God do set themselves in array against me.”

Now they had talked about the lions — Eliphaz had, at any rate. But Job brings a much more pertinent case into the matter. “Doth the wild ass bray when he hath grass?” If he has got his proper food does he bray as if he were suffering from great hunger? “Or loweth the ox

over his fodder?” No, he thankfully eats it. “Can that which is unsavoury be eaten without salt?” Here am I, and not even a morsel of food but what costs me pain, and I have nothing to make it agreeable; no salt with it; it is all poison as it were — poison that entered and drank up his spirit. “Or is there any taste in the white of an egg?” The best thing he could get was that which was altogether insipid and disagreeable. “The things that my soul refused to touch are my sorrowful meat; Oh that I might have my request; and that God would grant me the thing that I long for! Even that it would please God to destroy me.”

You see he had not the slightest fear of death. He was singularly above it; but he looked at death not so much as gain — he could not do that; he had not Christ to make it gain; but he looked to death as the cessation of his trouble, the end of his suffering. And so it would be. That, of course, was a very partial way, and by no means up to the mark that God was going to show him. But I mention it to show that it was not at all any fear of the unseen world; it was the trial that he could not solve it this present tangled life. “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 ordinary meaning of, “concealed” is not at all the idea here. “I have not violated” - I have not denied - “the words of the Holy One.” That is what they were doing; they were denying the words of the Holy One. They in their zeal, and in their superficial judgment, were not guided by the Holy One at all; they were acting according to their own thoughts; judging according to their own feelings, on the mere surface of poor Job’s intense affliction.

“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 stone, or is my flesh of brass?” — to be able to endure all this without any feeling. “Is not my help in me? and is wisdom driven quite from me? To him that is afflicted pity should be showed from his friend.” That they should be so lacking in pity — there was what galled him; there was what was inexplicable, next to the great riddle of how God allowed all this to come upon him — that there was not one word of true pity; not one word but what was very superficial, because of the bad judgment, the misjudgment that was underneath it. “My brethren have dealt deceitfully as a brook, and as the stream of brooks they pass away; which are blackish by reason of the ice, and wherein the snow is hid: what time they wax warm, they vanish: when it is hot, they are consumed out of their place.” They were of no use whatever to him. “The paths of their way are turned aside; they go to nothing, and perish.” He compares it with the desert; he was familiar with it, as they all were. It is a very different thing to pass through the desert in the winter, and to pass through the same desert in the summer — in the winter when people do not want so much the refreshment of water, and in the heat of summer when they feel the great need of even a drop of water to cool their tongue — then it is that the ‘wadies’ as they call them — those brooks that for a time cross the desert of despair — are completely sucked up by the sand or exhaled by the power of the son. That is what he compares this to. And therefore it is that the same company of Tema, or of Sheba, that passed through the desert might remember that there is where we should find water in the midst of all this trouble: ‘Ah! we hope we are nearing it now.’ Not a drop; not a drop! That is

like you. Time was when I could have got comfort from you, but now everything is changed. You have nothing now but an evil lurking suspicion that has no foundation at all. “The troops of Tema looked, the companies of Sheba waited for them. They were confounded because they had hoped; they came thither, and were ashamed.” There was not water to be seen. They had been promising themselves when nearing it, ‘That is where we were only six months ago, when there was plenty of water’ — and now six months after, not a drop! “For now ye are nothing; ye see my casting down, and are afraid.”

Yes, that was their state; they were shocked; they did not want to get near him even. They did not wish to have even the sense of the fetid breath of the poor sufferer, or to touch the skin for fear of contracting something bad themselves. They kept away from it; they were afraid. “Did I say, Bring unto me? or, Give a reward for me of your substance?” He says, ‘It is not that I have the least want for anything, and yet you are treating me as if I were a person to be wanting to draw upon you in my trouble. No, I ask nothing of you except that you should not misjudge me.’ “Did I say, Bring unto me? or, Give a reward for me of your substance? or, Deliver me from the enemy’s hand? or, Redeem me from the hand of the mighty? 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? Do you imagine to reprove words?”

That is what they were doing. He had broken out in these violent words, and they pitched upon them at once to say, ‘Ah, yes! there is old Job beginning to show himself. Now he is in this way, just think what the world would say if they heard or saw Job now!’ “Do ye imagine

to reprove words, and the speeches of one that is desperate, which are as wind? Yea, ye overwhelm the fatherless, and ye dig a pit for your friend. Now, therefore, be content; look upon me" — yes, he begs that they would look upon him — "for it is evident unto you if I lie." That is, 'if there is anything hidden under; that is what you suspect.' "Return, I pray you, let it not be iniquity" — he begs them to return to that, and to return to a sound judgment of the case, that it was their poor friend put to so tremendous a trial and could not see why it was come upon him. "Let it not be iniquity." It has nothing to do with that. He had to learn that his own righteousness, however real, could be no ground; he must have the righteousness of God to stand upon, though he hardly knew how it could be. That is what comes out later in the book. "Is there iniquity in my tongue? Cannot my taste discern perverse things?" That is what they were treating him to.

"Is there not an appointed time to man upon earth?" (Job 7). There he has another ground; his trial was so prolonged. It was not merely a tremendous trial, which is usually very brief in this world. If people have great agony, say in the foot or the head — well, very often they become insensible if it is the head; and if it is the foot no doubt it is very trying, but it passes; the paroxysm passes. 'But how is it that I from head to foot am nothing but a mass of sores, and inwardly suffering the deepest agony? Oh that God had taken it away; that God had terminated this terrible suffering.' "As a servant earnestly desireth the shadow" — of the evening, when he has done his work — "and as an hireling looketh for the reward of his work; so am I made to possess months of vanity, and wearisome nights are appointed to me."

They had each day their relaxation from labour; it may be hard labour, but still they had their night of ease and rest. ‘But I have nothing day or night, it is all the same terrible unremitting suffering.’ “When I lie down, I say, When shall I arise, and the night be gone? and I am full of tossings to and fro until the dawning of the day.”

Sometimes we have a little of that experience; but how little it is compared with Job’s; and how very quickly it gives place. But God was putting him into the furnace in order that he might come out purer than ever. “My flesh is clothed with worms.” Think of that; not merely with woollen or linen — “My flesh is clothed with worms and clods of dust; my skin is broken, and become loathsome. My days are swifter than a weaver’s shuttle, and are spent without hope.” That is, it was always something coming just like the rapid process with which a weaver passes his shuttle every moment. “Oh, remember that my life is wind; mine eye shall no more see good. The eye of him that hath seen me shall see me no more; thine eyes are upon me and I am not. As the cloud is consumed and vanisheth away” — that is what he compared himself to — “so he that goeth down to the grave shall come up no more” — that is what he wanted, that it should terminate. “He shall return no more to his house, neither shall his place know him any more. 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. Am I a sea, or a whale” — a sea monster — “that thou settest a watch over me? 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; so that my soul chooseth strangling, and death rather than my life.” It is not that he would

have done it, but that is what would have terminated his suffering. That is what the merely natural spirit would have done — terminated it violently. Oh, no; he had no thought of such a thing. He was under the hand of God, but he begs God's hand to close it. "I would not live alway; let me alone; for my days are vanity."

And he uses that very remarkable expression which we find in two other parts of the Old Testament: "What is man, that thou shouldest magnify him? and that thou shouldest set thine heart upon him?" It is very different here from what it is in the 8th Psalm, and it is sensibly different from what it is in Psalm 144. "What is man?" If you look at man without Christ there is nothing very wonderful to talk about; but when you look at Christ there is the most wonderful thing of all, both in the depth of His humiliation and the height of His exalted glory. Well, that is Psalm 8. But here it is man under the discipline of God; under the moral government of God. 'Oh,' he says, 'what is man, to be under such a tremendous government as this? If I were a sea I should not feel it; and if I were a big whale, well, I might perhaps endure more than I can now; but what is man?' — poor, sensitive man; poor man full of his nerves, and full of his feeling, of mind, too, embittered by his outward trial? 'Oh!' he said, 'terminate it I terminate it!"

Well, in the 144th Psalm there is another thing. Looking for the kingdom to be brought in by divine power, the Psalmist says, "What is man?" Man stands in the way. There the nations are, but what are they? Execute judgment upon them, put them down with a high hand. That is the way in which it is looked at. So that you see this — "man" in all the blessedness of Christ, then, "man" in all the sufferings of Job, and again, "man" in all

the worthlessness of the nation; thus are three different comparisons given us in these three places. “How long wilt thou not depart from me, nor let me alone till I swallow down my spittle?” — i.e., to get a moment to breath. “I have sinned” — or, “If I have sinned” I should think to be the real sense of the passage — “What shall I do unto thee,” “O thou” — not exactly “Preserver” but “Observer?” It is well to take notice of these errors where they are more particularly flagrant — “O thou Observer!” For he was perfectly conscious that God had His eye upon him all the time — perfectly conscious of that. Still he was not in the presence of God in the way that he afterwards entered it, when he knew himself, and when he knew God better, as he learnt through this.

This is what we have the privilege of learning in a very much more simple and blessed manner. “If I have sinned, what shall I do unto thee, O thou Observer of men? why hast thou set me as a mark against thee, so that I am a burden to myself? And why dost thou not pardon my transgression?” — he had confidence in God, but he could not understand what God somehow or another had against him, what he was not conscious of himself. ‘Oh,’ he said, ‘why not pardon it, if there be that of which I am not conscious’ — “and take away mine iniquity? for now I shall sleep in the dust; and thou shalt seek me in the morning, but I shall not be.”

Lecture 3 - Job. 8-10

The reasoning of Bildad is precisely the same principle as that of Eliphaz. It is all founded on God's moral government, i.e., the impossibility of causing God grief, and casting down to the ground a really righteous man, and the certainty of His bringing to naught every wicked man. It is all founded upon what is going on in the world now. There was no faith in it. There was conscience, conscience toward God; but conscience, however useful and highly important, as it is, for the soul, never does, nor can it ever, reveal God. It detects our bad state, and the more it is purged by divine grace through redemption the clearer is its judgment. But that was not the case then. Everything was more or less confused, and God was merely regarded as a righteous God. But God is the God of all grace. And many people confound God's grace with His goodness; but the goodness of God is quite a different thing from the grace of God. The goodness of God is that which flows out in every sort of kindness, and in patience with us and consideration of our weakness. But the grace of God means not merely His love, but His love rising above sin; His love triumphing over all our evil.

Now it is clear that that never was nor could be, till Christ came, and it was not even when Christ did come. It was in His death on the cross; it was there and then for the first time that all the love of God met all the evil of man. Both worked fully out, but had never worked fully out before. Man had never shown himself so wicked as round the cross of the Lord Jesus. And it, was universal; it was not merely the multitude, though it is a

terrible thing to see how fickle the multitude is. They are just the same to this day, and they will never be any other until the Lord change the face of all peoples. The same crowd that cried, “Hosanna to the Son of David!” and applauded Him to the skies, with one mouth cried, “Crucify him, crucify him!” within a few days. Well, and how was that? It was the power of Satan. It was their unbelief, because their applause was nothing. Applause is merely human feeling excited at the moment, and that feeling may give way to a totally opposite one, and very quickly. Why, even the children of God are not always to be trusted. The children of God are the most foolish people in the world in many respects. And the reason is because Satan hates them, and Satan entraps them, and they are apt to be deceived by appearances. Some never seem to take warning from the word of God; they are always ready for some new thing; and the consequence is, always tumbling into some mess or another.

Well, this has always been the case; it was the case in the experience of the apostle Paul. “I marvel that ye are so soon removed from him that called you into the grace of Christ, unto another gospel; which is not another” — it is no gospel at all. It was man but once born; it was poor wretched, fallen man that was the groundwork. That is the same thing with christians now. They are carried away by man, and they are all so anxious to get man to applaud them, and to sacrifice and compromise everything in order to get the assent and consent of people that want to be saved, that have no kind of judgment in things divine, for this never can be had unless we not only have Christ, but know what it is to be crucified to the world and the world unto us. That is, it must be a thorough-going work, and the children of God

shrink from that; consequently, they will read anything that merely keeps up their spirits, just like a boy at night whistling through a churchyard. Anything that will keep up their spirits — every little dram, every little sentiment, every little phrase — perhaps a very bad and poor phrase — but still there it is, and that keeps up their spirits. Well now, friends, that is the way to get removed from Him that called us; because it is entirely by growing in grace, and by dependence upon that grace, that we are kept from all these snares that more particularly surround the people of God. At the time of the cross the people of God were the Jews, and that was the reason why they were the worst of all.

And now in Christendom, in the world as it is now, who are the most guilty? Who are ripening now for the severest judgment of God? The world-church. I do not mean by that the Established Church; it will take in the Dissenters just as well. The Dissenters are further away in some respects than even the Anglicans. They are howling politicians, howling for their own will, and calling themselves, in the most extraordinary manner, “passive resisters.” Why, “passive resistance” is passive nonsense! You cannot be passive and resisting. If you are resisting you are not passive. It is the same kind of thing as people talking about the Roman Catholic Church; but if it is Roman it is not Catholic, and if it is Catholic it is not Roman, and the two things are just a marvellous piece of contradiction. But what I mean is this — there are different spheres. There are high spheres and low spheres; there are spheres of grandeur and there are spheres of wretchedness of every kind — dishonesty as well as all kinds of contention. And it is upon that that the awful judgment of God is coming.

Babylon is more loathsome to God than “the Beast.” The Beast is open self-will rebelling against God; but Babylon is that which is a harlot in God’s eyes, and pretends to be the spouse of Christ. And it is that pretension — that high pretension of being the holy bride of Christ — accompanied by the greatest unholiness and the greatest laxity of doctrine when pretending to be the orthodox, the holy Catholic, Apostolic, and I know not what else. Well, that is Babylon, but that is only high Babylon; there is low Babylon too; and all Babylon, no matter whether high or low — all will be the greatest object of God’s fury. For that is the expression of the term. It is His highest indignation. It is all this pretension to what the world has not. They are now giving up true religion as much as possible. What is the intent? To carry on religion with the world, that is Babylon. It is the confusion of two things that cannot be united, and there they are — the greatest and worst confusion that is possible to be.

The Babylon of Christendom is a great deal worse than the Babylon of the Chaldees. What privileges had they? Why, they were the heathen; but there you have only the human mind; in Christendom you have got the New Testament. There they pretend to have the Holy Ghost. There they can give the Holy Ghost to a baby! and they can give the Holy Ghost to a priest! Or they can do anything; bring fire — not from heaven, but from hell, to burn the martyrs of God. They can do anything that is wicked and is at the same time a pretence against God. Well, I say, because of them you must not be surprised that any who have got the truth in a measure are for that very reason the great object of Satan’s desire to draw them into what will undermine and destroy.

Therefore we need to be guided; we need the guidance of God; we need not to be taken in by appearances and fair promises and good desires that will never keep the same for one day or hour. But on the contrary, the better you desire, if you are not subject to God the more easily you will be drawn into that which will oppose God.

No doubt, nobody means that no christian could be like the Galatians — you do not mean that. They thought they were in the better state. They thought they were getting on, that they were not so narrow minded as some people, that they were not so very bigoted as Paul. Paul was too much in one line; they were the large people; they were the liberal people. And so it was that they got into this terrible snare of the devil. The same thing repeats itself in every age. And I believe that there are persons on the face of the earth that are as much the object of Satan's wiles as the Galatians. But that is no reason to be discouraged; not to be discouraged is the necessary consequence of having the truth — a necessary consequence that Satan dislikes and dreads, and will leave no stone unturned to prevent.

Why was it that Job came to this terrible plight in the Book we are reading? Because God said "There is nobody like him on the earth — a perfect man, a man thoroughly, all round — of integrity." Yes, but there was one thing that neither Job nor his friends understood, and that was grace; and it could not be understood. He did know that God was a faithful God, and his piety led him to feel, and to stand to it, that all the troubles he came into were from God. And so they were, because the devil even had disappeared. It was not merely the devil that endeavoured to cast him down. That he did most fully in both the first and second chapters. But at

the end of the second chapter he was defeated and baffled, and went off, and never re-appeared.

It is the greatest mistake to suppose it is only the devil. In the millennium there will be sin and death when the devil is bound. In point of fact, the occasion of Job's breaking out so violently was his three dear friends; and they were pious men, too. But what about that, unless you are guided of God? And that is the very thing that this Book is so instructive in — that we cannot trust to be led even by a pious man. With the best of intentions we require God's guidance and to be kept to it. And it was these three pious men by their conduct, so far from God's thoughts, so thoroughly judging by appearances, it was that that made them think that there must be something very bad in Job, after all his appearance, after all his life that seemed so fair, and after everybody thinking that there was nobody like Job. Certainly, if God said there was nobody like him, you may depend upon it that all pious people thought the same. And it was true, but still there was the great lack; because Job till he got Christ as an object, made an object of his own piety, and thought a great deal of himself.

It is one of the greatest mistakes that a believer can make — to think a great deal of himself. I think I drew attention to a beautiful word of the apostle Paul that teaches the very contrary — "esteeming others better than ourselves"; and that means any christian. And yet the christians may be full of faults in this way or that way. But still, who is the person whose faults I know better than anybody's? My own. And therefore I can honestly and loyally count a man better than myself. I do not know his faults to be anything like the faults I know of myself. Of course, others have the very same and are

called to the very same feeling, and they may have more reason, too; that is another question altogether. But we have to do with the fact that we know what we are, and we ought to know and it is a great thing to grow in knowing, that we are not only nothing for guidance, but we are worse than nothing in the sight of God. Our nature is declared to be the flesh in enmity against God. And that is what we know working out, Other people may not see it; other people may not have any reason to see it. But that is what every christian should know who is not like Job, admiring himself because he is not like other people. That is, he is like the Pharisee. “God, I thank thee I am not as other men.”

Yes, that is a very bad state; nothing could be worse — nothing worse in a believer. And these dear saints at that day were in imminent danger, every one of them, not even excepting Job. Job had a better knowledge of God, comparatively, than they; and Job stuck to it with amazing tenacity, first that all the trouble that came upon him was from God; that it was God who allowed it all to come upon him. He could have hindered every bit of it — and that he could not understand. Why, why, why? He had a thoroughly good conscience as far as that was concerned; he had no sin upon him at all, no particular defect of any sort. It was a question of self and not of sin; it was a question of never having judged himself in the presence of God fully.

I should like to know how many here in this room have judged themselves in that way now? I think they had better search and see. That is surely a very great lesson to learn, and it is a lesson that nobody likes to learn. It is always extremely painful, and it is very humbling to our comfortable thoughts of ourselves. Because we are

occupied perhaps with the gospel, and we see that the gospel is completely clear. That does not touch self. It ought to lead to it; but it may not at all. And consequently there may be people most zealous in the gospel that are peculiarly ignorant of themselves — peculiarly so. They are generally occupied with other people, and have not much time for sober reflection and self-judgment; and therefore, active work in the Lord may become a snare unless in subjection to Christ. Then we learn in the power of God's Spirit to judge everything of flesh in ourselves. That is where they were all wrong, and it is bringing out that clearly — that it is not merely a question of the righteous government of God; but it was then the secret of grace. Now the grace is published; now it is proclaimed; now it is preached; now it is manifested; and therefore, now it is a far more serious thing. And there was what these Galatians overlooked entirely. They had never learnt that yet; they were converted through the apostle; they were brought into the full joy of as good a gospel as ever was preached in this world — a great deal better than any of us preach it now. They were brought into that by the preaching of that blessed man — and yet they had not profited, to judge themselves. And it is this that we all need most deeply, in order that we may be kept from the snares that surround us, and which may spring upon us at any moment, even from friends just as dear as the three friends of Job. They were the occasion of this downfall, and that in a way that only God could have accomplished.

Well now, Bildad follows the line of Eliphaz, and says: "How long wilt thou speak these things?" He could not in the least understand it. "And how long shall the words

of thy mouth be like a strong wind?" Because Job could not understand why, as he was quite sure of the perfection of God, quite sure of the faithfulness of God, quite sure that God loved him, quite sure that he loved God; 'How has all this come upon me; what is the key to all this terrible suffering that I am sure God has sent?' He would not lay it upon circumstances.

But there were, to add to the terrible agony that he passed through outwardly, inward agonies. It really was one billow after another overcoming this poor man in such a sea of trouble as never came upon any man since the world began. How was all that? He was stung by the insinuation of his friends (he held to it firmly that it was all false) that he was not a true man, and that he did not love God. He was not conscious of a single sin; nevertheless, he owned it was God. That was what made the riddle, and no wonder at all. It was impossible that it should not have been a riddle, in those days, except by special teaching of God. There was one that appeared later, and Elihu did in some measure understand; but it was the Lord who put an end to all the uncertainty.

Now that Christ has come, there is no ground for it; only, beloved friends, we may treat the gospel now very much as is done in Christendom, and regard it as pretty much the same thing as there has always been, only with a little more light — a sort of new edition of Judaism — improved, that is all. Whereas it is entirely new — it is an absolutely new creation, a new light altogether. It is not merely the dim torch, as it were, on the earth. it is the light of heaven revealed in our Lord Jesus They had none of that — none whatever. There was a looking for Him, but it was entirely in an earthly way. They looked to Him as the Messiah; they looked for

Him as one who would meet their difficulties; but it was very, very shallow — anything that any one of them knew about it. We must not confound prophetic anticipations with the experience of the saints. The prophets did not always understand their own prophecy. They had to search and learn what the meaning was, just as you have to do now; but if you have all the prophecies, they do not give you what the gospel does.

The gospel is the revelation of God's righteousness. They were all occupied with man's righteousness produced by divine goodness, by faith, by looking for the Messiah; but they had no idea of the total judgment of man, and that this is an entirely new thing from God, communicated to the soul. This is what Christendom has never endured and never possessed. It has Christianity, but a very small amount of Christianity is quite enough for Christendom. Well, here then this man breaks out into this rebuke of Job for his extreme feeling. How could a man do anything but feel? And what were they about that they did not deeply feel for him? There they were, quite comfortable; and there they were, judging there must be something very bad; and I need not tell you that that deeply wounded the poor injured man. It was pouring vitriol into his wounds; it was not binding them with wine and oil, cleansing the wound, but, on the contrary, deepening and poisoning it.

And these were his three friends! What a lesson! Well, Bildad goes further, however. He says, "If thy children have sinned against him and he have cast them away for their transgression" — there they thought they had him. How could God do such a thing as to kill all his children unless there was something very bad in them? It was all the same principle, and the same false principle. And

what shows the falsity of the principle is the universal test. Bring Christ in. Was it any want of God's delight in Christ that allowed Christ to be the greatest sufferer, far beyond Job? It was therefore altogether a false estimate, and a false principle underneath the estimate, to imagine that there must be evil in the person that came to this depth of suffering.

"If thy children have sinned against him, and he have cast them away for their transgression" — they never could rise above that — "If thou wouldest seek unto God betimes, and make thy supplication to the Almighty; if thou wert pure and upright" — ah! there they were at it again! It was not merely the children then that had transgression! "If thou wert pure and upright" — why, Job was much more so than they — "If thou wert pure and upright; surely now he would awake for thee." Certainly not; the Lord was going to have the trial brought to its full completion; and He allowed all these discussions in order to bring out everything that was in their hearts, and then came He in with His own word completely casting down these principles which governed the three friends, and Job not able properly to answer them.

He could demolish their arguments, but that is a very' different thing. A clever man could, of course, easily overthrow a foolish reasoning; but that is a very different thing from getting in the truth. The truth requires God and His word and His Spirit; and we never can have these in a difficulty except by entire dependence upon God. And if we have got any self-will at work. which was very much the case with Job as well as with his three friends — self-will is a most darkening thing — you never can have the certainty of the will of

God where self-will is not steadily seen and judged as altogether beneath you. “Though thy beginning was small, yet thy latter end should greatly increase.”

Then he appeals to another thing. Eliphaz had spoken of his own personal experience. Bildad differs in the manner in which he defends their theme by bringing in the traditions of other people. Those are the two ways in which men are apt to slip away from the truth — confidence in self; confidence in other people no better than oneself; confidence in anyone but God. So he says,” Enquire, I pray thee, of the former age” — for people think that a little further back is where we should go. Why, beloved friends, we want to go back to the beginning; we want to go back to God’s beginning. People talk about the early fathers; well, that is a great deal too late; why do not they talk about the apostles? Because they are as far from them as they can possibly be! There is not the slightest resemblance — except the mere name of things — a totally different reality. And so it was here. Had they gone back to the garden of Eden? Ah, that is not a former age; that was the beginning where God manifested Himself.

They were all arguing on the ground of righteousness. Not one of them had taken in, up to this and for long after, any thought of grace. And Job only arrived at it at last by the intervention of God. There he was dust and ashes. There he took the place of nothingness and worse than nothingness; and then it was he was blessed; then it was that he was vindicated by God, and not till then. So Bildad goes on with this, “Shall not they teach thee, and tell thee, and utter words out of their heart?” But we want the words out of God’s heart; it is not any but His heart that can do. “Can the rush grow up without

mire? Can the flag grow without water?" Well, that is just what their condition was — mire and water, no substance at all, but just mire and water; and their thoughts were no better than the flag that grew out of the water, or the reed that grew out of the mire. And he talks about the hypocrite being no better than a spider's web. That is just exactly what they were, though they were not hypocrites; but still they were all wrong in their reasonings, and wrong reason is never better than a spider's web.

And so he describes in a very lively and wonderful manner the man that had known the hypocrite, and all this was a sly hit at Job. There is where they were so very wrong. "He shall lean upon his house, but it shall not stand; he shall hold it fast, but it shall not endure. He is green before the sun, and his branch shooteth forth in his garden. His roots are wrapped about the heap" — to get a little strength from the heap — "and seeth the place of stones." That is what the reed does in order to get tenacity. "If he destroys him from his place, than it shall deny him, saying, I have not seen thee". That is the case with man upon the earth; he passes away, and his memory is so forgotten that the place itself even says it never saw him, or it was all completely forgotten. This he applies to the hypocrite. "Behold, God will not cast away a perfect man." But God was trying and troubling the perfect at that very moment; they never could take this into their minds; they did not understand it nor believe it in the slightest degree, and hence their reasons were all false, and more than that, thoroughly unkind; and it is a sad thing to be unkind to what is good and true, as also it is a sad thing to be very kind to what is not good and what is not true. This is

what they were about; that is where they got through want of the guidance of God, and of the truth.

Job 9. Now we come to a very grand chapter, but still we find the lack of Christ. Job raises the question. “I know it is so of a truth.” He did not deny what they were saying, about the hypocrite, in the least; he agreed with them fully. Only he said, as it were, ‘You are all mistaken in thinking I am a hypocrite.’ “I know it is so of a truth; but how should man be just with God?” There was the great difficulty for him. He fully believed in God’s faithfulness to himself, and His faithfulness to His children generally; but still where was the ground? Well there was no ground yet at all. It was all hope. It was a hope of the Christ that was coming, without their knowing how Christ would answer to that hope. They only knew it would be all right, but how, they had no idea. That Christ should become the righteousness of the believer — oh, what a wonderful thing that is! Well, the prophet Jeremiah speaks of Jehovah’s righteousness; but I do not believe the prophet Jeremiah understood anything about it at all. How could he? Nobody could. Look at the apostles themselves. They had all the Old Testament to help them, and all the teaching of the Lord Jesus during the time of His ministry, yet they were entirely ignorant of it. They had not a notion of it until the cross began to enlighten them, and particularly the resurrection, and fully, the Holy Ghost — the Holy Ghost sent down from heaven. He brought in the truth that was in Christ, but their eyes were holden that they could not take it in — could not see.

So Job describes in a very grand manner what God is in His ways — His uncontrollable power and authority. He knew man was weak and faulty. Nevertheless, Job did

not doubt that God would see him through all his difficulties, but on what ground of righteousness he could not conceive. If man was a poor sinful man, and nevertheless God showed him saving mercy, how was man to be just? You cannot put justice and sins together until you have got Christ, who died for the sins and rose again for the believer's justification. There the sins are completely blotted out. How could Job know anything about that. Nobody knew it; no man on earth. Their idea of the Messiah was more of a great king that would be full of goodness and mercy to his people upon the earth. But that He should be made unto us righteousness as well as wisdom and sanctification and redemption I oh, dear no! they did not in the least understand; how could they? I daresay that the people in Christendom think it was all known pretty much as they knew it now. There was no power, no joy, no peace, but always entreating that God would show them mercy as poor, miserable sinners; there was no idea of salvation. Well, here Job describes God's power in a wonderful way. "Which shaketh the earth out of her place, and the pillars thereof tremble; which commandeth the sun, and it riseth not, and sealeth up the stars; which alone spreadeth out the heavens, and treadeth upon the waves of the sea." Very grand; wonderfully so; and very true. "Which maketh Arcturus" — that is in the constellation of Arctophylax or Bootes (the Herdsman), near the seven stars which people call "Charles' Wain." The Arabs call the latter, however, a very different thing, viz., "The Greater Bear." They made the four stars to be the body, and the three stars were the tail. However, this is Arcturus; and Orion and the Pleiades go by the same names still. These are all in the northern sphere; but the people of those days had penetrated enough to cross the

line, and they were aware that there was a southern world. They did not know much about it; they knew very little. Of course they did not know America, except very obscurely. There were hints from time to time that there was something in the west; but in the south they had no idea of Australia or New Zealand.

He goes on, “which doeth great things, past finding out; yea, and wonders without number. Lo, he goeth by me, and I see him not; he passeth on also, but I perceive him not. Behold, he taketh away, who can hinder him? who will say unto him, What doest thou?” (verses 6-12). That is exactly where Job was. He was quite sure that it was of God, and that is the very thing that made the difficulty. Because his conscience was pure toward God, and he knew the goodness of God, and yet how was this? He could not understand it, neither did they in the slightest degree. “If God will not withdraw His anger, the proud helpers do stoop under Him. How much less shall I answer Him?” There he is beginning to feel his weakness. He was not a proud man; but as all men are, till they learn in the way that I have described, he had a very good opinion of himself. That must all come down. If a man is to be blessed, or a woman, the blessing will not come by a good opinion of oneself; that is wrong, and the greatest hindrance to the blessing of God and the enjoyment of His grace. “Though I were righteous, yet would I not answer.” There, you see, was thorough piety. “But I would make supplication to my judge. If I called, and he had answered me, yet would I not believe that he had hearkened unto my voice.”

Well, that was great ignorance of God; because God does answer, and God does hear; and God delights in His children now; now that they are cleared, now that they

know Him, He delights in perfect intimacy and love with Himself. “For he breaketh me with a tempest” — and that was true — “and multiplieth my wounds without cause.” Ah! without cause; that is a little too much to say. He had His own wise cause; He had His own blessed end. He meant that Job should be a far happier man and brighter in his state than he had ever been before; and till Christ came it could be only by making him a bag of broken bones — to learn that all the goodness was in God and all the badness was in himself. “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. 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.” That is what they thought was a terrible blasphemy, but that is what he thinks.

We understand it. The greatest calamity might come, and God send it, and a number of people perfectly innocent might perish just as much as the wicked people — say the sack of a city, or a pestilence sent by God in His moral government. Well, I say, these things are there undoubtedly, and Job stuck to that. All their talk did not at all drive him from the plain fact which they shirked and shut their eyes to. “The earth,” he says, “is given into the hand of the wicked.” And is not that true? Is not Satan the god, and the prince, of this world? That is wicked enough. And further, “He covereth the faces of the judges thereof,” i.e., he allows the judges to pronounce altogether wrongly and unjustly. That is, somehow or other their faces are veiled from the light, and they judge according to appearance. It is very

certain that that is not a way to judge soundly. “If not, where, and who is he?” Who is he that does that? These things happen; innocent people suffer; guilty people escape; all these things are coming every day — are coming in England. It is not merely in Turkey, or Russia, or Tartary, or China; no, it is in England, in London; and nobody can hinder it. Things are out of course, and will be till the Lord takes the reins.

“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. If I be 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.” That is, God will show him to be defective after all. That is true. If you are resting upon yourself, you are resting upon a ground that is not approved before God. If you are resting upon Christ, you have got the only solid ground that never can be taken from you. So he closes. “For he is not a man, as I am, that I should answer him, and we should come together in judgment. Neither is there any daysmen betwixt us.” That is what Christ became; Christ became the mediator between God and men; and not merely a mediator, but a mediator who is equally divine with the God before whom He acts as mediator for us. If there had not been the hand of God in the cross, there could have been no divine redemption. It was God that forsook His Son; it was God that turned away His face from Him; and, therefore, now what is brought in is the righteousness of God. And there is nothing against that. But it is a justifying righteousness; it is not a condemning

righteousness. The same God that condemned under the law saved under grace, because of Christ.

Well, then, we come to a great lament in the tenth chapter, and I may be very brief with that; for we shall have a great deal of this lament throughout the Book. We have had it already, so there is no need particularly to dwell upon it. My object is not to go into every word, but to give a sufficiently general understanding of the Book of Job. “My soul is weary of my life; I will leave my complaint upon myself.” He now despaired of getting any sympathy from them. “I will speak in the bitterness of my soul.” ‘Here I am alone with all my sorrows; here are three dear friends who have not one particle of sympathy with me! no kind of feeling nor compassion for all that I am suffering. They are quite comfortable that they have none of it, and they are quite astonished that I should have any of it; and they think therefore I must be very wicked. It is all false.’ “I will say unto God, Do not condemn me; show me wherefore thou contendest with me.” That God did; he was answered. “Is it good unto thee that thou shouldst oppress, that thou shouldest despise the work of thine hands, and shine upon the counsel of the wicked? 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?” That is, he compares himself to a sort of butterfly broken on the wheel. There is this terrible wheel for malefactors, and he, a mere butterfly, is all broken down — God, in all His uncontrollable power dealing with such a poor, weak man as he; every part of his body throbbing with pain, and full of nerves all on the strain of agony from head to foot, “Thou enquirest after mine iniquity, and searchest after my sin.”

Job had a perfectly good conscience and therefore he says, ‘Where is it; I want to learn where it is and why it is.’ “Thou knowest that I am not wicked.” That he would say to God; and it was perfectly true. It was not that; it was his own satisfaction in that poor reflection of righteousness which the best of men can have here below in himself, but which is no ground at all to stand on before God. “Thine hands have made me, and fashioned me together round about; yet thou dost destroy me” — after all the love thou hast shown me. “Remember, I beseech thee, that thou hast made me as the clay.” He had not made him as an angel; he had not made him as one that was above this kind of suffering. “Hast thou not poured me out as milk, and curdled me like cheese? Thou hast clothed me with skin and flesh, and hast fenced me with bones and sinews. Thou hast granted me life and favour, and thy visitation hath preserved my spirit. And these things hast thou hid in thine heart.” ‘You had that in your heart before I was born. You meant me to come into this, and I do not know why.’

“I know that this is with thee. If I sin, then thou markest me, and thou wilt not acquit me from mine iniquity.” He asked to be forgiven if there was anything unknown. “If I be wicked, woe unto me; and if I be righteous, yet will I not lift up my head.” No, he is thoroughly humble now; at any rate, he was on the way to it. “I am full of confusion; therefore see thou mine affliction, for it increaseth.” And he uses very ungodly language now. “Thou huntest me as a fierce lion; and again thou showest thyself marvellous upon me. Thou renewest thy witnesses against me, and increaseth thine indignation upon me; changes and war are against me. 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! I should have been as though I had not been; I should have been carried from the womb to the grave. Are not my days few? Cease then and let me alone, that I may take comfort a little before I go whence I shall not return, even to the land of darkness, and the shadow of death." You see how little they entered into the bright future. "A land of darkness, as darkness itself and of the shadow of death, without any order and where the light is as darkness."

Lecture 4 - Job 11-14

We must carefully remember that, although the Book of Job is inspired, it would be a great mistake to concede that the speeches are inspired. Certainly Satan's words were not inspired, and they are recorded there; and it is part of the profit of the Book that we have the mistakes of the speakers. Every one of the three friends was very much mistaken in what he said, and Job himself also. It is only when we come to Elihu that we get the mind of God as far as a man is inspired, and then we have Jehovah's own word clearing up all the difficulty.

This is very important, because there is a kind of hazy idea that seeing they are found in the Bible the speeches of different people are also inspired. The Book is inspired to begin with; but we have to judge of the utterances, say of king Saul, or even of David, whether what they said was so or not, for it is not that everything which they said in their daily life was inspired. It might be more or less true; it might be sometimes really and absolutely true; but that is all a question of searching and comparing scripture with scripture. Then it comes direct from God or from a prophet, or from an apostle — the inspired writing — all that is absolutely the word of God. But not so where we have a historic scene — whether it is in Samuel, Kings or Chronicles, or whether it is in the Book of Job, where we have actual conversations given us by the Spirit of God — it would be quite a mistake to imagine that, because God gives us the speeches, therefore the speeches represent His mind.

It is perfectly plain from the solution at the end of the Book that they did not represent His mind. Now take this man Zophar — a great deal that he says is very true, but it does not apply to the purpose. It was all misused. It was based upon the assumption that whatever God allows now is really the judgment of God. But that is not the case. The devil now is the ruler; he is the one that actuates men. The spirit of evil works in the sons of disobedience, and everything is now out of course. Therefore to reason from things as they are now is to be guilty of a very great mistake. In short, it is to put what happens now into the place which the judgment of the Lord will have by and by before the throne. Then there will be the mind of God pronounced upon all our words and all our ways; but the present time is a state of confusion, and men are not at all as they ought to be, and even. God's children are very far from being as they will be. Everything is now imperfect and short of the mind of God. And still more, all the things that take place on earth are a mass of confusion, and judgment has not yet returned to righteousness. Judgment will never return to righteousness till the Lord sits upon His throne. Now, there is judgment in the hands of people who are themselves as bad criminals very often as the men whom they transport or hang. They might be thoroughly wicked men, and enemies of God in the most frightful manner; still, bad as they may be personally, they are very often honest in carrying out the law of the land fairly.

We all know that there may be sad mistakes in point of judgment; but the day is coming when judgment will return to righteousness. They have not got righteousness to return to — they are simply

unrighteous men; and it is remarkable that the apostle Paul brands the judges of the law in his day as being unjust (1 Cor. 6:1). Yet for all that God employed them. There were magistrates; there were judges; and God called them unjust when it was a question of His own people who had a far higher character of righteousness as their standard. They knew Christ; and all these things that these Corinthians were going to law about ought to have been settled among themselves — in the presence of them all. They were therefore exceedingly wrong in going on like the world. The world must go to the law-court. What could they do? They could not settle things themselves. They have not got the authority the court has. They go there, and on the whole they get their questions fairly well settled. But the children of God have quite another tribunal; and the apostle says it is so easy to settle these matters of an outward kind that the very least in the church might be asked to do it. He did not, of course, mean that the least in the church are the proper people to settle it, but it is a stigma upon their going before the world; and, of course, the most proper in the assembly are the people that ought to look into these things; those that have most experience and weight. It is merely the apostle putting shame upon the worldly spirit of the age. Here we are in a world where we are all apt to make mistakes; through ignorance sometimes, and very often through will of one kind or another that blinds us; but the mercy of God watches over all.

So here we find Zophar taking it all into his own hands. Why, if he had been a divine person, he could not have spoken more authoritatively. It was perfectly plain to him that Job was a bad man, and that he was a very vain

man who liked to hear himself talk, and that he had no regard for other people, for there he was abusing them. In short, it is a very bad speech this of Zophar, most disrespectful to Job, and proud and haughty on his own part; and the more so as he was the youngest of the three, and consequently the one least capable. “Should not the multitude of words” — that is all he would allow on Job’s part — “be answered, and should a man full of talk be justified? Should thy lies — “think how far he went — “Should thy lies make men hold their peace? and when thou mockest” — that was all he considered it — “shall no man make thee ashamed? For thou hast said, My doctrine is pure, and I am clean in thine eyes.” Now Job had never said either. He had never said that his doctrine was pure. What he said was, that he held to God and to His ways. And what he said about his conduct was that he was not a hypocrite. He acknowledged that he might have sinned in some way unknown to himself that accounted for all this terrible storm of affliction that bore his soul down to the dust. And that was his difficulty; he did not know quite. He believed that he had been walking with a good conscience before God; and they were not able to say anything — they could bring nothing against him. All said alike, and judged him in a most severe and unmerciful manner. So he asked that God would speak. Well, God did speak; and when God spoke it was not to the honour of Zophar, nor of Bildad, nor of Eliphaz even — here very much more quiet and calm of spirit than Zophar. But for all that it was owing to the intercession of Job that the anger of the Lord did not fall upon those three men. It might have been their death had it not been for the intercession of Job.

Zophar says some things that are very excellent — properly applied. He says, “Canst thou by searching find out God?” Well, nobody can; God must reveal Himself. “Canst thou find out the Almighty unto perfection?” Only if God speaks. “The measure thereof is longer than the earth” — certainly, and that was a very insufficient measure — the earth — “and broader than the sea.” He might have taken in all the universe. “If he cut off, and shut up, or gather together, then who can hinder him?” There is no doubt about His power, no limit to it. “For he knoweth vain men: he seeth wickedness also.” All these are insinuations against Job. “Will he not then consider it? For vain man would be wise, though man be born like a wild ass’s colt.” Well, no doubt. That is man’s condition now through the fall, that sometimes his acts can only be compared to those of a beast — uncontrollable, like a wild ass — or even to those of a savage beast, that consumes and destroys before it, like a lion or a bear. Man is capable of doing all these things. “If thou prepare thine heart, and stretch out thine hands towards him.” Now there, was excellent advice. That was just what Job did require — to wait upon God till God gave him the answer, as to how it was that all this had come upon him. But Zophar’s notion was all wrong.

“If iniquity be in thine hand” — that was not what it was; it was not a question of iniquity, but of God dealing with Job’s satisfaction with himself. Job was a truly pious, God-fearing man; but he had a high idea of his own character. That is what no soul ought ever to allow. It is altogether wrong for a person to rest in himself, no matter how unblemished he may be, no matter how he may truly wait upon God day by day. There is no rest in any creature, least of all in ourselves. It was One that

was coming. And now there is One that is come, so that we have the understanding of “Him that is true.” But in Job’s day he evidently did not understand all this. “For then shalt thou lift up thy face without spot; yea, thou shalt be steadfast, and shalt not fear,” and so Zophar pursues down to the end of the chapter in very proper language. But his thought was all wrong, because he supposed there was some great wickedness unseen and unknown. Why then did he suppose it, if it was not seen and known?

We have the most remarkable instance of the opposite of this in the New Testament. One of the twelve was a dishonest man, and was about to betray the Lord Jesus. The Lord, who knew it perfectly, never brought it out in such a way as to act upon the consciences of the eleven. He allowed it to go on to the very last, and it was only when the dishonest one had passed out of their hands, and was himself on the way to death — and death by his own hands, as well as the death of the Lord by the hands of the Jews and Gentiles — that then the Lord no longer allowed it. If the Lord had meant them to judge Judas He would have made it manifest before. But He meant on the contrary that if he had made it manifest before, Scripture would not have been fulfilled. Scripture had declared that that man was the man to betray the Lord, and therefore it must go on to the end — to the betrayal. The Lord would not therefore open out the wickedness of Judas until it was before all the world.

Job answers in the next chapters (12-14) and no doubt he repays them too much in their own coin. “And Job answered and said, No doubt but ye are the people, and wisdom shall die with you.” Well they deserved that rebuke. “But I have understanding as well as you.” Now

there he was far more considerate than they; because he did not take the place of being so superior. “I have understanding as well as you” — “I am not inferior” — he does not say, “I am superior” — “I am not inferior to you.” “Yea, who knoweth not such things as these?” They were only talking platitudes, moral platitudes, that every person of the slightest acquaintance with God already knew. They were not giving any light upon this very difficult question, how it was that a pious God-fearing man fell under such tremendous sorrow and affliction. They did not contribute one atom to that question. They merely let out all their bad thoughts and feelings, and consequently they were really heaping up wrath, if it had been the day of wrath; but it was the day of mercy, and God humbled them, by their being indebted to Job for His not taking them away by a stroke that would have been perfectly just. “I am as one mocked of his neighbour” — they talked about his mocking — “who calleth upon God, and he answereth him; the just upright man is laughed to scorn. He that is ready to slip with his feet is as a lamp despised in the thought of him that is at ease.”

Now that phrase exactly gave the position; they were all at ease, these three men; there was nothing the matter with them; they had not, as Job, been taken up by God to allow the devil to do all the evil he could, and finally to allow that pious men should be the persons that would provoke them as they provoked Job. “He that is ready to slip with his feet” — that is what Job felt he was — “is as a lamp despised in the thought of him that is at ease” — because if he gives way — the lamp requires to be held steadily — if a man is slipping with his feet, what is the good of a lamp? It waves and waves down into the mud.

But they were all at ease sitting in judgment upon him. “The tabernacles of robbers prosper, and they that provoke God are secure; into whose hand God bringeth abundantly.” Nothing could more completely upset all their arguments.

There had been that great robber Nimrod — that man who first began to hunt beasts, and then to subdue men to his own purpose without God giving him authority. And yet God allowed it. Nimrod built great cities and became a great man. “The tabernacles,” therefore, as Job says, “of robbers prosper, and they that provoke God are secure; into whose hand God bringeth abundantly.” That is the present state of the earth, and any state of the earth since man fell is no adequate testimony of what God thinks of people. It is not bringing out His judgment of men yet. There may bean occasional dealing of God in a particular case, as an exception to His ordinary way of leaving things apparently to their own course. But that is just the reason why there is to be a judgment — because things have not been judged according to God, but they will be.

“But ask now the beasts” — there is a very triumphant thing. “Why,” he says, “the very beasts know more than you, and prove more than all your speeches! 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” — who have got practically no voice, and do not know how to talk — “shall declare unto thee.” That is, the whole creation — the lower creation of God upon the earth — is a proof that things are not yet according to God. Do they not prey upon one another; do not the great swallow up the small; and is not man the great executor

of death upon beasts and birds and fishes, and everything, for his own gratification? I do not mean merely for food, but to please himself at all costs. In short, it is not merely what the Lord allows, but man makes it for his lusts, for his luxury, for everything except God. “Who knoweth not in all these that the hand of Jehovah hath wrought this?” He cannot deny that the Lord has left it in this way. “In whose hand is the soul of every living thing, and the breath of all mankind” — and yet He allows them to break forth in this lawless way. “Doth not the ear try words?” — do you think I cannot hear? — “and the mouth taste his meat?” — that I cannot discern my palate? “With the ancient is wisdom.” There again he shows how little he was for condemning where there was wisdom. He allows that with the ancient there is wisdom — “and in length of days understanding” — because there is experience that nothing else can give.

“With him is wisdom,” he says. He turns to God; for, after all, it is only in a little measure a man profits. “With him is wisdom and strength” — whereas as the ancient gets wiser he becomes weaker — “he hath counsel and understanding.” “Behold, he breaketh down, and it cannot be built again; he shutteth up a man, and there can be no opening. Behold, he witholdeth the waters, and they dry up” — and what a wretched state the world is in when there is no water. But then in another way it comes, and He gives them too much water; “also he sendeth them out, and they overturn the earth.” The waters carry everything before them. “With him is strength and wisdom: the deceived and the deceiver are his.” That is the present state. “He leadeth counsellors away spoiled, and maketh the judges

fools.” Undoubtedly those counsellors and these judges were persons eminent for their knowledge, and, were supposed to be, for their wisdom. But there is always a limit in this world, and there is often a disappointment where you most rest.

“He looseth the bond of kings, and girdeth their loins with a girdle. He leadeth princes away spoiled, and overthroweth the mighty. He removeth away the speech of the trusty, and taketh away the understanding of the aged. He poureth contempt upon princes, and weakeneth the strength of the mighty. He discovereth deep things out of darkness, and bringeth out to light the shadow of death. He increaseth the nations, and destroyeth them; he enlargeth the nations, and straiteneth them again.” There are all kinds of change. There is nothing therefore that shows the settled judgment of God. Everything among men is in a flux — a constant flow and change; and therefore nothing could be more foolish than the groundwork of the three friends in their attack on Job. “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. They grope in the dark without light, and he maketh them to stagger like a drunken man.” And that is the way where people trust in men.

But now he says (Job 13), “Lo, mine eye hath seen all this” — “you have been boasting of what the ancients had all thought” — “mine ear hath heard and understood it. What ye know, the same do I know also; I am not inferior to you. Surely I would speak to the Almighty, and I desire to reason with God.” That is just what he was doing. But how? He did not know. There was not the New Testament yet. There was not One to stand

between God and man, like Christ. So he did not know how to get at Him. If he could only find Him; if he could only be before Him! He knew very well what he would find there — a faithful God. But somehow or other there were difficulties and riddles between God and his soul that he could not understand. He says, “But ye are forgers of lies.” You see all their arguments were founded upon man and upon the world. Everything that a believer stands upon is what is in God, and what God gives and reveals. And there we find it, in all its perfection, in Christ. But they were all resting upon man’s thoughts and man’s experience, and the like. And further he says, “Ye are all physicians of no value.” You have come to heal me; you have heard of my terrible state; you came to heal and cure me in my dreadful sickness and suffering, and what have you done? Why, you have poured poison upon my wounds; you have poured no wine, no oil. No balm have you poured upon the poor sufferer.

“Oh, that ye would altogether hold your peace I and it should be your wisdom.” And it often is a man’s wisdom when he sits quiet and holds his tongue. But directly he begins to speak about what he does not understand — well, what then? That is exactly where they were. “Hear now my reasoning, and hearken to the pleadings of my lips. Will ye speak wickedly for God? and talk deceitfully for him?” That is what they had been doing. They pretended this to be for God. “Will ye accept his person? will ye contend for God? Is it good that he should search you out?” Well, that is what He did. “Or as one man mocketh another, do ye so mock him? He will surely reprove you.” How remarkably that was fulfilled! “He will surely reprove you, if ye do secretly accept persons”

— and that is what they were doing. They were accepting persons falsely — according to appearance. “Your remembrances are like unto ashes, your bodies to bodies of clay. Hold your peace, let me alone, that I may speak. and let come on me what will.” Now here I am, ready to bear whatever God sends. I feel the awfulness of it, and the terrors of God are on my soul; but here I am; let him do as seemeth good in his sight “Wherefore do I take my flesh in my teeth, and put my life in mine hand? Though he slay me, yet will I trust in him.”

There was a far deeper faith in Job than in all the other three, or in any of them. He did not mean, ‘though I am lost.’ Oh no, he had no idea of that. “Though he slay me” — he knew that the best thing was not life on the earth; he is learning that; but the best thing is the life to come. There it would be all according to God; but here it is in confusion, and in every kind of moral anomaly. “He also shall be my salvation” — he has no doubt about that — “for an hypocrite shall not come before him.” He was very far from that. I do not say that they were hypocrites; but certainly they talked very badly, for men of piety, to Job. “Who is he that will plead with me? for now, if I hold my tongue, I shall give up the ghost.” That is, it was a relief to him, in the agony that he was passing through, to speak out; and all he wanted was to be put right if he was wrong. He says now, “Only do not two things unto me; then will I not hide myself from thee. Withdraw thine hand far from me” — the outward thing — “and let not thy dread” — the inward — “make me afraid: then call thou, and I will answer” — and so he did — “or let me speak, and answer thou me. How many are mine iniquities and sins? “

Did he say that there was no sin in him? He never said anything of the kind; he never had the presumption to say, “I am clean in thine eyes.” No, no, far from it. Unfortunately he had rather rested in his cleanness in his own eyes, and in the eyes of other people; but he had to learn that it was a very different thing to be clean in God’s eyes. He begins to learn that more and more deeply. “Wherefore hidest thou thy face, and holdest me for thine enemy? Wilt thou break a leaf driven to and fro?” Was that a person pretending to any strength? “And wilt thou pursue the dry stubble? For thou writest bitter things against me, and makest me to possess the iniquities of my youth” — it may be that they are coming upon me now. “Thou puttest my feet also in the stocks” — you make me an object of shame before everybody — “and lookest narrowly unto all my paths; thou settest a print upon the heels of my feet.” That might have been thought to be hidden — “the heels of my feet”; but no, everything is marked. “And he, as a rotten thing consumeth, as a garment that is moth-eaten.”

Now we come to a very remarkable chapter (14). Here we find how far were people, in those days even, ignorant as they were, from confounding the resurrection of the unjust with that of the just. This chapter brings in man raised from the grave. I would not say from the dead. Resurrection from the dead means some raised and others left. Resurrection from the grave will be true after all the saints are raised, and there remain only the wicked to be raised. That will be the resurrection from the grave, but not from the dead (for “from the dead” allows that others remain), there will be none left at that time. There are two resurrections. What is called in the common creeds of Christendom the

“general resurrection” is a figment; it has no foundation in scripture. It is entirely opposed to the plainest words of God. Now you have in this world the righteous and the wicked all confused together. The tares are growing with the wheat. But that is only till the judgment come; that is only till the Lord come. And when the Lord comes there will be the separation of the righteous called not only from the dead (other dead being left in their graves), but to heaven where He is now. They are going to be like Himself — “the resurrection of the just.” But there remains the great mass of mankind; and that is what Job describes in this chapter. I shall have little more to show, if God will, next Wednesday, about “the resurrection of the just”; but here is the resurrection of the unjust. And therefore you observe how beautifully the language suits. “Man that is born of a woman” — not a word about anyone that is born of God. Those that are born of God will be the righteous. But “man that is born of a woman” (and all are) “is of few days” — it looks at man since the fall — “and full of trouble.”

Now, if you are speaking of those that are born of God, is that all you could say? Surely not! To depart is no doubt gain, but to live is well worth while; particularly when Christ is the object; and such can say in their measure, in spite of all their weaknesses and all their faults, “To me to live is Christ.” Yes, it is full of blessing; but here it is merely man born of woman, never born of God — not yet, till we come to a later chapter — not one of these is supposed to be born of God. “He cometh forth like a flower” — for they are all pretty much the same when they are born, so far like a flower — no doubt, an interesting object, but how soon developed and made perfectly plain. “He cometh forth like a flower, and is cut

down: he fleeth also as a shadow, and continueth not." You know very well — we all know — that there is great mortality among the children; it is particularly there that we have death so frequent. "And dost thou open thine eyes upon such an one, and bringest me into judgment with thee? Who can bring a clean thing out of an unclean? not one." It does not mean, "not one person," but "not one thing." I merely make that remark in order that it may be understood. "Seeing his days are determined, the number of his months are with thee, thou hast appointed his bounds that he cannot pass." It its all therefore an uncertainty — a precarious condition as far as man is concerned — but all settled of God.

"Turn from him, that he may rest, till he shall accomplish, as an hireling, his day. 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. Though the root thereof wax old in the earth, and the stock thereof die in the ground; yet through the scent of water it will bud, and bring forth boughs like a plant. But man dieth, and wasteth away." There is no hope for him for this earthly life; he dies and is done with. A plant on the contrary may be brought down to the worst and nothing appear, and yet it may shoot up again, particularly if there is water to help it. "Yea, man giveth up the ghost, and where is he? As the waters fail from the sea, and the flood decayeth, and drieth up; so man lieth down, and riseth not." There people very often stop, but not so the Spirit of God here by Job. For it is plain here he really does say what Scripture fully warrants — "till the heavens be no more." A very remarkable expression. It might have been thought to be — and that we could easily understand as a natural thing — "till the earth be

no more”; but man lives and dies, and does not rise — not till the earth be no more, but — “till the heavens be no more, they shall not awake, nor be raised out of their sleep.”

Surely, what is here said is very striking, that even man without God — man who is only born of woman, and not of God — man is to sleep till the heavens be no more. Now take the last Book of the New Testament. In Revelation 20 you find that, after the last outbreak of the world and the external nations of the world in the millennium, all that are not converted during the millennium will fall victims to Satan, after his release from the abyss, and they will all be rallied by him against Jerusalem on earth. They cannot touch Jerusalem above, the holy city. And not merely that, but “the camp of the saints about” — another striking thing. Why is there a camp of the saints around Jerusalem at that time? Has Satan gathered all the outside nations for one great effort to destroy the righteous that will then be on the earth? All the righteous flow up to Jerusalem, and as it will be entirely beyond the capacity of that Jerusalem to take in the saints from every quarter of the world, they will make a vast encampment round the “beloved city,” and that will be the great mark for Satan. Against that he thinks to hurl his battalions — all the rebels of the millennium on earth. And what happens then? Fire comes down from God and destroys them all. And what then? Satan is cast at last into the lake of fire. There is to be no temptation more; everything is going to be changed now. It is not merely that he is bound — he is cast into the lake of fire. There is no use which God can put him to; he is now to be punished for ever. And that is not all.

Heaven and earth flee away. And as the fire had consumed these wicked nations, they now are raised from the dead, and not only they, but all the wicked since the world began. This is the resurrection of the unjust, and they will all be in one company, and without one righteous person. You may ask what is to become of the righteous. Oh, they are translated, just as we are at the coming of the Lord for us before the millennium. They will be with the Lord. They are not spoken of; there is no need to speak about it. They were never promised to sit upon the throne; we were. They had their comfort all the time of their righteousness. They will enjoy nothing but comfort; and, consequently, as they never suffered with Christ, they are not to be glorified with Him. Nevertheless, they are to be raised, or as I should rather say, they are to be changed, because they do not die. But they will no doubt be changed.

That great principle of change will apply to all that are found alive — all the saints on the earth at that time. And we do find them in the next chapter. “The tabernacle of God is with men.” There they are the men; they are not the tabernacle. The tabernacle of God are the glorified saints — are those that had been already with Him and reigning — all those that were His, and they are particularly, as far as I know, the church. I do not know that one could predicate it properly of any but the church. Still, all the others will be blessed throughout all eternity. But the tabernacle of God is with men, and I presume that these men that are spoken of are the saints that are transported from the earth into the “new earth.” You may ask me, How and why? I say, God does not tell us, and I cannot tell you, beyond that I know it will be; and we are all bound to believe that it

will be, because the word of God says so. So that there is the tabernacle of God quite distinct. And now when they are all in this city, fit for all eternity, the tabernacle of God, instead of being up in the air, comes down. It is not that it mingles with the other, but there it is. It deigns to be in the midst; God Himself is there, and all those that are in especial nearness to God will be there; but all the blessed inhabitants of the millennial earth will be there as the men with whom that tabernacle shall then be.

So that nothing can be plainer than how this coalesces with the words of Job. The wicked lie in the grave till the very end of the earth. Not merely the end of the age, but the absolute end, not only of the earth, but, of the heavens; and therefore it is said “till the heavens be no more.” For it might be thought that at the beginning of the millennium the earth sustains a very great change, and so it does. But it is not then; it is “till the heavens be no more,” and that will never be till the absolute end of all the dispensations of God; and then it is that the wicked from the beginning and up to the end of the millennium will be all raised for judgment. And this entirely agrees with the 5th of John. You recollect that very remarkable drawing out of the grand principle of life and judgment by our Lord Jesus. He is the source of life, and He is the executor of judgment. In giving life He had communion with His Father. “For as the Father raiseth up the dead, and quickeneth them; even so the Son quickeneth whom he will.” But He, and He alone, will judge the dead. And in effect He carries on the judgment of the living also, the “quick” or “alive.” But at this time all His enemies will be dead; all the wicked from the beginning of the world; and they will be sentenced therefore to that which lasts when the world

is no more, when there is nothing but the new heavens and the new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness. They will meet their doom then. And it is lovely, it appears to me, that God should bring those that He loves into their blessing, long before those that are accursed meet their doom, and they will all meet this doom together.

Speaking now of those that are left when the Lord comes for His saints, there will, of course, be great executions of judgment; but then they remain (as a general law) till the end of all — till the thousand years are over, and the heavens and the earth that now are, are completely changed. I would therefore leave this with you as showing how Job had a very good inkling of this blessed truth — much more than the theologians have now- a-days. In general they are all partners in error, no matter who they may be. They may be Established or non-Established; they may be what they call the Free Churches; or they may be Ritualist or Roman Catholics, or anything; but they are all agreed in that great error; they jumble together both the righteous and the unrighteous in what they call one general judgment — a general resurrection — a thing that is entirely without one single scripture to justify it. Nay, more — that is condemned by all the light of the word of God, both Old Testament and New.

Now, I need not say much more; for Job turns from this very solemn scene that is before his mind to call upon the Lord, and says, “Thou shalt call, and I will answer thee; thou wilt have a desire to the work of thine hands.” His heart is beginning to get a little courage. “For now thou numberest my steps: dost thou not watch over my sin? My transgression is sealed up in a bag, and thou

sewest up mine iniquity. And surely the mountain falling, cometh to nought, and the rock is removed out of his place. The waters wear the stones: thou washest away the things which grow out of the dust of the earth; and thou destroyest the hope of man." But the Lord does not leave Job until he sees that he was not merely man looking up to God, but a man knowing God's love that was taking him up and chastising him in order that he might be blessed more than ever he had been before. That is the great object of the Book of Job.

Lecture 5 - Job 15-19

In this 15th chapter we have the second debate between Job's friends and himself. I shall take a view of the greater part of it, if the Lord will, in a general way tonight.

Although Eliphaz was the more grave and solid of his friends, they were all infected with the same fundamental mistake. That is an important thing for our souls. We are so apt to think that we never make any important mistake. Why should that be so? Are we so different from others? Are we not very liable to it? You must remember that this is a practical mistake; it is not merely a dogmatic one. There is no question of false doctrine of any kind here; but it is the application of truth to the soul; and it is of great moment to us that God has given us a very early book — Moses probably the writer of it; but the persons concerned are considerably before Moses. We see that from the very age of Job, and from all the circumstances.

There is no reference to the law of Israel; no reference to the deliverance of Israel out of Egypt; it always speaks of a particularly early time. Its great point is the dealings of God with man, and particularly with men of faith. It is not merely unbelieving man; with him it is always pretty much the same thing. His guilt may be aggravated; and, indeed, I have no doubt that there is no man now so responsible as those that hear the gospel — those that have Christianity in a living way presented to them. They are far more guilty and more to be pitied in one way than even the wild Tartars, or the subjects of that kingdom (Thibet) that seems now [1903] about to

be penetrated — that practically shut up and sealed kingdom which now is about to be opened, as far as we can see; surely a rather solemn consideration; for it would be hard to find another. No doubt, in the wilds and centre of Africa there may be many tribes that are unknown; but this is a very old civilization; and its rulers have managed to completely block out light from every source — to pursue their own devices to their own destruction. But God will not allow it to proceed further; and although we cannot look for much in the present state, many may go there as a matter of commerce, or a matter perhaps of politics, or a matter of ambition of one kind or another — still there may be children of God mixed up with them, and these, at any rate, can give a message from Christ.

However that may be, what I am drawing attention to is the interesting character of this book as the revelation to us now (and, of course, to the Old Testament saints long before us) of how God deals with pious men, and that for their souls' good, before there is any written revelation of God. For this is one of the very first books that ever was written, as I have previously remarked. Sometimes people forget that although Job appears far down in the Bible, it is the first book of a poetic character; the prose books all come before Job, carrying you down past the captivity to Babylon, and then returning from it; and then we go back to the poetic books, and the Book of Job is the first one. It answers, therefore, very much to Genesis; what Genesis is in the first portion of the Bible, Job is in the second. Then we have the Prophets; but it is the first of the poetic books that are not the Prophets.

Now as to the attack — for we cannot call it anything else — that is a serious thing. It is not merely in modern times that Christians have their differences. We see it is here radical — it belongs to the human spirit, and it may have a very good source; because we are, as no doubt Old Testament saints found themselves too, instinctively caring for one another. These friends of Job were exceedingly troubled as to the man to whom they had all looked up, and he was considered the most righteous of all men within their scope; and no wonder, God pronounced him so. They did not know that. It is a most important thing to make this remark, that we are in a very different position, for hearing all these debates, from Job himself. How little did Job know that all that came upon him was in consequence of what passed in the presence of God in heaven! — everything spoken in heaven about the child of God, even the trials! This was to be a peculiar trial, but it was all settled there; Job knew nothing about it. The raid of these Chaldeans, and those we call “Bedouins,” and the like — all that was merely natural; and, no doubt, the tendency was to regard it merely as the trials of a righteous man and his family from natural causes.

No, beloved friends; it is not a mere natural cause to the believer; he is under the eye of God. He was so always; still more so now. Now we are brought into known relationship with God, and into the nearest relationship with God. We are put in the place of His own family; we are His own children, yea, sons of God, for this latter speaks of a dignity before others; that is to say, we are no longer novices, no longer babes in the nursery, as was the case with believers in the Jewish system. They had not arrived at age. The Christian now, if he knows

what it is to be a Christian (a great many, alas! do not know, for they think themselves very much like believers of old, but that is a mistake), has far superior privileges; and it is one of the great means of Satan's hindering, to lead people not to understand the place they are brought into, and, consequently, their responsibility. However that may be, here we have these undoubted saints that were all at sea in regard to this terrible calamity, this blow after blow, tempest after tempest which blew away everything in which Job had once been so favoured. For God has pleasure in blessing His people not merely in spiritual things, but where we can bear it. You remember that word of the apostle John, where he wishes that Gaius might prosper as his soul prospered. If the soul does not prosper, adversity comes as a great mercy; but where the soul prospers we may be allowed to feel, and God has pleasure in showing, His goodness in everything — in family circumstances, yea, in everything, if it be for His glory. He is the judge of that. But there are continually things that, in the wisdom of God, are forbidden in this way or that way.

However, I do not go into that new; but here we have the fact that the two things perfectly coalesced in Job — that there was not a man upon earth that God had such pleasure in looking upon as Job, and yet such a man passing through deepest trial from God. It is a great difficulty with the Jews; they cannot understand it. They want to make out that Job was an imaginary being, because it seems so strange to them that after Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, there should be a man outside Israel altogether that God had such a high opinion of — and he not a Jew! Yes. So there it was a great blow to their pride and their narrowness. Yet were they not all in fact

outsiders? They would seem to have been in the Abrahamic line in one way; but they were not in the chosen line. You know that Abraham had other children; and they would appear to have been sprung from an Abrahamic line, but outside that particular covenant; and we have no reason to suppose that they had the sign and seal of that covenant which, of course, the Israelites have.

No; the point is God dealing with “man,” and with man’s heart and conscience. And what is more, it was not because of any particular evil. There was the radical mistake of Eliphaz which runs through his speech that I have just read tonight. He cannot rise above the thought that Job had seemed everything that was beautiful to our eyes and everybody’s eyes, and he was blessed of God in an extraordinary manner. For he was, as is said, the greatest man in that part of the East. And now this utter reverse! this casting him down from what seemed his excellency! How could it be but that, as God is a righteous God, there must be some terrible iniquity there? So he also felt that if there was an iniquity, Job must be conscious of it; and yet not a word from Job! Not a sign that he was ashamed of himself, or that he had anything to be judged! There was fault in Job; but not the least of the kind they expected. The fault in Job was this, that Job had a good opinion of himself, and that Job had great pleasure in everybody’s so highly respecting him. I wonder whether any of us have got that? I am afraid it is a very common thing. And there is just what people do not find out. They do not learn; they so little understand this wonderful mirror of the word of God. They do not understand that here is their own case.

However, I perhaps anticipate. But we find how very strong is the outburst of Eliphaz — a mild, grave, and serious man — for this he undoubtedly was. There is no need of our running down the three friends as if they were something very uncommon. They were very common indeed. Job rather was uncommon, yea, decidedly uncommon; and that is what made the example of Job so very pertinent to the object of God — that a man might be spotless in his way, that a man might be justly respected, but that when the man that is pious, God-fearing, prayerful and one so loved and valued and cried up as Job was — when he accepts it as his due, and has great pleasure in it, God is a jealous God, and will not allow that. And why not? Man is a sinner! And Job, even though he was now a believer, had sin in him, and self-judgment was wanting. If self-judgment had been duly exercised, Job would not have needed this trial. And there is another thing too; that when God does send a trial, the great call of man is to submit to it without a doubt, without a question, giving God credit for it that there is no undue severity. Now, on the contrary, Job felt a very great deal about it, and found fault with God, and thought that God was dealing very hardly indeed with him. Thus it is that the way in which this book has been sometimes treated for 1,500 years (perhaps more) is an entire fallacy.

What I refer to is this: that Job was considered to be a kind of type of Christ in his suffering. Nothing of the sort. Quite the reverse. Look, for instance, at Psalm 38 and Psalm 39. There you have not exactly Christ personally, but the spirit of Christ in the Israelite, and this will be accomplished in the future day, when there will be a remnant of Jews thoroughly marked by the

spirit of Christ, which will follow after we are taken out of the way to heaven. They will pass through tremendous trial, and the remnant will have that spirit of Christ. Those Psalms are prophetically written for them. No doubt all was written for us. All the Bible was written for the Christian, and for his use, blessing and enjoyment. But it is not all about us. This is the mistake that many people make, that because it is all for our good and for our spiritual taste and enjoyment, therefore, we are the persons that are meant in it! Not so. There is just what was falsified — this trying to find the pattern of Christ in it! whereas the very point is the contrast shown by the rebellious spirit of Job. For there is that. He charges God with being his enemy, and with tearing him to pieces and casting him down, making him to be an object of mockery for everybody. Job imputes to God. Well, no doubt God had allowed all this to come to pass; it could not have been without it. But it was not God's, it was Job's own mistake; and it was Job also that had the most agonizing sense of that, because he could not bear the shame of his friends coming. He bore it all beautifully till his friends dawned upon the scene. A man when alone can bear; but when there are people that show no sympathy and no understanding, he breaks loose and lets out, and flings very improper language about his friends — perhaps they deserved it, but certainly, certainly not God. And his friends were alive to that. They could see that he spoke improperly about God; so that he put himself quite in the wrong there.

"Should a wise man utter vain knowledge," for they were quite aware that there was something very able in what Job said — they called that vain knowledge — "and fill his belly with the east wind?" No doubt he was

exceedingly wrong. “Should he reason with unprofitable talk? or with speeches wherewith he can do no good? Yea, thou castest off fear, and restrainest prayer before God.” Now he did nothing of the kind; Job always clung to God, always looked up to God, but he said, ‘I cannot find Him; He has shut me out, occupying me with this agony that I am passing through, so that I cannot get at Him. I know if I could only get there I should find goodness and mercy.’ It was no doubt very inconsistent; but that is always the case with poor man when he is not in the presence of God. That was one of the grand points that all had. Job was living, for a man of faith, too much in the good opinion of other people as well as in his own good opinion. There is where he was quite wrong. And there is where Christ and Christianity puts us in our true place if we are faithful — which is, that we have to face a hostile world; that we have to face not only a hostile world, but even, it may be, fellow Christians, who, if they are not faithful, are mad against any people that are; because it rebukes themselves. We have to bear that, and consequently here we are now in the truth of things suffering with Christ. That is what Christ suffered.

I am not speaking now of suffering for Christ. Suffering for Christ is where there is a decided break made. Perhaps we are cast into prison falsely, or it may be transported falsely, or executed falsely as martyrs and the like — that is suffering for Christ. But there is another kind of suffering that belongs to the Christian — suffering with Christ. For instance, suppose that there was a royal princess of England that was truly brought to God, and who entered really into the place of the Christian — why, what would be the case of that young

princess? Always suffering. Why? Because every. thing that surrounded her would be contrary to what belonged to her soul and to her position. Why so? Because it is of the world, and of the world in its grandest shape, and consequently it would mark the contrariety. What is the place of the Christian? He is not of the world. How far not of the world? Why, like Christ. What did Christ do with the world? Where did Christ ever contribute one iota to what the world likes and values? Christ appeared to be the most useless of men for the world. He never made a speech upon science; He never contributed one lesson in learning or literature. He never gave a vote — if I may speak of voting or anything of that kind. He never did the slightest thing of that nature. He would not even judge a case, or arbitrate even when they wanted Him to judge in that informal way; consequently, there never was a person more completely outside the world while passing through it. That is where the Christian is. I say, therefore, that the higher you are up in the world the more you find the difficulty of being faithful. And that is suffering with Christ, where you feel it. There are some people who get through things easily. That is not to be admired; it is a kind of opiate — continually dramming oneself with opiates to drown feeling, and take everything quite comfortably, no matter what it is, and entirely losing sight of the fact that we do not belong to these things in which we take part.

Oh, beloved friends, that is not the way. Our call is to take part actively for Christ and according to Christ. Our call is to entire separation to the Lord. Supposing that there was a house on fire next door; it would be our business to immediately do all we could to help and save

both life and property. That is not worldly; but it would be worldly to go into the Court and fight for our rights or to refuse to pay our dues if we are called upon to do so. All that is not only worldly, but it is rebellious. I know what they call themselves — “Passive Resisters” — but I do not understand that language. They are active resisters of the law; and if they had any sense of propriety they would pay their money quietly, or let people take their goods quietly, and so make an end. I only mention it now to show how completely God’s children have lost the sense of what it is to be a Christian. I am speaking now practically. I might go further. I maintain that Christians have lost the doctrine of what a Christian is. It is not that there is a certain blessed standard that we all acknowledge to be what a Christian is, and that we fall sort, practically. I believe it will be found that they areas wrong about the standard as they are about the practice; and one thing I can say for myself, honestly and truly, that what has occupied me all my life, is cleaving to what I have found to be the Christian pathway and duty, and seeking to help others to see the truth and blessedness of it, and to act faithfully according to it. I am sure I have plenty to judge myself for; but I thank God for every trial and everything that has made nothing of me. And that is just what Job had to learn as to himself. He did not know that God was working all this for Job’s own great good, even allowing also what was most repulsive to God — the disease, and the sweeping away of his family. This was all the devil’s doing; but God allowed it for Job’s good, and Job had not an idea of all that. If Job had understood the end that was coming, and had understood the beginning which was before all the trial, he would have lost a great deal of the blessing, and

why? Because, then, as now, the child of God is to walk by faith.

People like to walk by sight, and that was the great fallacy that lay under all the speeches of these three friends. They looked at Job; they looked at what he was; and they look at what he now is in all this terrible crushing to the dust, and they said in effect, 'Well, God is a righteous God, and if there were not some dreadful thing behind all this, God would never have allowed it.' They were completely wrong, and Job was thoroughly right in saying, 'No, I know it is not so, and all your talk cannot get rid of the fact that you have most wicked men that are most flourishing, and you have pious men that are exceedingly suffering, in the world as it is now.' How is that? Because Satan is actively working here; because Satan is the one that men follow without knowing. They are slaves and captives of the devil; and those that are not slaves of the devil are the objects of his vengeance and hatred. God does not remove that; He does not put down Satan yet; he is allowed his way. And there never was a greater proof of it than his leading the world and the Jewish people to crucify their own Messiah, the Lord of glory. Was there any fault here? Here you have the crucial proof. Here was the absolutely sinless One and never such a sufferer.

The whole theory, then, of the three friends was a falsehood from beginning to end. Yet it is exactly what most people think to this day. They have an idea that there must be something very wrong where they see people passing through exceeding deep waters. Now there was something that Job had not got, and that was to measure himself in the presence of God; and God never stopped till He brought him into His presence. He

interfered in the most remarkable way; but I must not anticipate. Eliphaz, after having let out strongly at Job, now falls back upon what was a very common feeling, especially of the former. Eliphaz was a man that strongly stood for the great value of experience. You know there are people that are very strong for experience, and accordingly, as to the great and good men that have been before — is that a standard? No one denies the honour due to elders, at least no person with any propriety. But Eliphaz used it in a wrong manner, and told Job, “Why, you are going against everything that has been held by the best of men that have ever been. Are you the first man; are you as old as the hills when you talk in such a manner as this, as if you knew better than any of these most excellent men, older than your father? and you set up in this way.” Well, he carries on that for some time, and he comes to this; what it must be. “How much more abominable and filthy is man, which drinketh iniquity like water? I will show thee, hear me; and that which I have seen I will declare.” He meant Job particularly there. “I will show 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.” He looks therefore at old experience, and of the best of men, when men were not so bad as they were in his time. For that is quite true; man does get worse and worse, and even he had remarked it.

A famous poet that I used to read as a boy — a heathen poet — says the very same thing, that no generation had been so bad as the present one, which is going to bear children that will be worse than their fathers. At any rate they are not so bad as the people who think the world is going to get better, for these are most

deplorably wrong. There will be a great change; but what will bring in that change will not be preachers, nor tracts, nor books, nor education; nay, not even the Bible, although that is the word of God. But the Bible demands more than this. It requires that men be born of God; and even in the case of people that are born of God they are called to judge themselves, just like Job, the very best of them. That is what he was brought to, and what he was most slow to come to. Therefore all this reasoning was entirely out of place, and the larger part of the chapter is description, that when a man is carrying on in this way it must be that he is always in dread of what is coming. Eliphaz was wrong about that. Job had no such thought. Job was quite sure if he could only find God that all would be right, and that He would speak to him, and God would do all that was good. But he knew that somehow or other God was dealing, in allowing all these terrible things to happen to him, why he did not know, and for what end he did not know.

Now we come to Job's answer (Job 16). "I have heard many such things; miserable comforters are ye all. Shall vain words have an end? Or what emboldeneth thee that thou answerest? 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. But I would strengthen you with my mouth, and the moving of my lips should assuage your grief. Though I speak, my grief is not assuaged." And no doubt Job spoke perfectly truly. He would have been a comforter of sorrow; he would not have been a physician without any medicine. They brought poison into his wounds instead of something to assuage. He said, 'I have been pouring out my sorrow, but I am no better for it' — "Thou hast made desolate all

my company. And thou hast filled me with wrinkles." He now speaks of his own person too. "He teareth me in his wrath, who hateth me." He does not say it was God. I think it is rather too much to suppose that he means that; but he does mean that God allowed it; and therefore, in a euphemistic way he says "He." But it was God allowing the devil to do it — his enemy — otherwise it would be a dreadful inconsistency with the rest of his language which we are not bound to carry out to more than a superficial inconsistency; it is not radical. "God hath delivered me to the ungodly" — and he in the most graphic manner describes his intense affliction. But now (ver. 17), we find Job in the midst of this making complaint as to prayer being restrained. "Not for any injustice in mine hands" — that he could say truly. It was not a question of injustice; it was a question of Job's too great complacency in himself. "Also my prayer is pure. O earth, cover not thou my blood, and let my cry have no place." He regards himself as if he were a victim to all this enmity that is shown him. "Also now, behold, my witness is in heaven." You do not find the others saying that. They did not know as much about heaven as Job; they did not know God as Job did — not one of the three. "My record is on high." It is the beginning of a little light that is piercing through the clouds. "My friends scorn me; but mine eye poureth out tears unto God. Oh that one might plead for a man with God, as a man pleadeth for his neighbour!" How the heart of Job was made to pine for the very thing that Christ must do!

In the 17th chapter Job carries on, and goes back to his dreadful condition. It was not yet a settled thing; it was merely a gleam. "My breath is corrupt, my days are extinct, the graves are ready for me. Are there not

mockers with me?" — surely there were three of them — "and doth not mine eye continue in their provocation?" If that was the case with these three men who had been his friends, what was the feeling of all the people round about that knew? You may depend upon it it would be quite as bad as that of the three friends, or worse. We must not suppose it is limited to them. It is the natural conclusion of the natural mind, working upon this thought, that God's moral government is exact now, instead of knowing that God on the contrary, is waiting for His direct government, when Christ, who alone is capable of holding the reins and of governing, shall rule. Therefore, even when the church was formed, the church was perfectly incapable of judging the world; and of this Popery is a clear instance. There they have tried to govern the world, and what are they? Why, the most abominable thing in the eye of God on the earth. There is nothing more wicked than Popery. You may tell me about all the horrors of heathenism and Buddhism. Yes, but they do not mix up Christ, or Peter, or Paul, and all the rest. The Papists know enough of Christianity to make them verily guilty. It is a great deal more wicked idolatry to worship the Virgin Mary than to worship Juno or Venus; because the one was pure ignorance under the darkness of the devil, and the other is worshipping Mary after Christ came — after the true light shone. There is nothing more guilty than what people call Christian Idolatry. Worshipping the Mass — what is that? That is not confined to Papists now; now it is unblushingly done — I will not say by Protestants, but by people who masquerade as clergymen. Surely that is not too severe an expression for it? — and at the same time they are perfectly in the error of Popery, only they do not yet own

the Pope; but they have all the falsehood of it in their souls.

Well, Job bemoans his condition in a very solemn manner, and compares what he once was. “Aforetime I was as a tabret,” i.e., “I sounded music, as it were, in the ears of people as I had to do with them.” But now a by-word not merely of the three friends, but “of the people!” “Mine eye also is dim by reason of sorrow, and all my members are as a shadow. Upright men shall be astonied at this, and the innocent shall stir up himself against the hypocrite. The righteous also” — you see it is turned for good — “shall hold on his way.” That is where he looked onward to. His record was on high; his witness was in heaven; he clung to God. “Though He slay me, yet will I trust Him.” That was Job’s language; that was his spirit. He had far more faith than any one of the three.

Then, in the next chapter (18) we have another man, Bildad the Shuhite, and he speaks still more violently than Eliphaz, “How long will it be ere ye make an end of words?” He had no feeling for Job whatever; no understanding. “Mark, and afterwards we will speak. Wherefore are we counted as beasts, and reputed vile in your sight? He teareth himself in his anger; shall the earth be forsaken for thee? and shall the rock be removed out of its place? Yea, the light of the wicked shall be put out.” There was a thrust, and a bitter thrust, at poor Job — “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.” That is what he counted Job. “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” — a

mere dream of his own imagination! And this he pursues to the very end of the chapter. I do not dwell upon it, in order to come to Job's answer. For it was all a mistake.

"Then Job answered and said (Job 19), How long will ye vex my soul, and break me in pieces with words? These ten times have ye reproached me: ye are not ashamed that ye make yourselves strange to me." And now he takes this ground — Be it that I have sinned without knowing; be it that I have done something displeasing to God! — "mine error," he says, "remaineth with myself. If indeed ye will magnify yourselves against me, and plead against me my reproach; know now that God hath overthrown me" — that was his faith. He takes it all as from God, without knowing what had taken place in heaven. He was to be made to pass through the deepest trouble; but the man that was to be proverbial for patience broke out in a total impatience. There came about the total failure of even a pious man; not merely of a man; not merely of Adam — for Adam fell; he was not born after Job, but Job was born after Adam; and yet after all, that a man so noted for his patience should fail when he was tried! Ah! in Christ there is the contrast. That is where people are so wrong to make this one the type of Christ. No, it is a specimen failing, and a man born of God failing. We want Christ, and cannot do without Christ. That is the true moral of the Book of Job.

"Know now that God hath overthrown me" — it is perfectly true it must have been God allowing all this." Behold, I cry out of wrong, but I am not heard; I cry aloud, but there is no judgment. He hath fenced up my way that I cannot pass, and he hath set darkness in my paths. He hath stripped me of my glory, and taken the crown from my head." All this he felt very deeply. What

right has any believer to a crown now? What right has any believer to glory now? Has he not an evil nature to be judged constantly, every day? Does this deserve a crown? Or a man that has that nature to contend with; does that deserve a crown? The day when we shall be crowned is when we have nothing but what is of Christ, every bit of the old man completely passed away. There is where Job had much to learn. “He hath destroyed me on every side, and I am gone; and mine hope hath he removed like a tree. He hath also kindled his wrath against me -” — there he was wrong — “and he counteth me unto him as one of his enemies. His troops come together and raise up their way against me, and encamp round about my tabernacle. He hath put my brethren far from me, and mine acquaintance are verily estranged from me.” You know what that is to the heart if you have ever tasted it. “My kinsfolk have failed, and my familiar friends” — he now gets closer — “have forgotten me. They that dwell in mine house, and my maids, count me for a stranger: I am an alien in their sight. “I called my servant” — his man, as we call it, or in modern language, his ‘valet’ — “and he gave me no answer” (vers. 1-20).

How pitiable! He had come down very low to call upon his dear friends to have pity, and they had nothing but bad suspicion which wounded him to the quick. “Why do ye persecute me as God, and are not satisfied with my flesh?” Have not I suffered enough to satisfy you? “Oh that my words were,” etc., not exactly, printed in a book — but that they were impressed upon stone, or whatever might be the way in which writing was accomplished in those days. He refers to a very permanent form — “That they were graven with an iron pen and lead in the rock

for ever! For I know that my Redeemer liveth; and that he shall stand at the latter day upon the earth." This is a most wonderful expression of faith, and the more so when we compare it with what we had last Wednesday evening in the 14th chapter — the resurrection of "man" — not the resurrection of "the righteous," but the resurrection of man. Job, you remember, begins, "Man that is born of a woman" — not a word of any one born of God. Man without God, man without Christ, and what is the end of all that? A tree cut down to the very root may sprout, but not man; and so long will that sleep be that man will not awake — and the resurrection of man will not be — "till the heavens be no more."

Is that the case with the resurrection of the righteous? No. That is what he says here. He says, "I know that my [Kinsman or] Redeemer" — the One that will avenge the wrongs of God's people on their enemies; the One that will care for them in the face of every difficulty and every enemy — "I know that my Redeemer liveth, and that he shall stand at the latter" — He "the last" is probably the meaning of it, not "at the latter day." He is the One that when all has failed will appear. The First will be the Last, as it were, to take up not "man," but the saint, the believer. "I know that my Redeemer liveth, and that he shall stand at the latter [or, last] day" — as "last" is the word — "upon the earth." This last word is a little stronger too. It is the "dust" — quite a different thing from the heavens being no more. There will be no dust to stand upon then. The heavens and the earth will all be dissolved, and it will be a question of fire destroying everything, as we are told in more scriptures than one, particularly by Peter. Everything will be dissolved — the very elements. There will be no dust at all. But here He

will stand upon it; His power may reach it; and it may for aught I know refer to the dust of his people. He is going to raise them. But at any rate the word is rather vague; and we must not expect more than just a little gleam of light made known in those days. It is reserved for Christ to bring out the life of the resurrection.

“And though after my skin worms destroy this [body]” — i.e., after the skin is destroyed — meaning all the frame of the body. It is better to omit than supply the word “body.” “Yet in my flesh shall I see God.” That is, it will be a real resurrection — not indeed “flesh and blood” — but you recollect it was really Himself when Christ rose. He asked them to feel and know that there were flesh and bones, but not “flesh and blood,” which is the natural life of man now. When the resurrection comes there will be still the flesh in a glorious way, and there will be bone in a glorious way; and instead of it being blood as the source of life, it will be spirit; a divine character of existence will then be. While there is life, blood can be shed, and the man dies. The shedding of blood is the great figure of death by violence, and the blessed Lord knew all that, and passed through it all. But risen from the dead, the body possessed is a tangible body and can be felt; and although that need not always be, there is a power of change in this form; and I have no doubt the same thing will be true of every power. But there is the power. Now we are all limited; so limited that even a powerful man can be stopped by an oak board of only an inch, or two, thick. It stops him. And certainly a granite wall could stop anybody. But when that day is come we shall pass through everything just as our Lord did. Our Lord purposely came in when the doors were shut. You may tell me the stone was

removed from the sepulchre; but it was not to let the Lord out; it was to let the disciples in to see that He was gone. What is all the thickness of the earth to Him? The glorified body has a power of its own. and can pass through anything.

This is not the case with man now. He is very limited and feeble; a little thing stops or even kills him. But not so when the body is raised in power and incorruption and glory; and here then the Lord comes to claim, and stand upon, the dust as it were. That is the figure, of course, of dealing with the lower state. The body is destroyed; not merely the skin, but everything belonging to man in the natural state. But what then? “Yet in my flesh shall I see God?” Job was to be raised and live again, and to live in a glorious way, and in the way of power and incorruption. “Whom I shall see for myself.” Ah, he was not in the least afraid of the Lord. He loved to think of Him, and looked for His intervention with certainty. “And mine eyes shall behold, and not another.” What a contrast with Balaam! Balaam could not see except prophetically, but not for himself. He had no part nor lot. But Job, with every part and lot, knew it perfectly. “Though my reins be consumed within me.” That will not hinder it at all.

So then you see this was a resurrection of the righteous; it is before the heavens are no more. And though the earth subsists, it will, when it is in a state of ruin, give place to a complete change — not only one affecting the condition of the bodies of the millennial saints, but also the earth itself. All creation meanwhile awaits its deliverance from the bondage of corruption from which it now suffers. And Christ will accomplish it, for this will be His work. No one need wonder, therefore, that when

that day comes, there will be righteous government on the earth. No one need wonder that then Satan will be allowed no power. He will be shut up, and not be allowed to deceive another moment until the end of the thousand years, and then it will be to act as a kind of sieve, to separate those that are not born of God from those that are. He will be allowed to do that, and then will be cast into the lake of fire for ever. But the righteous will have been reigning for a thousand years before, while the earth still goes on. You see the great force of it there, and of the Lord coming upon that earth in a state as low as it can possibly be reduced to under the power of Satan, just before He comes and delivers it. Oh, may our hearts rest upon Him entirely, beloved brethren. Let us cleave to the Lord now! and let us remember that the Lord is served and magnified by simple faith day by day, having to do with Himself about each thing, and with implicit trust in Him, and judgment of ourselves! Amen.

Lecture 6 - Job 20 - 23

Chap. 20 Job was not a wicked man. There was the great error of Zophar — of this hasty and violent man; for evidently this was particularly his character. He was not so much looking at long experience as did Eliphaz — that was his point — long experience. A valuable thing, but still it may not be the mind of God. It may be right, or it may be wrong; and it was wrong in this case, because Job's trial was altogether peculiar. God had not dealt with any other man in the remarkable way in which Job was tried, and that is the reason why we have a whole book about him — because he was tried so specially. No one save the Lord Jesus was ever tried like Job. The trials of our Lord were far more profound; but in Him. there was nothing but perfection, and why? Because, to begin with, there was no sin in Him; there was in Job, and Job did not think about the sin that was in him. Job had no idea of what the New Testament calls "the old man." He had turned from Satan and from his sins to God; he was a real, true, saint of God. But he had no notion, nor, indeed, had anyone among the Old Testament saints, any definite conception of what our evil nature is. That was a truth that came out after Christ came. It was Christ that made everything clear, and till Christ came things were not plain. There was quite enough light to guide; and for that matter all the three friends were pious men, and Job particularly was; but for all that, Job had to learn that there was that in him which was proud of the effects of faith in his soul. Job had too good an opinion of himself.

This is not a very uncommon thing with a Christian even. I think I know a good many who are not disposed to think very lowlily of themselves; but I am quite sure (and I have nothing to boast of myself) I desire to feel thoroughly what I am. Yet I admit we are very often apt to forget it. There was no question of Job's end, no question but that God would receive him, and had already received him in spirit; and therefore there was no fear of death in Job; he looked at it and desired it even; but that would spoil the great lesson. God would allow him to be tried thoroughly, but would not allow Satan so to torment him as to end his life — that would frustrate the lesson he had to learn by agony of suffering and suspicion of his own friends — his dearest friends, those who had most respected him. They all gave him up, and thought there was something very bad behind it — there could not be so much smoke without fire.

That is exactly what people say nowadays when they see anything particular. The eighteen on whom the tower in Siloam fell must be the worst people in Jerusalem! 'Not at all,' said the Lord. God has his own wonderful ways of which we know nothing; but "Except ye repent ye shall all likewise perish" — by a worse perishing than the fall of a tower upon you. We find how a man was kept — not faultless, far from it — but entirely free from all the hidden evil that was imputed to him because of his terrible suffering, which entirely alienated, therefore, the sympathy of his friends; and instead of getting one grain of sympathy he got a good many tons of scorn, and their suspicion that things were very wrong in him.

This is what entered into all their speeches. And they get worse and worse for a while, and particularly this one. This is the last of Zophar's; he poured it out so

strongly, that, somehow or other, he was afraid to come forward again. We find that Eliphaz and Bildad do follow, and Job disposes of them all. They were completely taken aback by Job's reasoning, and the reason is that there was a truthfulness about Job that was not in them, although a good deal remained for Job to learn. Therefore, in comes Elihu, a new personage in the matter, and after that Jehovah himself. These are facts. This is not an imaginary tale. There was a real person called Job who went through all this trial; and there were these three friends; and there was Elihu too; and, further, Jehovah made His presence and His mind known, and settled the case brought Job out of all his troubles, and at Job's intercession pardoned the other three for all their bad and groundless ill-feeling against Job.

Well now, here Zophar comes forward. "Therefore do my thoughts cause me to answer, and for this I make haste." Yes, and that is just where haste generally lands us. It is easy for those who are not in trouble to speak, and to suspect evil of a man that is in the depths. And that is just what this young man — for he was younger than the others — fell into. "Knowest thou not this of old, since man was placed upon earth" — are you the only man that knows the mind of God? — "that the triumphing of the wicked is short, and the joy of the hypocrite but for a moment?" Is that all that Zophar had ever learnt? Did he know of no dealings of God for the trial and good of His children here below? Had he no thought of God disciplining us? — even before His proper Fatherly relationship was fully made known and conferred upon us. For now we are brought into that very place of privilege — we are children of God. The Old Testament

saints were so, but they did not know it. They were saints of God, and they know very well they were separated to God, and that they were not like the men of the world. They knew that perfectly, and they were waiting for One who would settle all questions and make known all things. Even the woman of Samaria knew that. “When Messias cometh, He will tell us all things.” He would clear up all difficulties.

But Zophar had no difficulty at all. That is generally the case with people who know very little; they fancy they know everything. Zophar, therefore, keeps up this — that there is the great fact, there is a righteous God above, and there are unrighteous, wicked people below, and God invariably deals with these wicked people now. That was not true. A large part of the world has always been allowed of God to apparently prosper in their evil, and the reason is that the time of judgment is not yet come. There may be judgments; there may be exceptional dealings with the wicked just as Job’s case was a very exceptional dealing in the severity of his trial, and in the manner in which Satan was challenged by God to do his very worst; and God was secretly keeping up Job even when he was finding fault with God and thinking He was very hard upon him to allow all this. But he was kept up not only for his own good, but for ours. Now we have the Book, and are meant to profit by it for ourselves and for other people. “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?”

Zophar was not at all wanting in power of expression. He was what you call an “eloquent” man; in fact, they were all eloquent. They all pleaded their cause with

ability — only there was short-sightedness. They had not before them this — that it was out of the goodness of God, and for the blessing of Job himself, that God made Job to recognize his nothingness, and also the evil that was within, which he had never detected to be, as it is, a sin against God, i.e., thinking too well of himself, taking credit for what grace had wrought. For I do not deny that grace had done a good deal for Job. Grace had wrought a fine character, full of benevolence and rectitude of purpose. Yes, but why did Job dwell upon it, and think so much about it? Why did Job think so much more highly of himself than others? All these things were working in Job's mind, and they must all be brought out. That was a great lesson for Job to learn, and it came out at the very severe cost of Job's trial and suffering. "He shall fly away as a dream, and shall not be found." That was true of some cases; but where were the eyes, where the discernment of Zophar? and this was all that he saw going on in the world! It was a very narrow way of looking at the dealings of God. "The eye also which saw him shall see him no more; neither shall his place any more behold him. His children shall seek to please the poor" — he supposes that God would still keep up the family, and would deal with his children — that they would have to restore some of the ill-gotten goods that their father had acquired.

All this was pointed at poor Job, but not a particle of it was real. It was nothing but evil surmises. So, he describes his case in very strong terms, which I need not follow- — all his inward trouble, and the being forced to give up what he had swallowed down. "He shall not see the rivers, the floods, the brooks of honey and butter." That is, Zophar recognised that God delights in doing

good. Yes, He does; and not merely to the righteous, but to the unthankful and evil. Is it that He has any complacency in them? Quite the contrary, but out of His own goodness, as our Lord put it so simply and so grandly, He causes His sun to shine upon the evil as well as upon the good, and He sends His rain upon the just as well as upon the unjust. Well, before all I say now, he is a most wicked man, the greatest enemy of God alive on the earth, who profits by all these benefits, and never thinks of God at all. There he is, so utterly insensible — more insensible possibly than the brute. There is less gratitude than with even the poor irrational brute who owns his master's kindness and care. This is indeed, an awful thing in a man. You might find men of the greatest education and of the highest ability, who are like a stock or a stone before the goodness of God. That you have now. The New Testament has come in and made it all plain. One word accounts for everything — unbelief.

The beginning of God's goodness in a man is when he comes to the sense of his badness, and that is produced by faith. It is by what God sends. God's word is the foundation and the means by which a man is brought out of darkness into light, and out of death into life eternal. And why? Because the word of God reveals Christ. And the believer receives Christ on God's testimony. Now the great mass of men in our country are rushing either into infidelity or superstition. These are both of them making more progress than the truth, at this present moment. God no doubt converts souls too; but if there are a few souls truly converted, how many go back? and sometimes out of the very families of those that love the Lord! So it has been for hundreds of years. So it was at the beginning; so it is now. Some believe the words that

are spoken, and some do not believe them. And as some enter now into endless and eternal blessing, so others will fall into absolute and everlasting ruin.

Here then, we see the all-importance of our getting the mind of God. Neither experience will do, nor tradition. Bildad was as fond of tradition as Eliphaz was of experience; but Zophar, I fancy, was pretty much confident in himself. And this self-confidence is what makes a man still more biassed than either the weakness of thinking too much of the wisdom of old age, or of the tradition of the elders before us. No, God will have His own word; and God is honoured by our receiving His own word and applying His word, not to other people merely, but, above all, to oneself. Everything issues from this, “I believe.” That is exactly where all human knowledge fails. Human knowledge — science for instance — is entirely founded upon the facts that are before our eyes, or the facts that we gather even if they are invisible to our eyes, that are ascertained through whatever means, sometimes by the microscope, sometimes by the telescope — but however it may be, it is all founded upon what is before man’s eyes and before man’s mind.

Now the blessing of God is entirely founded upon divine testimony. You honour God by believing God against yourself; by believing God against your sins; by believing God, receiving His testimony about His own Son. But God has love enough in His heart to lay all our case at all costs upon the Lord Jesus; and He has perfectly met all the mind of God about it. That is Christianity now; and this, of course, in Job’s days, was yet to be. There was just enough light — a little distant gleam as it were — a rift in the cloud that showed the Messiah that was

to come, but that was all. There was a little increase of light in the Psalms, and still more in the Prophets; but the full light was never there till He Himself came. Then it was not merely a gleam; it was not merely a promise; it was Himself. It was the Son of God, and eternal life in the Son of God to be given to everyone who believes in Him. By that I do not mean a mere nominal assent. No, beloved friends, it is always through our conscience that we are brought into the truth. There is no divine link with God unless it be the conscience that acknowledges our sinfulness, and, therefore, casts oneself in faith upon the Lord Jesus.

Well, now, we do not find anything of this in Zophar; it is all looking simply at judging wicked men. The judging of a righteous man never entered his mind, and that was the real question. So he puts to Job the awfulness of what will come to pass upon the man that goes on in his wickedness, and does not allow it, but only is clever in hiding it. And really he had got that in his head about Job, and never could get it out until God brought down everyone of them into the dust, and they were indebted to Job for escaping the severe chastening of God. He finishes, “This is the portion of a wicked man from God, and the heritage appointed unto him by God.” Here is not the slightest sense of God having chastening dealings with those that He loves during this time of pilgrimage. Yet this is exactly what God does. This is what He is carrying on today with you and me. The apostle Peter refers to it particularly in the first chapter of his First Epistle, i.e., that after we are born of God we become subjects of the dealings of God as Father. We are judged every man according to his work now. He will not do that by and by; the future judgment is entirely in

the hands of Christ; and it is particularly said that the Father has committed it all to the Son; and it is as the Son, and as the glorified Man too, that the Lord will sit upon the Great White Throne, where all the evil of all the unrighteous will be judged finally. That is the last thing before the new heavens and the new earth wherein dwelleth righteousness. The Father has nothing to do with that; but the Father has everything to do with watching over our faults, with pruning the vine, every branch of the vine, and this is what goes on now. It is the Father who is the husbandman, and He prunes that we may bear more fruit; and if there is no fruit at all, He takes it away.

Job now answers in the twenty-first chapter. “Hear diligently my speech.” It was a great relief to the tried man to speak out. He had entirely failed to win their sympathy, but still Job preferred to speak plainly out, and had no difficulty in meeting anything they had to say. “And let this be your consolation. Suffer me that I may speak; and after that I have spoken, mock on.” It was severe, but still it was not more than they deserved. “As for me, is my complaint to man?” In the midst of all this he has the deep sense of having to do with God, and that is true piety. “And if it were so, why should not my spirit be troubled?” i.e., I do not understand it; that is the thing that makes it so terrible. “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.” And what was it that made him so afraid? Why, he too saw just the very opposite of what Zophar only saw.

Zophar confined himself simply to the particular cases of God’s dealing judicially with some specially wicked men.

And there are such cases every now and then. A man calls God's name in vain, and swears to a downright falsehood — perhaps theft, or any other breach — and, occasionally, a man drops down dead after it. Well, that is a very unusual thing. Other people swear to it and keep their money, and try to keep their character, but all the while they are heaping up wrath against the day of wrath. Now what made Job tremble so when he saw wickedness prosper? As he says here, "Wherefore do the wicked live?" He says, 'I can understand it so far; I can perfectly understand God casting down wicked men — it is only what they deserve; but it is not the fact, for the great mass of them seem to flourish in their wickedness for the time.' "Wherefore do the wicked live, become old, yea, are mighty in power? Their seed is established in their sight with them." It was not at all passing away like a dream (as Zophar pretended) as a general role; it was rather the other way. "Their houses are safe from fear." Many a pious man's house is broken into by a robber; many a pious man's house is burnt over his head; and here there might be wicked men of the worst character, and they do not come into these troubles at all!

But there is the awful end that awaits them, the awakening up like the rich man Dives, "in hades he lifted up his eyes, being in torments." Ah! that was a solemn thing, but it was the Lord that gave us that picture. Nobody could speak positively of that till the Lord came. And that is not describing what will be after the resurrection; this is what takes place directly after death. And it was not a wicked man as he appeared in the eyes of the Jews; it was not a man who was a drunkard or a thief, or a robber, or anything of that kind.

He was a man highly respected; he was a man characterised by self-indulgence. We do not hear of any swearing; we do not hear of any scoffing. There he was; he acknowledged father Abraham even in the midst of his torments; and the Lord is the One that describes it. Dives is anxious about the souls of his five brethren; he was anxious about them. That is to say, he was a man whom people might consider of high respectability, but there was no faith, no repentance, no looking to God, no waiting for the Messiah. He was quite content to enjoy all his wealth; and, as for poor Lazarus, the dogs might look after him for all he cared about him.

“Their houses are safe from fear, neither is the rod of God upon them.” Ah! but it will be. “Their bull gendereth, and faileth not; their cow calveth, and casteth not her calf.” Everything went flourishing. “They send forth their little ones like a flock, and their children dance” — everything prosperous and smiling — “They take the timbrel and harp, and rejoice at the sound of the organ.” It is rather serious to find all that with such bad company — a solemn check for those that are given up. “They spend their days in wealth, and in a moment go down to the grave. Therefore, they say unto God, Depart from us.” Job’s words are far more solemn and more true than the violent Zophar had painted. “For we desire not the knowledge of thy ways. What is the Almighty, that we should serve Him? and what profit should we have if we pray unto Him?” It is not meant that they say that to man, but that is what their conduct says to God.

Therefore there is great force in what we read, “The fool hath said in his heart, There is no God.” Perhaps he never uttered that once in his life, “There is no God,”

but it is what his heart says. God reads the language of the heart. And the evil servant says in his heart, “My lord delayeth his coming.” Perhaps he preached what people call the “Second Coming”; he may have preached it, but that is what his heart said. He was not really waiting for Christ at all; he was glad that Christ stayed away. There never was such a prayer with him as “Come, Lord Jesus.” So that it is a very solemn thing — the way in which the Lord takes the crafty and reads the heart; and therefore, it is of all importance that we should judge ourselves, and look to the Lord, that we may have Christ Himself before our souls so habitually that we are filled by His mind and directed by His love, and led by the Holy Spirit who gives the needed power and grace to those that look to Christ.

“Lo, their good is not in their hand; the counsel of the wicked is far from me.” Job was farther from these people than his three friends. It is very possible that these three friends liked to be on good terms with people that were so flourishing, for that is a very common snare. People like to be in what they call “good company,” and to be respected by people that are respectable in this life; but where is Christ in all that? Our hearts are called to be with that which Christ values, and with those whom Christ loves. I do not say we are not to have the love of compassion for the very worst of mankind — surely, surely; but this is a different kind of love altogether. It is loving the family of God. This is higher than loving an unconverted wife; higher than loving our children if they are not brought to God. The family of God are nearer to us, and for all eternity, and we are glad to walk in that faith and love now. “How oft is the candle of the wicked put out!” There he allows

the other side that they were all harping upon; they only looked at that. “And how oft cometh their destruction upon them!” There were such cases; he had seen and known them, and in no way disputed them.

You see, what Zophar and the others press, was only a half a truth. Now half a truth never sanctifies. What you leave out is perhaps of equal, or, it may be, of still greater importance, and there was just the difference. With all his defect, Job really was cleaving to the truth, and he looked at it with a larger heart and with a more exercised conscience. There are people moralised, or what you call “sermonised”; but this did not come from their souls; it was merely their correct talk according to the thoughts of men. It was not the language really of faith at all. Job’s was, in spite of all its defects. “They are as stubble before the wind, and as chaff that the storm carrieth away. God layeth up his iniquity for his children; he rewardeth him, and he shall know it. His eyes shall see his destruction” — he allowed it might run in the family — “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?” i.e., selfishness is at the bottom of all these wicked men that flourish in this world. And even their children are in no way an object to be compared with the number of their own months. That is what they want — to live as long as possible.

“Shall any teach God knowledge?” — now he turns to Him to vindicate him — “seeing he judgeth those that are high. One dieth” — you see he took in the two sides. This very man had spoken of truth being double; but it was all mere talk; it was not put into practice at all. It was a wise saw; it was merely an apophthegm, without

being the true expression of his feeling and life. But Job had a reality about him. “Another dieth in the bitterness of his soul, and never eateth with pleasure. They shall lie down alike in the dust” — and the careless world goes to their funeral, and thinks they are both all right, that it is all right with them both. That is what is called “judging with charity” — charitable judgment! They hope that everybody goes to heaven, unless they are too bad — openly wicked! Now what is the judgment according to God? That if One died for all, then all were dead. That is the state of man. There is no question at all of their state or their end there. And He died for all — all mankind. They are all inexcusable. And the death of Christ makes them in a worse state if they do not believe than if Christ had never come and never died. He died for all, that they which live — ah! there is the difference — they which live — should not any longer live to themselves. That is what they all did. The dead — the spiritually dead — live to nothing but themselves. It might be honour; it might be seeking the applause of mankind and the world; but they live to themselves, not to Him.

But the Christian, the believer, lives to Him who died for us and rose again. That is not said to be for all. The resurrection of the Lord is the pledge that He will be by and by the Judge of those that do not believe. The resurrection to the believer is the sign-witness on God’s part that his sins are all blotted out. For the One that became responsible for his sins went down into the grave, and God has raised Him up to show us that our sins are gone. It was for all that believe, and for none others. And what for the others? The risen Man is the One that will judge all. That is what the apostle declared to the Athenians. They were not believers, and therefore

he does not speak of any being justified; but he tells them that the resurrection of the Lord is the proof and pledge which God has given that He is going to judge all the habitable world by that Man whom He has raised from the dead. What makes it so solemn is that it was man that put Him in the grave; it was man that slew Him. It was God that raised Him up. And that risen Man will judge them, all that are found alive — all the habitable world. It is not here the White Throne judgment; it is the Lord judging the habitable world when He comes again in the clouds of heaven. He does not speak here about taking up all that are Christ's, but of His coming down in judgment upon all that are not Christ's.

"Behold, I know your thoughts, and the devices which ye wrongfully imagine against me." Here you see he is now returning to their fault through this narrowness of their view, and the impropriety of allowing people to surmise evil without the slightest ground in fact for it. No, we are called upon to live what we know; we are called upon to speak when we do know; but where we do not know we look to God. "For ye say, Where is the house of the prince? and where are the dwelling places of the wicked? 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?" That is the reason why they flourish now. He laid hold of the great truth morally in a very admirable manner. "They shall be brought forth to the day of wrath." Not a question of now! These friends were all looking at the present time as the adequate proof of what God thought about men — that if He thinks we are all walking well we are flourishing, and if we come into trouble it is because we

are bad people. That was their theory, an utterly wrong and corrupt theory. “Who shall declare his way to his face? and who shall repay him what he hath done? Yet shall he be brought to the grave, and shall remain in the tomb. The clods of the valley shall be sweet unto him” — looking at the outward appearance — “and every man shall draw after him, as there are innumerable before him. How then comfort ye me in vain, seeing in your answers there remaineth falsehood? “

Well now, we begin again with Eliphaz (Job 22). Eliphaz takes it up, and he says, “Can a man be profitable unto God, as he that is wise may be profitable unto himself?” Yes, Eliphaz, but cannot a man please God? It is not for profit that a pious man submits to God, and obeys the word of God, but it is to please Him, and why? Because he loves Him. That is not working for profit. That is a way in which a Jew did afterwards. “Is it any pleasure to the Almighty that thou art righteous?” Yes, it was. He was quite wrong about it. God was pleased with Job — that very man that they were so insidious against, and against whom they insinuated all kinds of evil. God pointed out, as you remember, at the beginning of the Book, that there was not a man on earth that was all round like His servant Job, and yet there was something there that God meant to bring out, of which Job had no idea, i.e., that he never recognized that it was wrong. “Will he reprove thee for fear of thee? Will he enter with thee into judgment? Is not thy wickedness great? and thine iniquities infinite? For thou hast taken a pledge from thy brother for nought” — now come all his evil surmisings once more — “and stripped the naked of their clothing. Thou hast not given water to the weary to drink.”

Eliphaz is just imagining what he thinks Job must have done to account for the troubles that he was passing through. “But as for the mighty man, he had the earth” — Job was the mighty man — “and the honourable man dwelt in it. Thou hast sent widows away empty, and the arms of the fatherless have been broken. Therefore snares are round about thee.” You see all the reasoning is quite mistaken. “And sudden fear troubleth thee; or darkness, that thou canst not see; and the abundance of waters cover thee. 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?” That was not what Job said at all, but quite the reverse. “Can he judge through the dark cloud?” Well, undoubtedly he was not a scoffer. Nothing of the sort. He was a pious, narrow-minded man; and there are plenty of such individuals. “Yet he filled their houses,” etc. (vers. 1-20). There was a little bit of tenderness in his heart toward Job. “Acquaint now thyself with him, and be at peace: thereby good shall come unto thee. Receive, I pray thee, the law from his mouth.” Eliphaz certainly was nothing like Zophar, nor even Bildad. “And lay up his words in thine heart. If thou return to the Almighty, thou shalt be built up.” And so it was. Little did he know that that return was about to be made manifest, to their shame. “Then shalt thou lay up gold as dust, and light shall shine upon thy ways” (vers. 21-28). And so it did, in the most marvellous way, and much sooner than Eliphaz expected. “When men are cast down, then thou shalt say, There is lifting up; and he shall save the humble person. He shall deliver -”

There is a very old mistake in this verse (30); that word “island” is all wrong. The same word in Hebrew means

“island” and also “not” To give you an instance — take “Ichabod,” there you get the “I” (ee) — used adverbially, meaning “not,” for “Ichabod” means “not glory,” or “inglorious” — “the glory is departed.” This was the name that the poor wife of Phinehas gave, in her dying moments, to the son that was born to her — “Not glory.” Well now, that is the word here; and if you translate it as a negative particle you get the true sense of it — “him that is not innocent.” “Island” only makes nonsense. Nobody could explain it as given in our A.V.; no person has ever done it nor approached it, and it is an astonishing thing that it remains. I believe it is all right in the Revised Version; but it is well worth knowing, because I daresay you have been puzzled to find where “the island of the innocent” came in. You know there is a proud little corner of Europe that calls itself “the Isle of Saints.” but the isle of the innocent is still more extraordinary. There has never been such a thing. Man lost his innocence, and has never recovered it. Man gains holiness by the faith of Christ, but no recovery of innocence; that could not be. “He shall deliver [him, or] those that are not innocent” — that is the point of it.

Yes, and God did that, and who were they? Eliphaz, Bildad, and Zophar. They were the people who were “not guiltless”; they were guilty, they were “not innocent.” So that here are two words rather mauled in this version. The real force is, “He shall deliver those that are not guiltless,” and that was verified in the case of Job’s three friends, little as Eliphaz expected it. They were treated by God as being guilty towards their dear brother whom they had so misjudged, to whom they had imputed all kinds of hidden evil, and made him a hypocrite as well as a naughty man. And Eliphaz here

unconsciously gives utterance to words that came true. We sometimes find that. Words said passingly by a Christian, who had no idea perhaps that they would ever be verified — and yet how often they have been — as I have known frequently, from very simple souls. Perhaps only some poor brother that could not write, or from a poor old sister that could do very little except mend stockings.

So here we find these words were true. God has a great deal more to do with any good words which are uttered than we at all realise. Eliphaz, although he was so wrong, was, nevertheless, allowed to say words which came true in a marvellous manner about Job himself. “He shall deliver him that is not innocent,” or “not guiltless” — that is the proper word — “and he shall be delivered by the pureness of thine hands.” This was what God compelled these three men to feel — that Job was more righteous than they; that his hands were cleaner than theirs. They had defiled their hands in setting upon Job so foully and so violently; and they owed it to Job that they were spared their lives.

Job answers in the next chapter (23) and that is all we can look at tonight. “Even today is my complaint bitter; my stroke is heavier than my groaning. Oh that I knew where I might find him!” Ah! there was a pious heart, although he felt and smarted under his terrible sufferings. He was so pre-occupied that he could not find Him yet. He did, however, before long. “That I might come even to his seat! I would order my cause before him, and fill my mouth with arguments. I would know the words which he would answer me, and understand what he would say unto me.” Now that is what he desired. He was not afraid of what God would

say. He was sure to be good because He loved, and because of what Job knew him to be. “Will he plead against me with his power?” That is what they thought. “No,” said he; nothing of the sort; “but he would put [strength] in me.” “Strength” goes a little too far. It is rather, “he would give heed unto me.” “There the righteous might dispute with him; so should I be delivered for ever from my judge.” I knew it would be all right if I could only get a hearing. If I could come close to Him, then He would listen.

“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; but he knoweth the way that I take.” There, you see, was a heart always turned towards the centre of attraction, always to God. He might waver under the affliction — just as you knew the needle may be very unsteady for a little; but leave it to rest, and it always turns to the pole. “My foot hath held his steps, his way have I kept, and not declined. Neither have I gone back from the commandment of his lips.” He was perfectly conscious of a good conscience. Yet he had nothing at all, and that was what he had to learn. God had to show him; because it was not a question merely of an outward blemish that anyone would notice. This is what people think very proper.

I have been at dying beds of real Christians, and I am sorry to say, the principal thing that I have heard from them has been, “I look back upon my long life of following the Lord Jesus.” If Job had said, “I look back upon the tender mercy and the forbearance of God and His continual support when I never deserved it” — ah!

that would have been all right. I ought perhaps to add that those whom I have heard speak in that way never had heard the gospel in the way which you all are familiar with. Still, I do not doubt that they were Christians, but misled by bad teaching. “My foot hath held his steps, his way have I kept, and not declined. Neither have I gone back from the commandment of his lips; I have esteemed the words of his mouth more than my necessary food.” “But he is in one mind, and who can turn him? and what his soul desireth, even that he doeth.” Job allowed His entire supremacy; he allowed His sovereignty in the fullest degree. “For he performeth the thing that is appointed for me; and many such things are with him. Therefore am I troubled at his presence.” He was troubled that there was something between God and him; something with which God had a question, but what — he did not understand yet. “When I consider, I am afraid of him. For God maketh my heart soft, and the Almighty troubleth me; because I was not cut off before the darkness, neither hath he covered the darkness from my face.”

Lecture 7 - Job 24 - 28

Chap. 24. — This closes the answer of Job to Eliphaz that we began on last Wednesday. Job makes it perfectly clear that all things now are an anomaly — that you cannot judge of God's feeling about the prosperity of man here below, for the righteous are often far more tried; and it is no proof of anything wrong on their part, but, on the contrary, God putting them to the test, to manifest that they really are His; consequently, submissiveness of heart is what we are all called to under trial, and to perfect confidence in God. Still, we have an advantage saints of old had not and could not have till Christ came — not merely Christ's work accomplished, but the light of Christ shining. They had not that. This was before the law. Nevertheless, we see clearly that there was light enough for those that looked to God, and that there was darkness unquestionably, just as there is now, for those that have not faith in God. Only, the great profitable lesson of the book is the difference between believers, and why it is. There was a mighty difference between Job and his three friends, and I have endeavoured to point out wherein that difference lay. Whatever might be the mistakes of Job, and whatever his irritation at being accounted a hypocrite by his friends (and if we have ever known anything like that we can know the bitterness of it), there is no blow so keen and so deeply felt as that which comes from those who profess to love us. And yet the devil is always working and trying to set God's children by the ears.

Well, here we find it in a very extreme form. That is the grand difference between the history of Job and that of

other men. They only knew it in a measure; but God brought it out in one great display in the case of Job, who was more tried than any other man ever was. I do not mean that Paul and Peter and others may not have had trials of their own kind, and, particularly their life in their hand. That was not the case with Job. There was no question of life; it was a question of endurance. His life was not to be touched; it would have entirely spoilt the history if Job had died; but God took care that whatever his sufferings might be, he was preserved; and preserved to pass through such a scene as probably was in no other case since the world began, yet turned to incomparable benefit. That was what God was showing.

Satan never does anything for good — always for evil But in this case Satan had entirely failed, and it was God that wrought, and wrought particularly by the unfaithfulness and the unspirituality of Job's three friends. That is the great moral of the book. It was only then that he began to curse his day — never before. Whatever came from Satan he bore, and bore it with the fullest courage and with all confidence in God. But when his three friends began to insinuate wickedness hidden, and hypocrisy, that was too much for Job; he could not stand it. He broke out therefore into many a word highly unbecoming; but God made all allowance for that, because in the main Job adhered to God, and whatever came, he desired to accept it from God. He could not understand why, but he still cleaved to God. Now he puts the case himself.

"Why, seeing times are not hidden from the Almighty, do not they that know him see his days?" i.e., there are these times of evil, and how is it that God, who is a moral governor, and who takes notice of all evil, yea,

even the words of people (words reveal the secrets of the heart) — how is it that He allows it to pass` as He does, and that there is no day of retribution now? Well, we can perfectly answer that. It is all reserved for Christ. The Father will not judge any man; that is not what the Father will do. He is showing love because He is a Father, and showing love because He is God; because God is love just as much as He is light. And therefore it is reserved for Christ, and the reason is plain. Christ was the One whom, without the very slightest reason for it, without a cause, they hated. They hated both Him and the Father; and therefore it is reserved for the Lord Jesus to execute judgment. All judgment is committed to the Son, because He is the Son of man, and as the Son of man He has been hated; His Deity has been denied, and He was accounted as a companion of wicked people. He was accounted as a Samaritan, and to have even a demon. There was nothing too bad for man to say and feel.

And these were not the heathen; the heathen were never so bad as that. It is God’s people when in a bad state that are worse than anybody. That is a thing that many cannot understand and do not believe. There they are beating their drums and blowing their trumpets in Christendom as if everything were going on right. Oh, they are ripening for judgment indeed in England. It is not merely a Kamchatka or in the centre of Africa; all that is quite a mistake. The more light there is, if people are not faithful, the worse they are. And therefore our Lord was very clear in showing that the Jews were the people. It was no question of Sodom and Gomorrah. They talked about the horribleness of Sodom and Gomorrah. ‘Oh,’ said the Lord, ‘it is you that are worse

than they. It will be more tolerable in the day of judgment for Sodom and Gomorrah and Tyre' — and all those places that were regarded as peculiarly wicked — 'it will be worse for Chorazin, Bethsaida and Capernaum.' Capernaum was the place where He lived. It was accounted His own city in Galilee. What He thought worse was the rejection of all His light and all His love. And therefore the nearer you are to the blessing, if the blessing is not yours the more guilty you are.

But then comes another very important thing, and that is, that unless our self is judged — unless there is continual self-judgment going on day by day, we get hard; we lose the unction of the truth, we lose the power of it in our souls, and thus we may be very self-complacent, because we know that we believe. That is just where the friends of Job were. They were quite comfortable; there was nothing amiss with them; they were all right, but Job! he must be very bad. That was their entire misjudgment. Now Job faces this question — how is it, if the times are so bad, that the day of retribution does not come? We do not see it. It is coming; it awaits the only One that can perfectly deal with evil.

We are all apt to be very partial. Sometimes there are certain evils very bad in our eyes — man's eyes particularly. Some people are very hard upon drinking. Well, the same people are not at all hard upon covetousness. Nevertheless I suppose there is no one with any judgment but what avows that the spirit of covetousness is far more blinding and injurious to the soul than even the debasement of a man getting tipsy. No doubt a tipsy man is an object of contempt to those

that are temperate, and they pass very severe judgment upon him; and there is where the devil attacks them all. ‘Oh, no; I never drink; I never touch a drop; I am a good man; and they are very bad, they are very wicked!’ Well, I do not at all doubt that they are bad; but I do say other people are worse who have a good opinion of themselves. There is nothing that God has more an abhorrence of than a man who thinks well of himself; for however lofty his thoughts he is nothing but a poor, lost sinner, and if he has not one particular evil he has others perhaps as bad or even worse. I do not say that to excuse anything.

There are many other ways in which people show that they have nothing in common with the Lord Jesus, and that they have no knowledge of God whatever. But it is the Lord that will be the infallible Judge. It is the Lord that will never swerve to the one side or the other. Everything that is contrary to God will be met solemnly by His judgment another day; and it is because people did not see God in Him, but only a man, that therefore He as a man will be the Judge of all mankind. All judgment is committed to the Son because He is the Son of man. Well now, Job describes these anomalies that are going on now. He says, “Some remove the landmarks.” That is not at all an uncommon thing. We have the evidence of it all round about us in London now. There are people that have encroached upon — taken the common land of this very Blackheath. There you see in various parts of it where people somehow or other have encroached; they have laid hold upon what does not belong to them. But it has gone on so long that the law cannot touch them. There they are in possession; and we know that is a great thing in the eyes of lawyers

although it is quite contrary to law in itself, but still they cannot touch them. And there are all these anomalies constantly going on — even in the face of all the censure of the law; here we have it. If we were in Cornwall or in the south of Ireland nobody would be astonished; there are plenty of anomalies there; but here you have it in London before your eyes.

And so it is too in many other forms besides land grabbing. But this is what is referred to — a very old trick of bad men, and particularly of men of property, particularly of men of rank and the like, because having land it gives them the opportunity of stealing a little more. And so it is with kings. They see there is a nice province just outside France that would make such a good addition to the Empire, and by and bye it is stolen. Well then again, Germany sees that there is a certain part that gives an outlet to the sea that they have not, and they steal that and find a pretext of war in order to take what belongs to Denmark or whatever country it may be. In that case it was Denmark. That is in our own day — both of these things. And so it has ever been; and that is in the face not merely of the law, but the gospel; and these things are done by people that go to church or to chapel and the like, and there they are professing Christians. And all that by the very persons who by their position are the guardians of the execution of the law; yet they are the people guilty of all this wickedness.

And the same thing goes on in the lower strata of society. There they are prompted very often by want; but then what is it very often that is the cause of want? Why, for the most part it is dishonesty; it is recklessness as to performance of their duty. They lose their post. They strive to get rich; they take money that does not belong

to them, and they come under public judgment. That is going on constantly in the lower just as it is in the higher strata, and the fact of it is, all is wrong, and will be wrong here below till the Lord Jesus is the One that executes judgment and that reigns righteously. Nothing will be passed over; there will be no favouritism, but all will be according to God, and never before. For any measure of peace or quietness or allowance of what people have — to be in their possession peacefully — we have reason to thank God very much indeed. But I am speaking now of looking into things as they really are, and it does not matter what country you take.

We in England think ourselves a very righteous nation, and there are many that think we are, as compared with others; but I have just been referring to things that prove how very hollow all this pretension to righteousness is. And therefore there is the greatest possible comfort in looking up to God. There there is absolute righteousness, and not only that, but active goodness. There there is God caring for His own. He chastises them because He loves them — where there is something that they do not see; for very often it is that they do not. Sometimes we are buffeted for our faults. That is a thing that ought not to be. We ought to suffer for righteousness rather than for unrighteousness, because “for sins Christ once suffered, Just for unjust,” Who is made infinitely dear to us. But there we come on Christian ground.

Now Job simply takes up the things that are around him. “They violently take away flocks and feed thereof. They drive away the ass of the fatherless, they take the widow’s ox for a pledge. They turn the needy out of the way” — these were what you may call the “respectables”

of society, the people who had flocks and herds, but they wanted more. “The poor of the earth hide themselves together.” Well, now we see another class; we see the poor and distressed here below. “Behold, as wild asses in the desert, go they forth to their work” — they are the people that have nothing, now the “masses,” that have no skilled work, but that live merely jobbing about, and in all the precariousness and the suffering that this jobbery produces. “As wild asses in the desert, go they forth to their work; rising betimes for a prey” — before the light, and a prey, because it is not something settled — it is what they can catch. “The wilderness yieldeth food for them and for their children.”

Think of that — the barren sands of the wilderness, that is the only thing, and why? Because they have got no land of their own. “They reap every one his own corn in the field” — that is the corn of the rich man — “and they gather the vintage of the wicked.” Now they are called not “rich” but “wicked.” “They cause the naked to lodge without clothing” — that is what these wicked rich do. They have not pity for them; they make use of them for their work. “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” — describing still the indigent class that had scarcely any regular work to do, — “and embrace the rock for want of shelter. 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.” There might be a sheaf or two forgotten in the case of harvest, but they have found it out, and they are at them to get back their sheaf. “Which make oil within their walls.” They are employed for their abundance —

they make the oil, but they never have a drop of it for themselves — “and tread their wine-presses and suffer thirst.” There is no wine for them. “Men groan from out of the city, and the soul of the wounded crieth out; yet God layeth not folly to them.” God does not take any notice of it, and the reason is that He is waiting for that day.

Now what a wonderful love it is to the very persons to whom the gospel is preached. It was to the “poor” the gospel was preached; they were peculiarly the object of the Lord Jesus. There never was such a thing before, since the world began. Nobody ever made them his grand object, and that for eternity. But Job could not know anything of that. “They are of those that rebel against the light; they know not the ways thereof, nor abide in the paths thereof.” Then he describes a still worse class. That is a man — whether higher or lower it does not matter — a man of violence, the murderer. The man who has got his quarrel, and the man that nothing will satiate but the life of his victim. “The murderer rising with the light killeth the poor and needy, and in the night is as a thief” — who will be ashamed to show that he was robbing the poor. “The eye also of the adulterer waiteth for the twilight, saying, No eye shall see me” — the corrupt man — violence and corruption, the two great characteristics of human evil — “and disguiseth his face. In the dark they dig through the houses, which they had marked for themselves in the day-time; they know not the light. 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.” They cannot bear to be known, what they are and what they seek. There he pursues this terrible picture down to the

end of the chapter, showing that there is an eternal misery and a consciousness of guilt — for that was a very wonderful working of God.

When man was first created, he did not know anything about good and evil. He did not know the difference between them, because no such thing here existed. He was made perfectly without any evil. There was no evil in man when God sent him forth from His hand. But directly he fell into sin he acquired the power of judging what was wrong, and what was right in itself. That is conscience. There was no need of conscience judging of what was right and wrong when all was good; but directly man fell, he began to judge good and evil That is what God does perfectly — man does it in an unhappy, miserable way. It is because he knows of what is within that he detects it without, and pronounces judgment, but man is none the better. Now when man is unconverted, he goes on in that kind of misery, and his use of good and evil is this — there are other men he considers as bad as, or worse than, himself, and he excuses himself on that ground, and so he goes on. But when a man is converted conscience turns its eye upon himself. That is the reason why repentance is indelibly and from the very beginning bound up with the believer in Christ. Faith and repentance go together, and the fact of our receiving Christ makes us judge self, and not merely to spot other people's evil or excuse ourselves.

You see it in the poor tax-gatherer. When the Pharisee was saying, 'God, I thank Thee I am not like other men; I am a better-man; I do not drink; I do not swear; I do not go to gamble or anything of that kind; no, I am a good man, much better than other people' — there was the poor tax-gatherer, to whose soul God had spoken, and

who, instead of looking to find other people as bad or worse, can only say, “God be merciful to me the sinner!” It is not merely “to me a sinner.” For many, many years I have been struck with the great beauty of that expression “God be merciful to me the sinner, if ever there was one. I know my sins and they are so overwhelming I do not think about others. God be merciful to me the sinner; me only.” That man went down justified rather than the other. It is not what is called “justification by faith”; but it was the right thing that always takes place in a converted soul — self-condemnation before God And it is the light of Christ, somehow entering, that produces that. And therefore now that the work of Christ is done He is exalted to give repentance and remission of sins to every one that looks to Him.

So that repentance is a gracious work; the very opposite of men having a bad conscience. It was man, at any rate, having his conscience set right to condemn himself. He did not know it yet. He did not know his sins gone — that is the consequence of redemption. That could not be till the work of Christ came in. There might be a looking onward to Christ and His work. Some had a confident hope that the Lord would take their sins away; they did not know how. But now the gospel is the proclamation on the part of God of that which clearly explains and fully accounts for it. “The blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanseth from all sin.” We are glad to believe that — “from all sin.” If all our sins are not blotted out none of them are. If one sin is gone they are all gone. It is only through Christ, and never does Christ do a thing in a half or niggardly way, as man does. No; it is complete. Here then Job is simply looking at the

terrible state of these bad consciences, and then goes on to his death, and there the worms have their feast; that is all he says about it. And if the wicked are exalted, it is only to go down the more.

Well now we come to Bildad (Job 25). And Bildad only barely gives the appearance of a speech. It is a very short one, and it has no kind of application really to Job. They are evidently obliged to give in, and Bildad, the second of them, he it is that now descants upon the glory of God. And it is all perfectly true, and very finely stated too. There is a great deal of what is very beautiful in what Bildad said, only it had no bearing on the matter at all. “Dominion and fear are with him; he maketh peace in his high places.” Yes, but what troubled Job was that he had anything but peace in his low place. There he was in this terrible humiliation and suffering, and he could not tell why it was. “Is there any number of his armies?” That is all very true; was that any comfort to Job, or any answer? “And upon whom doth not his light arise?” Well, there might be an implication that Job was all wrong because he did not enjoy the light, and it was not that Bildad did. The fact is that he was quiet; he was entirely without any trial; and he could therefore talk reasonably, and so far quietly; but he had no understanding of Job.

“How then can man be justified with God?” That is exactly what Job had said in the ninth chapter, so that he was only repeating what Job had said a great deal better than he. Job enters into it in a very full manner, and so strongly that he even puts forth the need of a daysman, i.e., a mediator, between God and man. He had far more spiritual light than any of them. “How can he be clean that is born of a woman?” That again is what Job had

already taught. “Behold even to the moon, and it shineth not; yea, the stars are not pure in his sight; how much less man, that is a worm, and the son of man, which is a worm?” That was all true, but had no bearing.

Job answers (Job 26), and certainly with quite sufficient keenness, “How hast thou helped him that is without power? How savest thou the arm that hath no strength? “He was like the poor publican, the tax-gatherer. “How hast thou counselled him that hath no wisdom? And how hast thou plentifully declared the thing as it is? To whom hast thou uttered words?” He was talking in the air. “And whose spirit came from thee?” Now he showed that he entered into God’s dominion far more fully and extensively than Bildad had admitted. “Dead things are formed from under the waters, and the inhabitants thereof. Hell is naked before him, and destruction hath no covering. He stretcheth out the north over the empty place, and hangeth the earth upon nothing” — a very remarkable anticipation of modern discovery. “He bindeth up the waters in his thick clouds; and the cloud is not rent under them” — i.e., whether it be the little rain or the great rain, all is under God’s control. “He holdeth back the face of his throne,” etc., etc. (vers. 8-13). “Lo these are parts of his ways” — they are only the fringes of his ways, which would give the idea — “but how little a portion is heard of him?” It is only the whisper that we hear now — “but the thunder of his power” — ah I that is reserved for the day of judgment — “who can understand?”

Well, in the next chapter (27) would have come the time for Zophar; but although Bildad had very little to say, Zophar had nothing. He is fairly out of the debate; and we shall find that Eliphaz does not return. Job has it now

all to himself, and accordingly he gives here what might have been an answer to Zophar, but there was no Zophar to answer — he was silenced. They felt now they were fairly out of court. They began with great vigour; full of confidence that their judgment was a sound one; but Job had completely answered all their foolish talk, and there they were silent. It is not that they were yet convinced that they were wrong; but they do what many people do — they shut up, and have not a word to say, and still are of the same opinion. But God would not allow it to rest there. God brought them out of their hiding place, and pronounced upon them; and it was through Job, as we shall find by and bye, that they were saved, either from a terrible judgment or death itself.

“Moreover Job continued his parable and said, As God liveth,who hath taken away my judgment; and the Almighty, who hath vexed my soul; all the while my breath is in me, and the spirit of God is in my nostrils; my lips shall not speak wickedness, nor my tongue utter deceit.” He still stands to it that all their imagination was false. He said now more solemnly than ever — it was a kind of swearing to it — As God liveth this is true. “God forbid that I should justify you.” Now he turns upon them; he says “You are the culprits, not I”. “Till I die I will not remove mine integrity from me. My righteousness I hold fast, and will not let it go; my heart shall not reproach me so long as I live.” They were, on the contrary, imputing what was very bad to him in most of their speeches. “Let mine enemy be as the wicked, and he that riseth up against me as the unrighteous.” That is what he says. ‘It is you that are acting the part of wicked men without knowing it. It is you that are the unrighteous, not I.’ “For what is the hope of the

hypocrite, though he hath gained, when God taketh away his soul?" It shows that he had a great abhorrence of it — quite as much as or more than they had. "Will God hear his cry when trouble cometh upon him?" Here he describes it to the end of the chapter. 'Do you think I am going to fight against God in that way?'

"Will he delight himself in the Almighty?" That is what Job did. "Will he always call upon God?" He called upon God even in that terrible distress. "I will teach you by the hand of God: that which is with the Almighty will I not conceal. Behold, all ye yourselves have seen it; why then are ye thus altogether vain?" 'You know very well that I have been cleaving to God; you have heard my confession, and why do you impute such a thing as hypocrisy?' "This is the portion of a wicked man with God and the heritage of oppressors, which they shall receive of the Almighty." And even if they go on and have their children multiplied, it will only be deeper sorrow in the end. "If his children be multiplied, it is for the sword; and his offspring shall not be satisfied with bread," no matter what he may be appropriating (and so to end of verse 19). This is all totally opposed to their reasoning,and Job rather triumphs over them in this way. "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."

And now in the next chapter (Job 28), which will close tonight, we have a very remarkable addition — one of the most striking in the Book of Job. It seems very abrupt. He now turns away from man altogether in his bad ways, or from vindicating those who really looked to

God; and he locks at the general state of mankind. Not any particularly evil class or righteous class.

“Surely there is a vein for the silver and a place for gold where they find it.” Gold is not found in veins like silver, it is in quite a different way — very often in the form of dust, and sometimes of nuggets. But silver is found in large and rich veins. “Iron is taken out of the earth, and brass is molten out of the stone.” That is just exactly where copper is found. Where we read “brass” it is very often “copper” — chiefly so in the Bible. “He setteth an end to darkness.” He now gives us a remarkable sketch of mining in very early times. “He setteth an end to darkness, and searcheth out all perfection” — in quest of these precious metals, gold, silver or the like — “the stones of darkness, and the shadow of death,” i.e., he goes down to the depths of the earth after them. “The flood breaketh out from the inhabitant” — water there is very dangerous, and so the great point is to get rid of it safely — to drain it or turn it aside so that they may work their mine. “Even the waters forgotten of the foot.” That is, waters that people do not walk beside; not the rivers and rivulets and the like, but water deep in the earth. “They are dried up; they are gone away from men.” There is the drainage in order to carry it on.

“As for the earth, out of it cometh bread; and under it” — that is deep down in it — “is turned up as it were fire. The stones of it are the place of sapphires” — precious stones as well as these metals — “and it hath dust of gold.” They do not enter into these depths; they go up into the heights and they traverse all the surface of the earth, but the fowls do not venture into the mines where man goes down. Not even the vulture. The vulture has a keen sight, as we all know, especially for a dead body,

and there they are — God's natural scavengers for this poor world of death. "The lion's whelps have not trodden it, nor the fierce lion passed by it" "He putteth forth his hand upon the rock; he overturneth the mountains by the roots. He cutteth out the rivers among the rocks; and his eye seeth every precious thing," They get a great sensitive understanding of what is worth — not by any means that they are always right. Sometimes the miners in our country have thrown away as rubbish what was quite as valuable as all that their mind was set upon; but as a general rule they learn what is valuable. "He bindeth the floods from overflowing; and the thing that is hid bringeth he forth to light. But where shall wisdom be found?" No, there is no wisdom in all that. There is self in all that. There is what will make a man rich; there is what will bring money and perhaps distinction; but where shall wisdom be found? and where is the place of understanding? Well, it is not on the earth, and it is not down in these mines of darkness where man is so prompt to follow for that which he values. Where is it to be found? "Man knoweth not the price thereof; neither is it found in the land of the living."

What a very solemn thing that is! True wisdom and true understanding not found in the earth at all! It comes down from heaven. It is found only in Christ; and Christ had not yet come; and further, this is what came out still more by Christ's rejection and Christ's death. "Therefore the depth saith, It is not in me." There are silver and gold in the depth, and other like commodities, and precious stones. "The sea saith, It is not with me.... It is hid from the eyes of all living, and kept close from the fowls of the air." It is not in the skies as far as they

are open to the eye. “Destruction and death say, We have heard the fame thereof with our ears.” Yes, it was just that very thing. There was a report of that One who is Himself wisdom, and who is the Giver of wisdom to the meek. It was by death that it came to us, but they did not know it.

“God understandeth the way thereof, and he knoweth the place thereof. For he looketh to the ends of the earth, and seeth under the whole heaven; to make the weight for the winds.” It was many hundreds, yea, some thousands of years after that when man discovered that the atmosphere had weight. But it did not enter into the philosophy of the philosophers then; they knew nothing about it. Here is mentioned the weight of the wind. “He weigheth the waters by measure,” so that no matter what comes, the sea is never too full. There is always going on, the circle of waters — waters rising up in the form of vapour, and in vast quantities; for the power of the son acts upon the waters, and there are many tons going up every day. There was a measure for it all, in God’s mind. “When he made a decree for the rain, and a way for the lightning of the thunder, then did he see it, and declare it; he prepared it, yea, and searched it out. And unto man he said” — there is a wisdom above man — “Behold, the fear of the Lord, that is wisdom; and to depart from evil is understanding.” And that is just exactly what is felt when a soul is converted. He may know nothing more than that; he sees how he has been in almost all evil, and he departs from it. A real sight of Christ is enough to do that by the spirit of God, and the fear of the Lord. That is what is abiding even when souls are not occupied with their evil, and speaking of it — the fear of the Lord and departing from evil.

But that is not the same thing as the gospel; it is not the same thing as knowing that all our evil is judged already in Christ's person on the cross, that our sins are completely gone, and that we are brought in as children whiter than snow through the blood of Christ before the eye of God. That is the gospel; and it is after his reception of the word of truth that man receives the Holy Ghost, to delight in it, and to be the witness of it; but enjoying it first. Not to speak unto other people at first; oh, no; that is not the first thing. That is what the vanity of youngsters very often thinks — but to enjoy it with thankfulness and praise of God, and in worship of Him; that is what we come to. That is the true effect of the Spirit of God working. But then there is often a great deal of energy, and people are often more occupied with the wants of other people than with the infallible grace and truth of God. If the Lord will, I hope to continue on next Wednesday evening.

Lecture 8 - Job 29 - 32

This is the beginning of Job's last argument. The friends were quite silenced; he now makes his final confutation; and, indeed, it is more an appeal than an argument, for he rises above all that they had been pleading and insinuating.

Here he gives us in chapters 29-31 a very interesting pouring out of his feelings. The first of these chapters reviews his early days of prosperity, and we can see the very great complacency that he had in all that grace had wrought in him. But, alas! there was another thing that ought not to have been. He took pleasure in his good character. He was therefore in spirit too much of a Pharisee. "I thank thee that I am not as other men." It was not but that there was great grace in Job, and that there was a very admirable character sustained; but why should he talk about it? why should he think upon it? why should he not think of the source of all the blessing? Why should he not be boasting in the Lord — instead of an implied boasting in himself? There was the very thing that God had a controversy with. And we see that up to this time Job had not got to the bottom of that which God was ferreting out. Satan had completely disappeared. He is always defeated with the children of God. He may appear to gain a battle, but the campaign is always against him; and so it is very marked in the case of Job.

But the second of these three chapters looks at his downfall; that is the great topic that is in it. He bemoans his terrible state; and up to the present he could not withhold the expression that he thought God dealt

hardly with him, and was arbitrary. He could not understand His ways in the slightest degree; nor did he take in the motive that God had — the gracious purpose. In short, he had not reached the end of the Lord, because he had not done with himself. That is the real secret of it.

And the next chapter — the last of his appeal — is a most impassioned setting himself before God, and implicating judgments on himself. So thoroughly was his conscience good, that he goes over all the various snares of a man, and especially a man of position and wealth like Job; because that always increases the danger, and always makes the difficulty more. There is no greater mistake than to suppose that poverty is the hard place in which to serve God. On the contrary, it is when people are no longer poor, and no longer feel the need of continual dependence upon God — when they begin to be independent — for the world is not ashamed to call it that. I am sorry to say that Christians even drop into the language and the spirit of the world. Job calls solemn judgments upon himself — looking at the various snares — if he had been guilty in this or that or the other and so on — and the upshot of it all is that "The words of Job are ended."

We have no more of Job now in the way of self-defence. We shall find a very interesting new speaker on which I may say a few words on chapter 32 tonight. But now, first of all Job says: "Oh; that I were as in months past." Now it is always a bad sign when people look back to dwell on the past. Are people not to grow? Are children of God merely to be occupied with the immense favour of God? No doubt it is very true that one is plucked out of the teeth of Satan; but what is that compared with the

positive knowledge of God? It is a great thing for us; but is not the knowledge of God infinitely greater than merely the action of divine grace in rescuing a poor wretched sinner? It is an admirable thing for the sinner always to feel it; but it is a sad thing when he looks back to it as the brightest of all things. Why, that means he has been making no progress at all; it means that he has been all these years afterwards looking back upon that as the divine moment. Surely divine life ought to be a growing enjoyment; and the more so as you know of Christ and of God — I am speaking now to Christians, of course.

But even for Job God never left himself without witness — and God always met the souls that really walked with Him. Who can doubt but that Enoch walked with God, and do you suppose that Enoch looked back at the first glimpse he had of God, and would say he knew God by that? No, far from it, and shame on all people who talk such language. I do not deny that it is the language of many a Christian, but that is the most sorrowful thing now — that Christians forget what it is to be a Christian. They only think of the moment of becoming a Christian, and they seem to think that that is the great thing. No doubt it is passing the border, but it is certainly not going into the brightness beyond it. Where is the feast; where is the joy of the Father; where is the best robe, and all the other accompaniments? Is that nothing? Well, that was after. And that is what in an image presents us with the positive place of blessing. The “grace wherein we stand” — not merely the grace that rescued us, but the grace wherein we stand. It is a continual place of grace to be enjoyed more and more as we learn more of God and judge ourselves. But there is where Job failed.

Job admired himself. And so he looks back. “Oh, that I were as in months past.” God was going to do far better. It is true that Job went through very severe sifting, but that was all for his good; and more than that, it was for your good and my good, and the good of every believer that has ever profited by this book since God had it written down. It was meant for the blessing of all. It was not intended that there should be perhaps another man to go through the same. God has His economy of good; God has His reserve of grace; God was pleased that one should have had a very broad back to bear the trial. We have heard of the patience of Job; but that is the very thing wherein he broke down, so that he became impatient at last even with God. And the reason was because he was not yet an utterly broken man — he was given to knowing about himself.

Oh, how very rarely one finds a saint of God even now what every saint of God ought to be; but it is a rare thing even among Christian people. “As in the days when God preserved me; when His candle shined upon my head, and when by His light I walked through darkness; as I was in the days of my youth.” Why, that is a strange thing — “my youth.” No getting on with God in his maturity or in his old age! What was Job about? “When the Almighty was yet with me, when my children were about me.” Was not He with him then? That is just what he did not see or know. “Whom He loveth He chasteneth”; and that is one of the great lessons of the Book of Job. I admit it was terrible chastening. And that is where the friends were all wrong; it was so terrible that they thought it was retributive, and that it was impossible for a person to suffer to such an extreme degree unless he had been extremely wicked. And what

made it worse was that he looked so good, and therefore they thought he must be a hypocrite. There they were completely wrong; and the consequence was that they had to go down lower than Job, and that Job had to pray for them that they might be spared. And this he did. But, however, I anticipate what we will have another day.

“When I washed my steps with butter” — of course it is not literal — “and the rock poured me out rivers of oil.” You see that petroleum is an old affair in this world! “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; and the aged arose, and stood up.” All that was exceedingly pleasant to Job. And we are apt to think so too — there is nothing, men say, that succeeds like success, and there is not a more wicked maxim or one more entirely contrary to God; nothing more thoroughly denying that we are now in the place of suffering, and of being despised and rejected for Christ’s sake. But that is a worldly maxim, and it is just what the world delights in. Men will praise you if you do well to yourself, that is, if you are successful — make a good fortune, and have nice dinner parties, and so on. “The princes refrained talking, and laid their hand on their mouth.”

Now one of the beautiful features about Job was that he did not pretend to be noble, and he did not seek to be a prince. He was like a king in the nobility of his character — what a king ought to be — he was truly noble in his ways; and all that would have been admirable if he had not said or thought; for that is the important point. “Let not thy left hand know what thy right hand doeth.” It does not mean that other people do not know it, but the wrong is that our left hand should know what our right

hand does, i.e., we ought not to think about it. It is done to God; and it is merely returning a very little interest for the wonderful capital — for the spiritual capital that the Lord has put in our power.

Here you see it was not so. Job was highly pleased, and took great pleasure in the world thinking so much of him. “When the ear heard me, then it blessed me” — now he is looking at what you may call the objects of his kindness and love. For there was both kindness and love in Job. “And when the eye saw me, it gave witness to me.” He was referring to the people that had been helped out of their manifold afflictions. “Because I delivered the poor that cried, and the fatherless, and him that had none to help him.” And that was really true. God delighted in Job; that was all right; and he found at last that God did delight in him, but he did not find that till after the trial. He was buoyed up and raised above the ordinary occupations of men by the homage that was paid him and the perception of his exceeding kindness. All that lifted him up. Well, that is a very natural thing; but it is not spiritual; and it is the very thing that God was putting down severely in him; much more so than in a very inferior man. The greatest trials that God inflicts are upon the strongest, those that are able to bear them. Those that know most of His ways — they come in for it. And that was the case with Job.

“The blessing of him that was ready to perish came upon me; and I caused the widow’s heart to sing for joy. I put on righteousness, and it clothed me” — that was very true, and he looked at his clothing too; — “my judgment was as a robe and a diadem.” Yes, very pleased was Job. “I was eyes to the blind, and feet was I to the lame. I was a father to the poor; and the cause which I knew not

I searched out. And I brake the jaws of the wicked, and plucked the spoil out of his teeth. Then I said, I shall die in my nest." No, no; God was going to disturb that nice nest of his that was so warm and comfortable. "And I shall multiply my days as the sand." Why, he had been very desirous that God should cut short his days; for that was the only way that he saw out of all the trouble he was passing through. "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. 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. If I laughed on them, they believed it not" — it is too good to be true — "and the light of my countenance they cast not down. I chose out their way, and sat chief, and dwelt as a king in the army, as one that comforteth the mourners."

You cannot be surprised that the Jews were the first rationalists; they were the higher critics of a former day. They did not believe that it was a true story — the philosophic Jews — they did not believe that. How far it penetrated the synagogue generally we cannot say. I presume there were simple-hearted men that fully believed every word of it. But one of the great reasons why the Jews did not accept this history was that Job was not a Jew. "Oh! that cannot be; why, they are all dogs. Everybody but a Jew is a dog." And the idea that God did not say it of Abraham that he was of such integrity that there was nobody like him in all the earth — nor of Isaac, nor of Jacob! No, this they could not believe. They knew that it was of a patriarch of those

days, and therefore they were dead set against the possibility of such a thing as God extolling one who was not of the chosen race, one of the family and of the nation that had the promise.

What is it that makes people higher critics? It is that they prefer their own thoughts to the word of God. That is what it is to be an unbeliever; and if it is carried out thoroughly you are an infidel; you are a lost man. I presume that these Jews fully held to the other books of the Bible. It is to be presumed so. Perhaps they did not like some others. I can understand their no more liking the prophecy of Jonah being given to a Gentile city than that Jonah liked to be the prophet sent there. He did everything to turn away from it; and when God told him to go east he went west. When he was told to go to Nineveh he took a ship at Joppa to go west — just in the very opposite direction.

Well, now, in the next chapter (Job 30) we have a totally different story. Job now says, “But now they that are younger than I have me in derision.” You can suppose how very painful that was to a man that had been living a good deal upon the witness of these grand deeds and the high opinions of him, and the humbler classes, for once in a way, being entirely along with the grandees. For at times they do truly love to differ. “Whose fathers I would have disdained to have set with the dogs of my flock.” Ah! Job, you can be cutting; you can strike deep if you are so disposed. He would not have set their fathers with the dogs of his flock! Just think of it. And he gives his reason. He says, “Yea, whereto might the strength of their hands profit me?” Job was a wise man, and if he had servants he had servants that could do their duty. But as very often happens with the most miserable of

the world, they are weak, and unable to do a good day's work, nor a good hour's work. Whatever they do, they do in a manner that is enough to provoke any person to look at them. And so he says, "For want and famine they were solitary; fleeing into the wilderness in former time desolate and waste. Who cut up mallows by the bushes, and juniper roots for their meat. They were driven forth from among men (they cried after them as after a thief)" — they were most disreputable, and Job would not have had one of them on any account to serve him. He would be very willing to give them food if they were hungry; and if they had no clothing he would surely have abounded even then. But he felt it very much that these men should mock him, and should do everything to deride his sufferings, and not only that with these men in general, but that the young men tried to trip up his tottering steps! For you know the soles of his feet were intolerable — from head to foot not only was every nerve, as it were, active, but the very worms were beginning to prey upon him while he was alive, through all the sores that were open. It was a most awful case.

Yet what is that compared with moral suffering? Do you suppose the apostle Paul did not suffer much more severely than with any bodily trouble? He suffered from false brethren a great deal. And I think he must have suffered from true brethren very often — perhaps even more, but in a different way. "To dwell in the cliffs of the valleys, in caves of the earth, and in the rocks. Among the bushes they brayed." He will not allow that they talked — they brayed. "Under the nettles they were gathered together. They were children of fools, yea, children of base men" — i.e. of fathers that had not a name themselves — "they were viler than the earth. And

now am I their song; yea, I am their byword. They abhor me." Think of that — these words were all true. "They flee far from me." They could not bear to look at him — at the agony, and the terrible effect of all these sores on his body. They could not go near him. "And spare not to spit in my face. Because he hath loosed my cord." There was after all what grieved the heart of poor Job more than anything. It was God. He does not mean the devil; it was not the devil. "Because He hath loosed my cord and afflicted me" (and so to end of verse 16).

You see there is no reference to his three friends now. He is looking really at this tremendous trial that afflicted his body, and that exposed him to all this disrespect and contempt of the very lowest creatures on the face of the earth. "My bones are pierced in me in the night season; and my sinews take no rest. By the great force of my disease is my garment changed; it bindeth me about as the collar of my coat." Look at the pain all that would occasion. "He hath cast me into the mire, and I am become like dust and ashes. I cry unto thee and thou dost not hear me." But God did hear him. There was a reason why He did not answer; but God did hear. "I stand up, and thou regardest me not. Thou art become cruel to me." There he was quite wrong. "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. For I know that thou wilt bring me to death" — there he was wrong again. God had good things in store for Job. "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. Did not I weep for him that was in trouble? Was not my soul grieved for the poor?" — he goes back to that. "My

harp also is turned to mourning, and my organ into the voice of them that weep."

Well, there is a third chapter (31) to which we now come, very distinct from either of these, and this is his final appeal to God. This is all said not so much to his friends as to God; but he still was harping upon the past in the first of these chapters; then upon the present misery; now he appeals solemnly to God, and in the presence of them all.

"I made a covenant with mine eyes; why then should I think upon a maid? For what portion of God is there from above? and what inheritance of the Almighty from on high?" None whatever for a corrupt man, to take advantage of another. "Is not destruction to the wicked? and a strange punishment to the workers of iniquity? Doth not he see my ways" — he was a thoroughly pious believing man — "and count all my steps? If I had 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." He had a perfectly good conscience, but that is not enough. There is the great principle of self-judgment; there is the grand principle also of entire submission to God and vindicating Him — that He is right and wise in all, not only in what He does, but in what He allows. It is all for good. It may be very bad on the part of others, as it was on the part of Job's friends, but God had a good purpose for Job in it all.

"If my step hath turned out of thy way," etc. (vers. 1-12). It is clear that Job was a most blameless man in his conduct, and even in the state of his heart. "If I did despise the cause of my manservant, or of my maidservant" — he now goes to other duties — "when

they contended with me, what then shall I do when God riseth up? and, when he visiteth, what shall I answer him?" etc. (vers. 13-23). "If I have made gold my hope" — now he turns to a third kind of snare — "or have said to the fine gold, Thou art my confidence; If I rejoiced because my wealth was great" — and how many do — "and because mine hand had gotten much," etc., it was not inherited merely; but it was acquired by his own industry and God's particular blessing upon him.

Now he looks at another thing quite different — "If I beheld the sun when it shined, or the moon walking in brightness," i.e. in the way of any adoration; in bowing down to the son or moon, which was the earliest form of idolatry. We do not hear of Baals or Ashtoreths or any of the disreputable vanities and wickedness of heathen objects of worship; but here was a work of God of the highest nature, but no leaning to it in any way — "and my heart hath been secretly enticed, or my mouth hath kissed my hand" — even the slightest form of acknowledging the creature! — "this also were an iniquity to be punished by the judge: for I should have denied the God that is above." There we have very sound doctrine. "If I rejoiced at the destruction of him that hated me, or lifted up myself when evil found him" — a very common snare for people. They have a little pleasure when their adversaries come to grief, or are troubled. "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. The stranger did not lodge in the street; but I opened my doors to the traveller. If I covered my transgressions as Adam, by hiding mine iniquity in my bosom: did I fear a great multitude" — you observe he

was perfectly acquainted with the very interesting and profitable story of Adam's fall. There we have just what anyone now, looking back with the light of Christ even, sees. There was the great sin of Adam. Instead of humbling himself to God, and going to meet God to tell Him how he had disgraced himself, Adam hid himself away; and the clothing that he put upon him showed that he was no longer innocent.

"Oh, that one would hear me!" Now here is Job's final appeal. "Behold my desire is, that the Almighty would answer me" — Job wanted to hear His voice about it — "and that mine adversary had written a book, Surely I would take it" — if anyone that wished him ill laid charges "I would take it," he says, "upon my shoulder, and bind it as a crown to me" — because he was confident that it was false. "I would declare unto him," i.e. unto the Almighty; it would seem possibly "the adversary" — "the number of my steps; as a prince would I go near unto him." I think it is "to the Lord." "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. The words of Job are ended."

Well, it was very magnificent; as it had been a justification of himself. But it was a great mistake as to the secret of God's dealings with Job, and accordingly a new interlocutor appears. We have not heard of him. It is a remarkable indication of primitive habits and feelings. He was a young man. And this absence of any notice taken of him is just in the spirit of olden manners. And he shows that he perfectly enters into it himself, and in no way complains of it. Elihu, however, was a man

put forward by God, to bring to naught the pride of age and experience, observation and tradition. Because there you have what belonged to each of those friends. They were old men, and they were proud of their place. And Eliphaz, as we know, was a man that strongly stood upon the judgment and feeling of public opinion — of pious men, no doubt, but, after all, it was only men's. And one of the wonderful ways of God is this: that no tradition can ever meet present circumstances. The same facts even may occur; but they are in a different light, and the circumstances modify them enormously, and all that has to be taken into account.

Who, then, is sufficient for these things? Our sufficiency is of God. There is the need of dependence upon God. You cannot pile up wisdom in that way for divine things. It is all very fair in science, or knowledge, or art, or literature, or anything of that kind; but it is nothing in the things of God. Zophar seems to be more confident in himself than in anybody. And Bildad was one between the two. He was a man of keen observation and good power of expression. But, however that might be, all had failed, and now Elihu comes forward.

"So these three men ceased to answer Job, because he was righteous in his own eyes" (Job 32). That was their idea, and there was some truth in it. "Then was kindled the wrath of Elihu, the son of Barachel the Buzite, of the kindred of Ram." He belonged to the family of Nahor, the brother of Abraham. He was not properly one of the chosen family, but he was closely connected, like Laban and others. He belonged to another branch. "Against Job was his wrath kindled, because he justified himself rather than God." Well, that was true. He did justify himself. The last chapter which we have just read is self-

justification from beginning to end. It was quite true, as a matter of fact, but was entirely improper in a question of God's dealings, and why this great affliction had come upon him. "Also against his three friends was his wrath kindled, because they had found no answer, and yet had condemned Job." What was it that hindered these three friends from understanding him? The same thing that hindered Job — self. Self was not judged. Self is one of the greatest difficulties in the way of a Christian — in the way of a sinner of old, and now still among Christians.

"Now Elihu had waited till Job had spoken, because they were older than he." Well, that was very proper. "When Elihu saw that there was no answer in the mouth of these three men, then his wrath was kindled." Why? It was not for himself at all. He was displeased with them all for God's sake. "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 show you my opinion. I said, Days should speak, and multitude of years should teach wisdom" — and so it should be. "But there is a spirit in man" — there is something higher than experience — "there is a spirit in man" — it is the highest part of man's nature. The body is the outward, vessel, and the soul is that which makes a man to be a man. Every man has his own spirit, but soul is that which may be in common among men. For instance, John the Baptist came in the spirit and power of Elias. He could not come in the soul of Elias. Everybody comes in his own soul; that is the seat of individuality. But spirit is a man's capacity. You might find half a dozen men with the same capacity; and we say sometimes, "That man spoke like a Luther; that man wrote like a Calvin; that

man was as earnest in his work as John Wesley; that man was as diligent in preaching as Charles Spurgeon" — and so on. The spirit of these different men might be similar in other men, but it is that which gives them their particular power (or character). But the soul and spirit go together so closely that no human wit can ever distinguish between them; they are so welded together, being of a spirit nature. When a man dies, his soul goes up and his spirit too; they both go up; they go up together necessarily.

And so then it is that we can understand that there is a spirit in man. Spirit is expressive of spiritual capacity, and that is not to be measured by the question of experience. A man might have much more spiritual capacity who was young. That was the case with Elihu. And he says, "The inspiration of the Almighty giveth them understanding." It was God that breathed into man the breath of life; and in that breath of life there was not only the soul but the spirit; and that is the reason why man alone has an immortal soul. God never breathed into a horse or a dog, or any other animal on the earth, but only into man; therefore, man's soul and spirit are immortal. But it may be immortal in hell, or it may be blessedly immortal in heaven! It does not deprive a man of his being a sinner, nor of his bearing the consequences of it; neither, on the other hand, does it deprive him — still less — of receiving eternal life from the Lord Jesus. Then there is another life given to him. "Great men are not always wise: neither do the aged understand judgment." Far from it. "Therefore I said, Hearken to me; I also will show mine opinion. Behold, I waited for your words; I gave ear to your reasons, whilst

ye searched out what to say." He never ventured to interrupt; he never said one word.

Sometimes people are astonished to find this young man coming forward, after not only the three friends were silent, but Job too. Then he speaks, and he apologises in these words that I now read. That is all that I am noticing tonight. "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." And that was perfectly true. "Lest ye should say, We have found out wisdom." He saw that it was a question of God. They had not really brought in the true God as He is. "God thrusteth him down, not man." That is what Job had said. So far, Job was far more right than his friends. "Now he hath not directed his words against me." So he says — I am in a position to be able to speak dispassionately. If he had attacked me because of anything I had said it might seem self-vindication. But here I must speak for God, young as I am. "Neither will I answer him with your speeches." They were entirely powerless. "They were amazed, they answered no more! they left off speaking" (vers. 1-15). He was full of indignation that they went on still blaming Job, and could not convince him of anything wrong. They had entirely missed their way. "I will speak, that I may be refreshed: I will open my lips and answer. 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" (vers. 16-22).

And there we may leave it for the present. If the Lord will, we shall have the rest of Elihu's admirable address,

where he touches the real roots of the question for the first time — an interpreter who was one of a thousand, as he says himself, though not referring to himself.

Lecture 9 - Job 33 - 38

It is remarkable how worldly minds dislike Elihu. It is a very old story. It began with some of the famous Jews, and it has gone down to the present day. They regard him as a particularly forward young man, and also as full of self-conceit, after all with very little in it. Now nothing can show more a mind unacquainted with God; because Elihu has a most valuable place in this book. It is he that for the first time brings out the blessing of affliction — affliction turned to the profit of the soul. This was not very much known even in Israel afterwards; for in Israel God was showing His government of a nation; but that is a totally different thing from what we find in Job. What Elihu shows is a government of souls, and that goes on now more than ever in Christianity.

This is what is found in John 15: “I am the true vine, and my Father is the husbandman.” And what does the Father do? “Every branch in me that beareth not fruit, he taketh away; and every branch that beareth fruit, he purgeth it.” He purges on the one hand, and He takes away on the other. If there are those who are totally insensible, He takes them away; more particularly if they bear His name falsely. But those who do bear fruit He purges, that they may bring forth more fruit. That was exactly the case with Job. So also Peter takes it up. He knew what that was. Satan desired to sift him as wheat. But the Lord prayed for Peter, not merely for you, but for Peter. And why? Because a dead set was made against Peter. Peter was lifted up as Job was. Peter was quite sure of his own great love for the Saviour, and he trusted in his own love — not Christ’s love to him. but

Peter's love to Christ; for no matter what the difficulty he might be in, he would be faithful! Whereas, on the contrary, he slighted the word of the Lord that warned him of his danger, and that night before the cock crew, he denied Him — that is, he broke down exactly where he thought it was impossible that he could.

And so did Job. Job had shown himself a most gracious man in prosperity, and a most patient man in adversity; and if the trial had rested there Job would have been more pleased with himself than ever; for what could we expect more than that a man should be exceedingly kind, and, as men thought, humble, and always occupied with the activities of benevolence and of compassion towards the suffering, when he had nothing to trouble him? Then when he was more troubled, perhaps, than any other man ever was before, he first lost his property, then lost his children, and then lost all his bodily health and was reduced to being one of the greatest of sufferers; so much so that he would have been delighted to have died, but that would not have answered the end of the Lord The Lord intended that he should live, and consequently that he must accept the trial from Him; but Job did not understand that. No doubt, although his wife did not — as a wife nowadays very often does — help her husband to get wrong, she told him to curse God and die — make an end of it all. Women are sometimes very impatient; so she was, any way, and gave right bad advice. He rejected it, but he could not stand his friends' insinuations. However, as I have gone through that pretty carefully before, I need not dwell upon it now. But here we have come to Job triumphant over his friends. They are perfectly silenced. These men of age, experience, and wisdom, did not understand the

case even as well as Job And the reason why they did not understand it was that Job had more sense of grace in God, which is the real key of all the dealings of God. They thought everything must be shallow and on the outside, and yet they were true saints.

But we have to learn, as one of the great lessons of the Book, that we cannot glory in saints — we can only glory in God. Though not a few are brought before us, yet they all come short of it. Even Job, although he found it an easy matter to confute them (and he seems to have had considerable pleasure in reducing the three, one after the other, to total silence), he had not yet got to the root of the matter, and that was — a little complacency in himself — a most insidious evil, and only to be learnt in the presence of God. And now there is no excuse for us; because the very object of the death of Christ is not merely that we should be forgiven and made happy; but it is that we should walk in self-judgment, and also in confidence in God, and in these two things Job failed; and we are in danger of failing too. We stop short, just getting the heart and the conscience, when they have been awakened, to feel what sin is. But that is only the threshold; that is only the way in which we enter into the blessing, and the blessing is, to be brought to God. No doubt there is a great deal in being brought to God; and we are brought in a very wonderful way to God, on which I do not dwell now, because it is not what we have here.

But as to Elihu, he lifts up the veil for the first time off the riddle which none of them had been able to solve — neither Eliphaz, nor Bildad, nor Zophar, nor even Job. The last words of Job were that he would not give up his integrity, no matter what came, till cockle grew instead

of barley a thing that could not possibly be. He was determined to stick to it; and he was quite sure they were all wrong in thinking that there was anything wrong in him. And yet there was. Not at all in the way they thought; but it was the pleasure that he took in what grace, which the Lord had bestowed, had produced in his ways. There was no doubt about that; but why did he think about it? Why did he not think of God? Why was he not filled with the wonder of God producing anything that was good in such a wretched creature as fallen man? Now Elihu comes in; and he had evidently great difficulty in holding his tongue for a good while. And he showed his great humility. Because we should not have known he had been there. He suddenly comes forward at this critical moment, when not only the three, but Job, were silent; and it was a very hard matter to get Job silent; for he was an excellent speaker, and he had a great deal to say that was very true; but he did not yet know himself as God meant him to — as God means us to learn ourselves. That is the reason the book was given to us — not to learn ourselves in a human way by our thoughts, but to learn ourselves after a definite sort by the light of God detecting what nothing else can.

Well, Elihu had been silent. He was a young man compared with them, and he had a very strong sense of propriety; and accordingly he would not think of interrupting, or of entering in, even when, one after another, the others subsided. He might have spoken then, but no! he waits till the whole thing was closed by Job’s fervent utterance, in which he showed that his good opinion of himself was as great as ever it was, and all that God had done had not brought him down in his own opinion of himself. This was what roused Elihu. He

was indignant that the others could not see. He saw it clearly enough; that Job was insubmissive to God, and that Job spoke in a very improper way about God. Afterwards he said the right thing. You must not suppose that when God compared him with his three friends it was with regard to these speeches. No, no; Job had a wrong spirit while they were going on, and resented in the highest degree the bad thoughts the others had of him. But does that make a man bad? What is the opinion of another man? what does he know about it? So that if a person is quieted before God, he can afford to take it all quietly. It is very bad for the others; but it does not make him a bit worse. Job, however, had not learnt this; he broke down in the very matter of patience. Yet we have heard of the patience of Job. There was nobody like him for it; but he broke down in the very thing in which he was apt to be a little proud.

Elihu makes a great deal of apology. That is what these proud men do not like. They are men inflated with the pride of man’s heart; and scholars — even scholars in the Bible, learned men in the scriptures — are just as apt to be carried away by notions of their own importance as other people are; and that is what is the key to all these depreciatory views of Elihu. They know nothing about God. They are eloquent of the wonders of a man’s mind and perhaps the outward works of God; all that, they may be, but they do not know anything about the dealings of God. There are thousands of men that have written of the scriptures who have never seen their sinfulness before God, who have never been brought to measure self in the presence of God. And accordingly these men all hate Elihu, and speak with the utmost contempt not only of him as an upstart of a young man

that was full of himself, but also of what he said; thus deprecating his speaking at all. For he was very sorry to be obliged to speak. He had no desire to put himself forward; but there he was, quite contrary to all his own intentions or his own desire, compelled to speak on God's behalf against that which he felt was so unworthy in Job even. Indeed, he does not say much about the others. They were silent; they had passed away just as Satan had previously. Satan disappears and we do not hear of him after in this book; he was thoroughly beaten; and then the other three evidently had to give up and surrender; they had nothing more to say. Indeed, they had said a great deal too much.

But now (Job 33) was Elihu's turn; and after all, Job had not said the thing that was right. So he begins here. The 32nd chapter was merely a preface, speaking of his own shortcoming, and at the same time, of his entire conviction that he saw a truth that neither Job nor the three friends had seen; and this he must have out.

"I pray thee, hear my speeches, and hearken to all my words. Behold, now I have opened my mouth" — he had been very slow to do it — "my tongue hath spoken in my mouth. My words shall be of the uprightness of my heart" — it is all genuine and sincere, whatever these physicians of no value say, these higher critics — "and my lips shall utter knowledge clearly." And so they did. "The Spirit of God hath made me, and the breath of the Almighty hath given me life. If thou canst answer me, set thy words in order before me, stand up. Behold, I am according to thy wish in God's stead." Job, while his heart went out towards God, was afraid that it would be too overwhelming; and yet he wanted to find Him; but still he was afraid. He wanted some one that could speak

in a human tongue to him — could speak thoroughly for God. Well, Elihu does that in his measure. Elihu is an interpreter, one of a thousand, and he therefore does speak for God — just what Job had wanted, only very far short of the Great Interpreter — very far short of Him who is the Chief of the Prophets, who is the Lord God of the Prophets, as well as a Prophet. Very short, indeed, of Christ! Still the presence of Elihu is a witness to sovereign grace. It is the rarest thing in the world to find a man that has learnt so of God as Elihu had. And it was purposely intended to bring down the pride of the older men. And Elihu felt that; but still he made them apologies; for he was very unwilling indeed to appear to be setting them in order and correcting the folly that had come from them. He is occupied with Job rather — and that is a very fine trait in him. He does not go round Eliphaz, Bildad, and Zophar, and show how wrong they had been; but the great point remains still to be settled.

There was no solution of the riddle yet. Elihu contributes for the first time. Not completely — it required God to do that — and God did appear; I do not say how. I do not say that He took the shape of man, as He often did in the Old Testament. We do not read of anything of that here. It may merely have been a voice for that matter. But we shall see, when we come to that part, that it was a divine voice; there is no mistake about that. Here, however, it is a man, as he says, and a young man, too, “I also am formed out of the clay. Behold, my terror shall not make thee afraid, neither shall my hand be heavy upon thee,” etc. (vers. 7-11). Job had complained of God’s hand. There were two great faults in what Job had said. He thought too well of himself, and he found fault with God. That is what is clearly put here by Elihu. “Behold, in this

thou art not just: I will answer thee, that God is greater than man. Why dost thou strive against him? for he giveth not account of any of his matters." He had entirely fallen short of the reverence due to God — entirely forgotten the infinite distance between God and man; the majesty of God; and therefore, instead of finding fault with himself for being so far short, he found fault with God. He did not understand His ways fully. Now he ought to have credited, though he did not understand them. "For God speaketh once, yea twice, yet man perceiveth it not" (vers. 12-14).

Now he brings in the fact that God carries on His wonderful way in the midst of all, in a ruined world with everything out of order and Satan triumphing, and in fact the prince of the world, and the god of this age, as scripture calls him, at any rate in the New Testament; although they very little understood that yet. But we ought to know it. Well, God, in the midst of all this, carries on His wonderful way, and did so before there was a Bible. You must remember that when the circumstances of Job occurred there was no written revelation. Genesis and Job were probably written very near one another: practically at the same time. There is no reference to the law; there is no reference to the deliverance of Israel out of Egypt, in Job; and although there was some distance between Job's country and Egypt, the Book of Job shows that he was well acquainted with the great features of Egypt; that he was well acquainted with the crocodile and the like. There is a magnificent description of it in this very book, and many other things that show that the country of Egypt and its people were quite familiar to Job. He only lived on the edge of the desert, and a little, therefore, to the

east of the Holy Land; perhaps the north-east; but at any rate, it was in that part of the country. Elihu belonged rather to another part. He was the son of Barachel the Buzite, of the kindred of Ram. “Ram” is the same word (only another form) as “Aram,” i.e., Syria, that part of the country of Asia north of the Holy Land. He belonged, therefore, to a race akin to the Holy Land, but not belonging to it strictly, and that is what makes the great interest of the book — it is God and man. It is not Israel at all; it is purposely God dealing with man, and God dealing with man’s soul. It is far more important that the soul should be right, and this we find most carefully shown in this book. So much so that Job was brought into the best blessing he ever knew while he was still under the effects of his trial, and the external blessing had not yet been conferred; but it followed immediately he could bear it.

God therefore, Elihu says, often deals in a dream of the night (ver. 15). I dare say some of you have had these visitations. It is certainly not for me to beast of anything; but I think that I have had consciously God whispering little things to me about myself, and advising me to take care what I was about, and compelling me to judge myself in a way that I had not done before; and I conceive that it is very probably so in this case. It is nothing miraculous at all. We may perhaps not count with God; but this no doubt is just where we fail, in not attaching the importance that we ought to do, and this although we have His word. But still God is a living God, and God has to do with every one of us in this way. There can be no doubt that here Elihu speaks about it as a certainty in those days; and why it should not be in our day, I, for one, have never learnt. I believe it is all a

mistake to imagine it is not so. The great point is that it is altogether inferior to the word. This is where we have our great advantage; and all these excellent people that come before us in this book had it not. Oh no, scripture is of enormous value, and we show our great lack of faith by not estimating it, and making it the grandest point of every day's life — to learn God more and better by His word, now especially as we have Christ, who is not merely the Interpreter, "one of a thousand," but alone; alone, above all — Moses, Elias, no matter whom — Jesus only. Well, "In a dream, in a vision of the night, when deep sleep falleth upon men" — it is not seeing a spirit, as Eliphaz did. That I do not pretend to. It has never been my lot, nor, I suppose, yours; but here it is another thing. It is in sleep; and it is a dream; plain, simple, positive fact, but still it is God deigning to help us. And He loves to do that in ways that we do not always perceive, but He is always doing so in one way or another, except where Ephraim is joined to his idols — "let him alone"! That is a terrible word.

"Then he openeth the ears of men" (ver. 16). That is what is shown in this chapter. It is not "believing" men; it is any man, in order that he might believe. But still, when we do not behave as saints, we may get a little word just showing us where we are, that we are "walking as men," as the apostle said. "That he may withdraw man from his purpose, and hide pride from man." You see, it is one that had never yet been broken. "He keepeth back his soul from the pit, and his life from perishing by the sword." He was on the straight way to it. "He is chastened also with pain upon his bed." It is not only these dealings with the soul, but also with the body. There he touches the very case of Job. "And the

multitude of his bones with strong pain: so that his life abhorreth bread, and his soul dainty meat. His flesh is consumed away" — how true it was of poor Job "that it cannot be seen; and his bones that were not seen, stick out. Yea, his soul draweth near unto the grave, and his life to the destroyers. If there be a messenger with him" — that is exactly what Elihu was — "an interpreter, one among a thousand, to show unto man his uprightness": i.e., what becomes him. And what is it that becomes a man? Self-judgment. He is a fallen man. He may be a believing man, but still, he is a man, as we can say, with the flesh in him; and that flesh may be working strongly, as it did in Job as well as the others. "Then he is gracious unto him." Directly the man bows, directly there is submissiveness to God — that is the uprightness of man. This is what is done when a man is converted, i.e., he bows to God, but also when a man gets away, like Peter, it may also be said, "When thou art converted." For the restoration of a man is very much of the same character as when a man is converted. He is turned back to God. He has been forgetting God, and he turns back and remembers Him. That is how it was with Peter; and that is what we sometimes find also. "Then he is gracious unto him, and saith, Deliver him from going down to the pit, I have found a ransom" (vers. 17-24).

Now I do not think you could find in all the rest of the Old Testament such a description as here of God's dealing with the soul that is wrong, or that has got wrong. I do not remember any so graphic, and so personally applicable; and it would be hard to find it in the New Testament, except where the Lord gives us the Prodigal. There I admit that we have a perfect picture. We could not have here all that the Lord shows of the

prodigal son; but here it is a wonderful thing, especially so precious at the early day. But it does not mean that the ransom was yet offered; but there it was before God, answering to that word in Rom. 3: “the pretermission” of sins — a passing over, not a “remission,” for this latter could not be true of an Old Testament saint. “Remission” is what particularly belongs to the New Testament. But there was a “pretermission” — a “passing over” by God. It was like a bad debt, and the creditors saying, “It is no use; we must pass it by; we must not expect anything.” That is what God did. There was “the forbearance of God.” But now it is not the forbearance of God at all; and it is not “pretermission.” It is “remission” now. It is God’s righteousness clearly manifested, and that is, that Christ has borne our sins, and therefore it is a righteous thing to blot them out. It is not merely saying, “Poor fellow, he cannot pay”; but here is One that has paid, and paid in the most glorious manner; more wonderful a great deal than if there had never been sin; more glorious to God and more blessed for man. Because, on the contrary, it was giving us up as a bad job where it was merely “forbearance” and “pretermission”; but now it is triumphing.

You recollect that remarkable word which I think is quite misunderstood — “come short of the glory of God” (Rom. 3:23). Does this apply to the believer? On the contrary, no believer comes “short of the glory of God.” And how is this? Why, because there is One in the glory who bore my sins on the cross, And He who is in the glory of God is my life and my righteousness. Therefore it is that we, believers, do not “come short of the glory of God.” There was that great fact, not merely a mighty work upon the cross, but the Lord Jesus

connecting that work with the glory of God, and giving us the wonderful impulse and strength of knowing that we do not come short of the glory of God. That was a thing that could not be at the beginning. It could not be without — not only sin forgiven, but Christ glorifying God about sin, and consequently going up Himself into the glory of God, and this as our Saviour. Well, we have not this here; nothing like it at all, but simply "I have found a ransom."

"His flesh shall be fresher than a child's; he shall return to the days of his youth; he shall pray unto God, and he will be favourable unto him; and he shall see his face with joy." We have here nothing at all about the two natures. That the Old Testament saint never understood. There is no such thing as the intelligence of that great truth in any part of the Old Testament. And man is incapable of profiting by, or understanding, it until he sees Christ by faith; sees the Son and believes in Him. Now we are capable. Now we are made to understand it simply and fully. "He looketh upon men, and if any say, I have sinned, and perverted that which was right, and it profited me not" — there you see, is just what the repentant soul says. It is not called "repentance" here. It is in Jeremiah. Jeremiah, brings it out very beautifully in the 31st chapter, before he introduces the new covenant; but here we have the thing, repentance, although the word is not employed. "He will deliver his soul from going into the pit, and his life shall see the light. Lo, all these things worketh God oftentimes with man" (vers. 25-30). It is very comforting to think that that was what God was doing, and was known to be doing, in those days. Because the gospel was not preached then. There was, no doubt, the precious

revelation of “the Seed of the woman” that was to be bruised, and which was to bruise Satan; but after all, although that is a most wonderful word, and not less wonderful now than it ever was — most wonderful to think of now — yet it was almost all they had then.

There was a little more that came in with Noah, as a type — the deluge, and man passing out of it; and then Abraham as the chosen one, and the seed that belonged to that stock; because. they all knew that thence was to be the Messiah. All the believing Jews were perfectly aware that Abraham’s Seed, represented by Isaac, was to be the Messiah. And how beautifully it was confirmed by Isaac being the one that was offered up in a figure, and was received, as it were, from the dead, God forbidding Abraham to put him to death! but he was under sentence of death for three days, and then it was, at the very critical moment, he was delivered!

Not so with Jesus. Here everything was perfect. Everything here was carried out in all its fulness of blessing, but it could not be in any other than Jesus. So Elihu calls Job (ver. 31) to mark all this, and hearken; and then if he has anything to say he would be very glad to hear, because he wanted to justify him. There is, you see, the great difference between Elihu and the others The others wanted to condemn him. They were quite sure there was something altogether bad there, and they wanted to have it out. Therefore they were on their mettle to try and discover what it could possibly be; and so they grew more and more angry with Job, because instead of acknowledging it he told them that they were botchers. Instead of being physicians of any value they were mere bunglers, and everything was a mistake and

a blunder on their part, and no doubt they were very angry.

Well, Elihu proceeds (Job 34), and now he blames Job again. He says, “Hear my words, ye wise men, and give ear unto me, ye that have knowledge. For the ear trieth words, as the mouth tasteth meat. Let us choose to us judgment: let us know among ourselves what is good. For Job hath said, I am righteous” (vers. 2-5). And he was, in the sense in which his three friends denied; but he was not righteous in glorifying God. No, he found fault with God. “For Job hath said, I am righteous: and God hath taken away my judgment. Should I lie against my right? my wound is incurable without transgression.” Well, he says that is insufferable; such language is highly improper. “What man is like Job, who drinketh up scorning like water “; for there was a good deal of the pride of his heart that came out in Job. “Which goeth in company with the workers of iniquity.” He says: ‘It is bad enough for unbelieving men to say something like that; but you — Job!’ “Therefore hearken unto me,” etc. Now he appeals to Job. “Who has given him a charge over the earth, or who has disposed all the world?” Who is one that has committed anything to him, to dispose of the whole world? Who has done that for God? “If he set his heart upon man” — He has only to leave man, and he perishes.

You see, Elihu had not in the least that idea which many pious men have now, that all the world goes on well by the principle of gravitation. Well, there is not a doubt God gives an impulse to all the heavenly orbs, and the earth among the rest. He gave them their motion; but then it is God who keeps it up. Men attribute this to second causes. But it is not in the way of motion to be

perpetual. That is all a great mistake; there is no such thing, and God it is that keeps everything going, and if God were to withdraw for a moment the immediate action of His power, everything would collapse. That is what Elihu teaches here. “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. If now thou hast understanding, hear this: hearken to the voice of my words. Shall even he that hateth right govern?” That is, he shows the monstrousness of Job finding fault with God. “And wilt thou condemn him that is most just?” “Why,” he says, “it is not fit to say so to a king.” A king may have his faults, but his office is one that demands reverence from men. We are not only to fear God’ but to honour the king. Here you have it. He was anything but, what people call, in these days, “a liberal.” “Is it fit to say to a king, Thou art wicked?” etc. (vers. 18-21), Every now and then God does allow, and what is the effect of it? A revolution. People do not know why it is; but when men are always crying for some change, or something new, God allows it to come, and they are overwhelmed. It is the very thing that they do not want; because the upshot, almost always, of a revolution of men against government is that there is a worse government that follows. But there is a true despot at the same time flattering the people while he is taking advantage of them in every possible way. “For he will not lay upon man more than right,” etc. (vers. 23-27).

Then he shows another side, when God gives quietness. God, after all, spite of the restless wickedness of the devil, is always above him. Not only above man, but above Satan and all his power. “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; that the hypocrite reign not, lest the people be ensnared. Surely it is meet to be said unto God, I have borne chastisement" — that is what he was pressing upon Job. "I will not offend any more" etc. (vers. 29-36). Job had spoken very unguardedly. "For he addeth rebellion unto his sin, he clappeth his hands among us, and multiplieth his words against God."

Now again, we come to a further step (Job 35). "Elihu spake moreover, and said, Thinkest thou this to be right, that thou saidst, My righteousness" — which was not only that he spake against God, but he thought so much of himself — "My righteousness is more than God's." That is what he practically meant, although he would not have said it. But Elihu put his finger upon the spot. "For thou saidst, What advantage will it be unto thee? and, What profit shall I have if I be cleansed from my sin? I will answer thee, and thy companions with thee. Look unto the heavens, and see, and behold the clouds which are higher than thou." Can you bear in the face of that to speak against Him who is above them all? For man cannot look the sun in the face; who then is he to look God in the face? "If thou sinnest, what doest thou against him?" etc. (vers. 6-16). So that whether it was decrying God, or setting forward himself, Job was wrong on both counts.

Well, he goes on further still (Job 36): "Elihu also proceeded, and said, Suffer me a little, and I will show thee that I have yet to speak on God's behalf. I will fetch my knowledge from afar, and will ascribe righteousness to my Maker. For truly my words shall not be false; he

that is perfect in knowledge is with thee. Behold, God is mighty, and despiseth not any" (vers. 1-5). What a wonderful saying! People might have thought, and do think, that the greater the majesty of God, the less He takes notice of the very smallest thing on earth. It is all the other way. And God shows His might by His being able to grasp everything, and take notice and show His concern about the smallest insect. "He preserveth not the life of the wicked" — His great concern is man, but He takes in everything — "but giveth right to the poor. He withdraweth not his eyes from the righteous." That is the great point of this chapter. In the 33rd it was "man," but here it is "the righteous" man that He more particularly looks at. The discipline that God exercises over man in order to win him to God is far more strictly over the righteous man, to keep him right; that if He has justified him it should not be to His dishonour. For it is a terrible thing when a saint of God gets wrong. "But with kings are they on the throne; yea, he doth establish them for ever, and they are exalted. And if they be bound in fetters and be holden in cords of affliction" — and sometimes kings come under these things very decidedly — "then he showeth them their work" (vers. 6-12). It is not entirely occupied with the righteous; but it is particularly with kings. "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." But what He has pleasure in is this: "He delivereth the poor in his affliction, and openeth their ears in oppression. Even so would he have removed thee" — he applies it to Job — "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." It was to be accomplished strictly, exactly, as Elihu explained it. "But

thou hast fulfilled the judgment of the wicked: judgment and justice take hold on thee." Job was not yet right. There was a process going on under Elihu, and it was shown by this — that he never interrupts him. It is not without a little proof that Elihu saw signs as if he were going to speak, but he stops him. I need not enter into the proof of that new.

Then he says: "Because there is wrath, beware lest he take thee away with his stroke" (vers. 13- 26). He is infinitely above our thoughts. "For he maketh small the drops of water." Elihu illustrates it by God's power with outward things. And if that is the case with so small a thing as the rain, how much more with a thing so great as the soul of man; the soul of man that is due to the inbreathing of God Himself? "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 speaker takes up the same line of argument that Jehovah does when He speaks out of the whirlwind in the latter part of this book. "Behold, he spreadeth his light upon it," etc. (vers. 27-33) For the cattle are very sensitive to a thunderstorm, and show that they regard it as a very serious matter; there are men who only harden themselves. But here Elihu gives his last words, and is very much occupied with describing a thunderstorm. For he had proper thoughts about God even in outward matters.

"At this also my heart" — that is a very different thing from the mere instinct of the cattle — "my heart trembleth," etc. (Job 37:1-8). Even the beasts have more sense than some men. "Out of the south cometh the whirlwind," etc. (vers. 9-12). That is, he shows the

absolute sovereignty of God. And if that is true about natural things, is it not still more necessary in spiritual things? “He causeth it to come, whether for correction” — that is, what he was showing about the dealings with Job — “or for his land, or for mercy. Hearken unto this, O Job; stand still, and consider the wondrous works of God. Dost thou know when God disposed them, and caused the light of his cloud to shine? “What do you know about it all?” Dost thou know the balancings of the clouds, the wondrous works of him which is perfect in knowledge?” etc. (vers. 13-19). That is, that with even those men of God, it is only in part we know. There is great darkness even now. “Shall it be told him that I speak?” “Oh,” he says, “I should be frightened if such a thing were to be. I speak in the presence of God.” “If a man speak, surely he shall be swallowed up,” etc. (vers. 20-24). There was just where Job had made a mistake. He was wise of heart, and he admired the fruits of grace, and all that was quite inconsistent with what was due to God. And here ends Elihu. Immediately we find the Lord interposing; that I reserve for our next occasion.

Lecture 10 - Job 38-41

Chap. 38:1-38. The last three verses of this chapter properly belong to the next chapter, as we there enter upon animate nature. All that we have here is in regard to what is called inanimate nature. Yet it is a part of the creation of God quite as truly as is animate nature. Still, this latter rises above everything that is without life. For life is a very wonderful thing, even in an animal, however small, and distinguishes it from all that never had life. But here we have Jehovah speaking, and it was Jehovah who spake at Sinai and in a way suitable to the law. Because the law of God if given to man — sinful man, as it was — must be a ministration of death and condemnation. It is because of defect in human law that a bad man escapes, and therefore the better the law the greater certainty that it will reach one who deserves to be punished by it. And God's law is perfect for the object for which He gave it as the rule for fallen man upon the earth, to curb and restrain him; and if he be not curbed or restrained, to condemn (and in effect ending in death).

But here there was quite a different reason why God spoke; because there was an end, for those who believed — to know that God cares for them, and this too, entirely independent of Israel and the very special dealings of God for the chosen people. God's eye and God's hand too are ever in exercise over every creature on the face of the earth. It does not matter how small or how great; it does not matter how violent or how peaceful; this makes no difference, they are creatures of God. And God has to do with them, as He shows here. This was a grand

lesson for Job. He had forgotten that God has to say to the very hairs of our head, for they are all numbered; and that not a sparrow falls to the ground without His knowing. But God takes it in according to His own grandeur, and His grandeur is quite beyond man's ability to comprehend, and this was exactly the object — to show the folly of Job venturing to judge God's dealings, venturing to pronounce, or to find fault for a moment. In an early chapter of the Book you may remember that Job wished that God would only lay aside His alarming nature, and allow him to approach Him that he might plead his cause, and that he might defend himself before God. Here came the answer. I need not say it was to be an answer to every person, to everyone that has the fear of God, in all ages. The value of this Book does not at all diminish by the light of Christ. On the contrary, we ought to understand the Book a great deal better for that light.

Here, then, we have Jehovah — you observe this name has not appeared after Job 2 (except in Job 12:9) in the historical part. But now before the proper history is concluded (the last chapter is the concluding chapter of the history), before that it brings Him in again. We have Him speaking according to His authority, according to His relationship; and that is just exactly what "Jehovah" means. It is God not merely in the abstract, but God in relation to man upon the earth. And hence He answers Job. But He answers him here because it was a rebuke out of the whirlwind. "Then Jehovah answered Job out of the whirlwind." It was meant to be a rebuke and that Job should really feel it and profit by it. And it is a terrible thing where God does not rebuke a soul upon the earth. What does it mean? It means judgment by and by for

ever. Those that are brought into relationship livingly with God have His interference — not merely the fact that they are in relationship, but the proof of it. And He was giving this grand light upon how it acts and how Job ought to have been — if he did not enter into it — ought to have been on his guard against setting up his own judgment about God. This is what He is overthrowing, in these chapters.

“Who is this that darkeneth counsel by words without knowledge?” He does not mean that Job did not know Him at all, but He did mean that his knowledge was limited, and that he had no adequate knowledge as to the dealings of God. “Gird up now thy loins like a man” — like a hero — “for I will demand of thee and answer thou me.” That was a remarkable word. God is going to ask him a number of questions. Job had been questioning the dealings of God. Now God retorts upon him; now He says, I am going to ask you, and answer Me like a man if you can. “Where wast thou when I laid the foundations of the earth?” What an overwhelming question! What did Job know about it? “Declare, if thou hast understanding.” He had none. “Who hath laid the measures thereof, if thou knowest?” He did not know. “Or who hath stretched the line upon it? Whereupon are the foundations thereof fastened?” Because there are two things true of the earth. Stability for the time — that is what is referred to here, and why foundations are spoken of; and there is another view given in this very Book of Job, that it is suspended upon nothing. That never entered into the mind of anyone until comparatively late. Even the men of science have only just come to that. But there it was in Scripture before them. It is hung upon nothing. So that it has great

stability and regularity in its course, so firmly are the foundations laid; but on the other hand the mighty power of God is shown, because, although it is hung upon nothing of the creature, it hangs entirely upon God's power.

"When the morning stars sang together and all the sons of God shouted for joy?" The angels were made before the earth was made, but this is not at all referred to in Genesis 1; and the reason is plain. The point in Gen. 1:1, is simply to give, first of all, the creation of all the universe where there was nothing. I do not say out of nothing — that is folly; but where there was nothing, God created the universe, the heavens, the earth, and all their host, but in a very different state from what it is in now. Then the next verse shows a complete collapse that subsequently took place — what people call chaos; and the heathen always began with chaos, but we begin with God the Creator. But that chaotic condition was of all importance for man when man should be created upon the earth. Because how was man to get down to the bowels of the earth? How was he to know that there were treasures of gold, silver, precious stones, and marble and slate, and granite, and all the other most useful things that God had created? They were down deep in the earth, and the only way in which man could even suspect and learn certainly of their existence, and, consequently, to lock for them, was by that confusion which brought up some part of that which was buried deep in the earth. So that all mining was founded upon that very fact of the power of God that caused the inner contents of the earth to appear, at any rate, on the earth's crust. Be. cause what is deep in it no one can tell; no man can tell. Man has never penetrated but a

very small way — I suppose not more than the thickness of an orange peel compared with the orange — so little, into the bowels of the earth. What fills it, therefore, they do not know. They may reason; and as to what one man reasons, another man reasons to the contrary. They really do not know; and this is the thing that Jehovah was causing Job to realise — his total ignorance.

What is the effect, then, on a pious man that really believes in Him and His guidance? What is the effect of knowing our ignorance to be so immense? Reliance upon God. There was the great thing in which Job failed, murmured and found fault. He could not understand it. He might have believed and ought to have believed, and that is where we find our failure too, for we are quite as ready to reason and murmur as Job. Well, now, He speaks here clearly of the creation, and He carries that on in the verses which follow.

“Or who shut up the sea?” He had looked at the earth, and now he looks at the sea. “Or who shut up the sea with doors, when it brake forth, as if it had issued out of the womb? When I make the cloud the garment thereof, and thick darkness a swaddling-band for it.” Well, it was a very bold child, this new ungovernable creature that came into existence! And therefore He speaks about covering it up and swaddling it. “And brake up for it my decreed place and set bars and doors and said, Hitherto shalt thou come, but no further; and here shall thy proud waves be stayed” ? For who can control the ocean? “Hast thou commanded the morning since thy days”; now He looks at the vicissitudes of day and night, and He says now, ‘Was it you that set this all agoing, or do you know anything about it, how it was done?’… “Hast thou commanded the morning since thy days; and

caused the day-spring to know his place; that it might take hold of the ends of the earth" — that is, when the son rises to gild it as it were — "that the wicked might be shaken out of it?" Because the darkness of the night is exactly what gives the opportunity for murder and burglary and all the other knaveries of men more than any other time. "It is turned as clay to the seal" — because when the earth is in darkness just like that, no more can you discover it than the clay before it is impressed with the seal. But the moment the light shines, there you find its conformation and its beauty as God fixed upon it — but in the dark there is nothing to be seen. "And from the wicked their light is withholden, and the high arm shall be broken." Then He turns to the sea again in another way. Not the rushing of the waters controlled by the power of God; but here He looks at the source of it. "Hast thou entered into the springs of the sea? Or hast thou walked in the search of the depth?" — the abyss.

Now He goes down lower still, because Sheol, or Hades, as we have it, that is, the receptacle of departed spirits — is represented under the figure at any rate, and it may be the reality, of the heart of the earth. It is not the same thing as the lake of fire, but here we have a prison for those that have died. "Have the gates of death been opened unto thee? Or hast thou seen the doors of the shadow of death? "

Now He comes up to the surface. "Hast thou perceived the breadth of the earth?" What do you know about it? "Declare if thou knowest it all. Where is the way where light dwelleth?" (vers. 18-21). And He shows that God has a store that man knows nothing about, which is caused to act whenever it pleaseth God. "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?" Look at the case of the Amorites, who, on the way to Beth-horon, fell by the hail stones that God rained upon them. And, again, He rained fire and brimstone, in other cases, on the cities of the plain. "Who hath divided a watercourse for the overflowing of waters; or the way for the lightning of thunder; to cause it to rain on the earth, where no man is?" Well, God does think of animals, He thinks of even the insect; He thinks of where no man is; there He has His thoughts and His plans and His goodness.

"To satisfy the desolate and waste ground and to cause the bud of the tender herb to spring forth?" And it is remarkable how much rain has to do. People have been lamenting the immense and abnormal rain that we have had lately. But I saw a letter of an expert upon it, who looks forward, if God is pleased to give a good spring, that there will be an exceptional harvest. The fruit of it will be far beyond what has been had in England for many a day and many a year. That is in the hands of God. I do not pretend to say; let these men fight it out. "Hath the rain a father? Or who hath begotten the drops of dew? Out of whose womb came the ice? and the hoary frost of heaven, who hath gendered it?"

Then He looks also at the various stars and constellations. He asks, now what have you to do with them; do you know anything about how they came there. and how they have been ranged there? "Canst thou bind the sweet influences of Pleiades" — it is rather the bands of the Pleiades — at any rate it is a counterpart of the bands of Orion — "Canst thou bring forth Mazzaroth

in his season?" They say that the signs of the Zodiac are here referred to, but whether that is the case is very uncertain. "Or canst thou guide Arcturus with his sons?" "Knowest thou the ordinances of heaven? Canst thou set the dominion thereof in the earth?" Conditions have an immense effect upon the earth. All is having an influence either of a terrible kind or a beneficent kind. Who is it that has fixed all that? Was it you, Job? "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? Who hath put wisdom in the inward parts? Or who hath given understanding to the heart?" It comes down to man now. "Who can number the clouds in wisdom? Or who can stay the bottles of heaven" — well, all that is perfectly simple to God, and God has command in every whit of it — "when the dust groweth into hardness, and the clods cleave fast together?"

Well, now we come to animate nature. Clearly these three verses (39-41) ought rather to be the opening of Job 39. "Wilt thou hunt the prey for the lion?" It says, That is what I do, I find food for the lions and for the young lions too. There they are crouching in their dens, "and they abide in the covert to lie in wait." I do not allow them to die for want of proper food. "Who provideth for the raven his food?" It is not only the great lion, but the comparatively small raven when his young ones cry unto God — there it is, they cry unto Him. They do not murmur; they cry. They tell their want, God has put that into them. It is a cry, and God hears it as directed to Himself. "They wander for lack of meat." But He hears and answers.

“Knowest thou the time when the wild goats of the rock bring forth” (Job 39:1)? They are very inaccessible as a general role to man. They are found in the great heights of the mountains. “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? They bow themselves; they bring forth their young ones, they cast out their sorrows; their young ones are in good liking” — though they are hunted to death, and man is fond of feeding on them, yet God provides for them — “they grow up with corn; they go forth, and return not unto them. Who hath sent out the wild ass free?” That is also an animal that shuns the human race. “Or who hath loosed the bands of the wild ass?” (vers. 1-8).

Thus we have had the wild goats, and then, the wild ass; and now, what is called here, a “unicorn.” I do not know why this name has been given to it. There is but one animal with a single horn, the Indian rhinoceros, found only in Southern Asia, but here it should be the wild ox. “Canst thou bind the wild ox with his band in the furrow?” We have the wild goat (ver. 1), the wild ass (ver. 5), and now the wild ox (ver. 9). They follow one another in rotation. This is a more powerful animal than either of the others. There is a rising in the scale. “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? “

Well, now we come to a very peculiar phrase. There is really nothing here about peacocks at all. It is a mistake. A peacock we find for the first time in Solomon’s day. They were brought from India or from Ceylon; and it is curious that the name of the peacock as given in Kings

and Chronicles is Sanscrit, not Hebrew. It is the language of India, the old classical language of India. But this is quite a different thing. It should read, “The wing of the ostrich waveth joyously; is it the pinion and plumage of the stork?” (ver. 13). It is really the ostrich in the first part of the verse, and the stork in the latter. There is a kind of contrast of the ostrich with its great fluttering and also its stupid indifference to its young with the stork. The stork is the most affectionate bird that God created. There is no bird that has such a great care for its offspring; and for that reason there are people in the world who allow them to be kept and honoured, and not a soul must injure them under penalty. I believe, in Holland to this day, that the storks are found in buildings of any height; and they are allowed not merely on the firs of the forest, but they are very fond of being near mankind, and they often build their nests in chimneys and the like, and in lofty places; and people have such a respect for a bird marked by such affection that they will not allow anyone to shoot or injure them in any respect, Now that is the bird that is contrasted with the ostrich. The ostrich on the contrary leaves its young just to get through as they can, and exposes its eggs in the sand and leaves them there to come to maturity or to be destroyed. She does not care about them. And this is referred to — “which 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. She is hardened against her young ones, as though they were not hers; her labour is in vain without fear; because God hath deprived her of wisdom.” And who is to dispute with God? The God that gives one bird its remarkable character of affection takes away the commonest sense even from another bird

of immense power and great swiftness so that an ostrich could outrun a racehorse for awhile — “she scorneth the horse and his rider.”

Now he comes to the horse itself; and the war horse in particular. “Hast thou given the horse strength? Hast thou clothed his neck with thunder?” What have you to do with it? “Canst thou make him afraid as a grasshopper? The glory of his nostrils is terrible” (vers. 19 - 25), Well, it is a splendid description indeed, but it is all for the purpose of overwhelming Job with the folly of his pretending to talk about God. Now He looks at the hawk, and the eagle more particularly. “Doth the hawk fly by thy wisdom?” Who was it that conferred these peculiar powers on all these animals and birds? “Doth the eagle mount up at thy command, and make her nest on high?” (vers. 26-30).

And at this point Jehovah appeals to Job again (Job 40). “Moreover, Jehovah answered Job and said, Shall he that contendeth with the Almighty instruct him? He that reproveth God, let him answer it.” Then Job does answer. “And Job answered Jehovah and said, Behold I am vile, what shall I answer thee? I will lay my hand upon my mouth.” Jehovah repeats what He said before, “Wilt thou also disannul my judgment? Wilt thou condemn me, that thou mayest be righteous?” That is what Job had done. “Hast thou an arm like God?” Who are you to talk to God about Him as you have done? “Or canst thou thunder with a voice like him?” Well, now, “Deck thyself” with the excellency of God if you can. There was Job — a poor woebegone man with all his flesh corrupt, and the very worms feeding upon him before he had died — in the greatest possible misery of his body. “Deck thyself with majesty and glory.” “Cast

abroad the rage of thy wrath; and behold every one that is proud, and abase him." Why do you not put down all the bad people in the world? "Look on every one that is proud, bring him low" (vers. 1 - 14). But he was entirely dependent upon God.

That is the reverse of the picture. God now takes up in the latter part of His discourse but two animals, and of an amphibious nature. They were neither among the beasts of the earth proper, nor were they birds of heaven. They were a mixture of animals that could enter upon the land, and could also betake themselves to the waters. And these are described under the name, first, of "behemoth," and secondly, of "leviathan."

"Behemoth" means what is called the hippopotamus. It ought not to be called a river- horse, at all, which is what "hippopotamus" means, It is a river-ox. It is like an ox rather than a horse; of course, with its own peculiarities; and they are very peculiar. But still it is very much more after the appearance and habits of an ox than it is of a horse. And these two creatures were well known, particularly on the Nile. Both of them were familiar in the waters of the Nile; and in Arabia in the desert, to which these speakers all belonged more or less — the edge of it or beginning of that which abutted on the desert — they were familiar by report, if not by actual visit to Egypt. They were familiar with these animals. They have been very much misunderstood by learned men. They have called them all sorts of strange things. For instance, many will have it that "behemoth" means an elephant, but when you read the account you will see it is very unlike an elephant, except that it is a big creature and with enormous strength, but beyond that, nothing.

“Behold now behemoth1, which I made with thee” [vers. 15 - 24). When I made you I made him. “He eateth grass as an ox.” I have, therefore, good reason for saying that it is a river-ox, and not at all a river-horse. “Lo, now, his strength is in his loins and his force is in the navel of his belly.” I rather think that the expression in the 19th verse means, not that he makes the sword to approach unto him to kill him, but that He that made him made him a sword — made him a scythe; it is a scythe rather than a sword, and that is pretty much what the tusk of a hippopotamus is. It has great power in cleavings of all kinds, and in cutting. “Surely the mountains bring him forth food” — he can go to the mountain if he likes, in the neighbourhood of it — “where all the beasts of the field play. He lieth under the shady trees” — that is where he loves to be — “in the covert of the reed, and fens.”

Well now, in Job 41, comes a still longer description of “leviathan,” and I understand that to be the crocodile. The crocodile is a very formidable beast. It is not so shy of the human kind; on the contrary, it preys upon men, women, and children, if it can get hold of them. It is not therefore at all so strange as the “behemoth” that we have been reading about.

“Canst thou draw out leviathan2 with an hook?” You that can do such wonders; you can talk about God; and you can judge for God, and you can find fault with God! Well, can you catch leviathan with an hook? You ought to be able to do that. “Or his tongue with a cord which thou lettest down?” (vers. 1 — -8). Be off with you! Do not you fight him. “Behold, the hope of him is in vain.” Spears or arrows are nothing to him and even a musket ball has no power to pierce the skin of a crocodile. “His scales are

his pride," because it is not only his enormous strength, and his practical invulnerability to any ordinary weapon, but there he is so confident in it himself.

So that here we may stop tonight. It suffices to show what God uttered to overwhelm Job in his self-confidence, and to show that his ignorance was so great, his powerlessness was evident; his lack of wisdom to enter into even the outer works of God. And, after all, what was God speaking about? Earthly things. Everyone of these things is merely of a natural kind, and has to do with what is visible, with what is seen and temporal And if Job is so utterly unable to answer one of these questions — and in point of fact they are not answered to this day with all the brag of science — still, if that is the case about earthly things, what about the heavenly? What about the eternal things? There we are entirely and absolutely dependent upon God. We know nothing but what He tells us, and this is all our blessing — this is what we are waiting for — the unseen and the eternal, and, consequently, we of all people ought to be thoroughly dependent, looking up, confiding, and believing.

If the Lord will, next Wednesday evening I hope to conclude the Book, and to say a little of its general character also, besides saying what is necessary upon the particular chapter itself — the 42nd.

1 Behemoth. "Behemoth is as competent men believe, an Egyptian designation (p-cho-mo, literally, water-ox) of the hippopotamus in Shemitic form"

2 "The leviathan here described seems to be, beyond doubt, not the dolphin or the whale, as some learned men have argued, but the crocodile. So most have been

convinced since Bochart (Hieroz. iii. 705, &c., 737, &c.).”

Lecture 11 - Job 42

We have now the great object of God manifested. It would not at all have been so well for Job to have heard it before; but he had to walk very simply, and to learn to confide in God; to be perfectly sure that God could not fail to be faithful and gracious. Yet the trial was severe; and we knew that Job broke down, as every one since the world began has done except the Lord Himself. And indeed, it is very instructive to contrast where the Lord speaks of His suffering, with the irritation that was shown by even so admirable a man as Job. But still we have had the whole case out; and nothing can be more beautiful and striking and instructive than the book locked at as a whole.

You will observe that it is only in the closing chapter that we have the story and bringing in of “Jehovah” in the dealings with Job. No doubt in what the Lord said to Job, we have it too, but that is coming to the conclusion of the book. In the parts of the book that precede we have nothing of the kind except in the first two chapters. There we have Jehovah the moral Governor, and that not in the way of a nation, but applied to one single soul, yet no doubt other people were tried and brought into blessing; or, at any rate, they had mercy shown to them, as in the case of the three friends. But what we find is that everyone concerned, except Elihu, has to be truly humbled. Elihu is very peculiar, because he takes no part, and we should not have known there was such a person; and he only, and suddenly, appears when the friends of Job had all been silenced, and Job had nothing more to say; for when Elihu spoke, Job was silent still,

he could not answer. Still all was not yet wrought completely in his soul till Jehovah appears.

But now it is very striking to see that in this Book we have all the great elements that appear in the rest of the Old Testament. We should not have known there was an Israel from this book. We have no reference to the law that was given by Moses, nor to the peculiar place in which the sons of Abraham were set. The very object of the Book is to show that God remains God, and more than that, that “Jehovah” (the covenant name of God) would skew He had intimate personal dealings with a pious man, and in point of fact one that was chosen by God for this great trial — the most faithful man then found upon the earth. Even Jacob was not one fit for such a trial, even supposing Jacob and Job had been contemporaries. For although there was a great deal that came out very beautifully as Jacob grew older in the way, there was an immense deal that had to be sifted; there was a great deal that he had to be sorry for, and that he was chastised for at various times of his life, from early days comparatively till his later ones. So that Jacob was not at all as suitable a person as Job.

Job seems to have been a man sheltered (if I might so say) by God, so that he knew very little of the corruption that was in the world through lust. As far as he was concerned he seems to have been prospered in a way that very few men have been; for although he was a pious man, and therefore liable to be imposed upon by the wicked men of that generation, as such men usually are, yet he was really a prince among men. But the sorrowful thing was that Job thought a great deal of it; he admired himself a great deal too much; and further he liked his “nest.” He hoped that he would never have

that nest disturbed, and that he would die in his nest, as he said. But God intended to teach him a very severe lesson before that came to pass. In point of fact he became more blest than ever; and there we find ourselves very much upon Old Testament ground. He got large flocks and greater herds; and he had possessions too in the way of love; everybody could not do too much for him after he came into prosperity. That is the way of this world, and that was the way of even Job's friends. But he had more camels, more horses, more herds, and fairer daughters at the end than at the beginning. That is all entirely outside what we know.

In short, we do not find suffering with Christ, or suffering for Christ, throughout the Old Testament. Nor is it the ordinary way in which God acted then. I was only reading this morning in a little paper that came from Spain; and the great object of the person who wrote that paper — who has been seen in this room, too, though not in communion with us — was that the ways of God were always the same. That is where our good sister is altogether wrong. The ways of God differ greatly; the ways of God were quite different in paradise from what they were outside paradise; and they were different after the flood from what they were before; and they were different in Israel again from what they had been before the law was given; and they are still more different now that Christ is come and that redemption is accomplished. I suppose people mean by it that God's character is always immutable. Certainly that is all right; God does not change; but God in His sovereign wisdom takes different ways in dealing with every one of us. At the same time there are general ways that subsist at particular times. There are deeper ways now than

ever, since Christ came, and we are expected to enter into the ways of God, as well as His counsels which are now revealed for the first time. Heavenly counsels they did not know anything about in Old Testament times. They knew the purpose of God for the earth; they gradually knew that better and better as things went on, and as the regular prophets who wrote their prophecies began to appear. But the ways of God are always according to what occupies Himself, and what He is doing in a general way. Yet at the same time He carries on a moral government with every one of us, so that we have to do with Him.

And that was what Job had to learn — that there was, unknown to himself, what was inconsistent with the presence of God. It was not that he doubted a Redeemer; he fully believed in one; but that was a different thing. And people may believe in the Saviour now, and yet may never have been brought personally into the presence of God as a practical thing. It is quite a different thing to have it, as the philosophers say, “objectively,” from what it is to make it our own “subjectively.” That was just exactly where Job was. He had no subjective knowledge of it; he had not appropriated it to himself. He rejoiced in the goodness of God. He was a faithful man. We see him acting as a priest, but not as a king; and we have it in a more glorious manner at the end of the book than at the beginning; because we find he had certain fears about his sons and his daughters, but when he had gone through all, he had no fear at all. There was no reserve; he was not at all afraid of anything coming. But he was put into the extreme suffering that might belong to any man. At first the sufferings were such as were common

to man. It is not an uncommon thing for a very rich man to become very poor. It is not an uncommon thing for a man to lose all his property. It may be not merely by robbery, but by other means sometimes through lack of wisdom and other people taking advantage, and so on; there are many ways in which there may be a very great reverse; and further, a person might be suddenly changed from glowing health to be the most miserable object possible.

But I do not call these spiritual sufferings; they are what are common to man. It might be so with an unconverted man; only there was this peculiarity about Job, which he did not know at first — that God was allowing Satan to bring all these things. Satan's pleasure and hope was to entangle Job's feet and cast him down, and that he would curse God. That was what Satan dearly longed to bring about. God allowed him to have his way, but not to kill Job. That would have been agreeable to Job; but it would not have brought out the great moral of the tale, which is, blessing brought into his soul by the very things that seemed to be against him, and not merely by the things that he experienced. When he began to find fault, he had to learn that that very God was One who never could swerve from what was excellent, and that in all this He had a purpose of blessing for Job. Not merely in his having outward blessings, i.e., of a temporal kind, but blessing for his soul.

And all this is very striking in so early a book as this of the Old Testament. For there is no reason to doubt that it is quite as early as the Book of Genesis, and very probably written by the same man. It is earlier, I do not hesitate to say, than the Book of Exodus. It may have followed Genesis or not; that I cannot say. They may

have been comparatively together. It might even have been before Genesis, as far as that is concerned; but it is extremely early, and before Israel's history as a nation began. There is, in the book, no coming out of Egypt, crossing the wilderness, and going into the land — not even the slightest allusion to any of them. Had these things then taken place an allusion would have been very highly appropriate; but there is nothing of the kind.

Still, there we have the great elements that we find elsewhere in the Old Testament. The place of sacrifice — you know how very early that came in — from the Fall; and how the first great action of Adam's sons was decided by faith or the lack of faith — Cain bringing a mere offering which would have been all very well after a sacrifice, but showing a total lack of sense of sin, and also of what-was due to God. Abel on the contrary brought his sacrifice; there was death brought in between him and God. That looked onward to the death of Christ; but I am speaking now simply of the sacrifice; and Abel's faith, therefore, offered that sacrifice. That answers to the death of Christ now. Any attempt to stand before God without that now, shows that I have no proper sense of sin, or of God's holiness. I neither know myself nor Him; else I should surely lock to the one great sacrifice that completes and terminates all others — the sacrifice of Christ.

Well, then again, we find another very important truth from the beginning of it, and that is, the connection of heaven with man upon the earth, and that which is about to take place in man on the earth, arranged in heaven before it reaches the man himself. Well, that is true now; that is going on still. We find that is carried on afterwards. We see it in David — another phase of it —

Satan's opposition, in the last chapter of 2 Samuel (and in 1 Chronicles, repeated in another form); and, further, in the Book of Kings we have it. But this Book of Job was written hundreds of years before. So that it was perfectly original in Job's case. It had not been written in any other book until long after. And there we find another terrible personage; not only the angels, familiar with the presence of God, and God telling out before them what is going to be upon the earth; but the devil, man's great enemy; yet withal the perfect supremacy of God in His love and in His power. He particularly brings Job's case before Satan; and He (what we may call) glories in Job before the devil; and the devil, of course, is excited to every kind of spite and jealousy because of that very thing; and God allows all this to be, knowing perfectly well, but always working by His own grace, that in due time all would be set right. It might require His own personal intervention, and that is one of the great peculiarities of the Book of Job.

But we find the same thing in Zechariah — Jehovah speaking to Joshua, and Satan resisting; and this in one of the latest books of the Old Testament. So that here we find that Job has the same great truth in an earlier form — at the beginning of the Old Testament — of what afterwards is found near its end. Because Zechariah was only just before Malachi, and in fact they may have been contemporaries. They were post-captivity prophets. And then comes the great trial. And the remarkable thing is, first of all, Satan was entirely defeated. Satan could do nothing with Job. He did his worst, and all that time Job was seen at his best.

But there was that in Job's heart that must be got out somehow; and it is remarkable that the friends of Job,

not the enemy, seem to have been the means. And God has a very humbling lesson for them, as He has a humbling lesson for Job. They got it all round; and, in point of fact, Job's friends were more ignorant of God's ways than Job; and they took a very bad view of his case, and this, when it is about a good man, is always a danger. There may be something that the Lord has to chastise; but very often those who try to do it only show their own shallowness, and also that they are very unspiritual — that they do not enter into the mind of God about it. That was the case with the three friends of Job. I have no doubt that they were highly respectable, and that they were also thought to be very pious men indeed. And I do not doubt it. But pious men have to find their level.

And so it was with Job and his three friends, and the great debate goes on; and they are sitting, who had come to sympathise; and the end of their looking at him and seeing the terrible state in which he was, was that they had not a word to say to him; and Job could not understand that. If they had not been there he might have stood it. But sometimes we can bear alone what we cannot bear in the presence of other people, and that was the case with Job. And Job accordingly, after bearing this for seven days and nights, their sitting demure, judging him all the time, with not a word of sympathy — this aroused Job, and he broke forth into expressions that were certainly very unlike his habit, and anything but glorifying to God. And then came their doubts of him, growing more and more passionate, until they began to think he must be a very wicked man. They went upon the ground that what occurs now is according to the absolute character of God.

Why, it is not so at all. If things were according to God's mind now, there would be no such thing as war; there would be no such thing as intriguing; there would be no such thing as people taking advantage one of another; there would be no such thing as robbery or drunkenness or any other kind of wickedness allowed. There will be a day when that will be the case, and when the state of things on earth will answer to the mind of God in heaven. Why, that is what is expressed in what is called "The Lord's Prayer" — "Thy will be done on earth, as it is in heaven." That will never be till the Lord reigns. And these men had the very foolish notion that no pious man walking properly could ever suffer, and that if a person came into very great suffering it was because he was a very great sinner, and, if nobody knew it, he must be a hypocrite.

That was the "amiable," or "loving," or whatever you call it — self-righteous really — -the "self-righteous" judgment, with gross ignorance of both God and man, of the three friends of Job. Well, he resisted it and resented it; and he accordingly told them very plainly that they were physicians of no value at all; that they, instead of giving him comfort, on the contrary cauterised his wounds, and that they only inflamed them — in point of fact, that they were comforters of no value whatever, at the same time that they thought they were the wise men; and so he stopped, and whenever they uttered a word, he uttered a better; and so at last compelled them to silence. Then it was that we find Elihu, who appears very opportunely, and in what is very beautiful to a spiritual mind who would understand it, for he was a young man, and they were old — he had kept silence until they had not a word to say — not only the three

men, but Job also, for he had come to the end of his long parley; and until that was the case Elihu never opened his mouth. But when he did, he told them plainly that he was obliged, young man as he was, to speak for God; and that he was indignant, first that the three men had entirely misinterpreted Job, and secondly that Job had misinterpreted God; and therefore that Job deserved to be rebuked, and that he must tell him plainly where he was wrong. But after he did that, he disappeared. So that he plays the part of an interpreter, one of a thousand. This is what Job had wanted at the beginning because he was terrified when he thought of the majesty of God; and he wanted some one that was of clay like himself.

'Well,' says Elihu, 'I am a man of clay like you; and there is nothing to frighten you in me, and therefore I will tell you the truth, that you have been speaking in a way altogether unbecoming a saint of God. You have allowed yourself to be roused and inflamed by the bitter reproaches of others and you have vented it upon God; your proper place was to remember that God was carrying on His discipline — that He does that even with the unconverted, and still more with the converted, that they might walk consistently. This is what He was doing with Job; and Job's place should have been to judge himself, and submit to God.' Well, that was exactly true. And the Lord then intervenes in the case; and He overwhelms Job by a succession of questions that one of the most scientific men that ever lived could not answer.

One of the things in which the Germans have been successful — not about the Bible; there they are nowhere; but about matters of science on this earth; they have had some very able men of late years, and

nobody perhaps was a greater oracle in science and in knowledge of the world generally than the famous Baron Alexander Humboldt; and these words of Jehovah astonished him; and he acknowledged that what Job could not answer, the men of science cannot answer yet. It is overwhelming to them; because although men of science are very clever about secondary causes, they are always stopped by primary causes. They never can arrive at the great cause, and they do not want the great cause. The reason is this — that nobody ever learns God by knowledge or by wisdom. We learn God by our want of Him. We learn God when we are poor sinners overwhelmed in our souls. And who can meet us but God? Repentance, therefore, is always toward God; and repentance means that I take the place of nothing but a sinner; for God will show me mercy; and God shows it in our Lord Jesus. However, Job did not know and could not know the Lord Jesus as we know Him; but he was waiting, for Him. That is another grand truth that comes out.

No doubt the way in which Job looked for the Lord was rather as a Kinsman-redeemer who would also be an avenger on the enemy. Well that is very natural. “The Seed of the woman shall bruise the serpent’s head.” That is the proper Old Testament idea. But he could not enter into it as yet. It was not given for a great while after. There is a most remarkable Psalm of David — Psalm 22, and the most remarkable in the Book of Psalms in that way. And it is not the only one. We have a companion one particularly in Psalm 102. And we have another that is more with reference to the Avenger in Psalm 69. And there are two others that I need not dwell upon now; but at any rate, in the Old Testament there is

One that is coming to avenge. And therefore Israel looks, at the coming of the Lord, for their enemies to be destroyed at the same time that they themselves are delivered. That is not our faith at all of the Lord's Second Coming. We look to go up to heaven as the Lord went up to heaven. It will make no difference to the earth, and men will not see it; they will know that we are gone somehow or other, as they knew about the Lord.

That was a nine days' wonder, and was soon forgotten. And so it will be then. One would think that it would make a great impression all over the world as to the saints disappearing; but it will be a day when they are given up to hardness of heart, and when judicial blindness will fall upon them, so that God will not therefore be working to awaken their souls. He will, by converted Jews, send out the everlasting gospel to the Gentiles, and there will be a very great gathering of converts, Jews as well as of the Gentiles too; but that is during the time that we are up in heaven before the Lord appears. But the view of the Saviour as dying for us, and consequently giving the meaning of all the sacrifices — all this was very much hidden from the Old Testament saints. Why, even the apostles did not understand it till the Lord rose. They had no idea of it, and did not believe He was going to die; and I have very little doubt that Judas flattered himself, when he was getting the money for selling the Lord, that the Lord would escape out of their hands; and when he found that the Lord was going to die, he committed suicide. He gave himself up entirely to despair and to the devil.

But in Isaiah 53 we have a very luminous prophecy. Yes, it is all very luminous to us now; but what was it in Isaiah's day? It is very doubtful whether any of them

understood it. Look at that good treasurer that came up from Ethiopia to worship at Jerusalem, reading from that very chapter, and not understanding what it meant. He did not know at all. It is very possible that the treasurer had heard of the death of the prophet of Nazareth, but he did not connect it with the chapter at all. And as I have said, the apostles themselves were never clear about it till the fact had taken place. And it was only after the Holy Ghost was given that there was any power to proclaim it; but after the Lord breathed upon them, they do seem to have entered into it during those forty or fifty days — forty while the Lord was with them, and ten days later before the Holy Ghost was given. So much as there is even of types of it in Scripture, so little does man put things together; and so much are we beholden to the Spirit of God for giving us to understand the Scriptures.

Now, I refer to that because we have again, let me mention, another thing very remarkable, as showing how far they had got — the two resurrections. Job 14, as I have already pointed out, is with reference to the resurrection of man, and this is only when the heavens are no more. But in Job 19 it is the resurrection of the saint; and there is brought in the Redeemer, and the Redeemer standing upon the dust of the earth; that is before the heavens are no more. You see that exactly agrees with the two resurrections in Revelation 20; the resurrection of the saints while the earth is still going on, and the resurrection of the wicked after heaven and earth are all completely dissolved, and are to reappear as the new heaven and the new earth. But Job does not speak about that. Isaiah does, but applies it to Israel. He takes a very contracted view; he was not allowed to see

it fully. But 2 Peter 3 brings it out fully as a matter of doctrine; and John, in Revelation 21, has a heavenly vision that manifests it to us and makes all plain.

Well, Jehovah overwhelms Job; but even He does not speak of the sacrifice of Christ. What Job confesses is, his impropriety, the forgetfulness of his own ignorance and of God's omniscience — for Job had pretended to understand what God had not yet revealed to him. It was not yet revealed. It was after this. But what is a man to do when he does not understand? Why, to look up confidingly to God; and secondly, to judge himself, lest he might allow any thoughts that were wrong. Job was wrong in these two ways, but is completely set right; for these wonderful questions of the Almighty laid Job in the dust for the first time. And the Lord stopped in the middle of it and addressed himself to Job, and even then Job said, "Behold I am vile." He now had come down to a thought of himself. It is not merely that 'I was vile before I knew anything of Thee,' but, 'In spite of all that Thou hast been to me, and in spite of all the grace shown me, I am obliged to come to this, "Behold, I am vile. What shall I answer Thee?" Well, nothing at all. That man that was such a fine answerer of others, and particularly eloquent about himself! For there is as grand a description as you can have of an admirable saint, in Job 31. But the misfortune is, it was Job talking about himself. Now, it is a fine thing to be eloquent about other people's goodness; but it is not a fine subject for oneself, and there is what betrayed Job. He had the greatest pleasure in thinking of the great honour showed him, and how the nobles held their tongues when Job uttered a word, and how everyone bowed down to Job. And now it had come to this! that he was the ridicule of all the

naughty little boys, and that the bigger boys tried to entangle his feet and push him down — and all the rascally ways of a wretched world — just such things as would be now if people saw a grandee that had come down to be going in filthy rags in the street, and all his body a mass of corruption!

Oh, it is a terrible plight, and an awful thing! But how good the result was! Well, now, he says, “I will lay mine hand upon my mouth” — that mouth that talked so well! “Once have I spoken; but I will not answer; yea, twice; but I will proceed no further.” That was one good sign. But now after the Lord had brought it fully out, what He dwells upon are two things in particular — His supremacy, and also His power, accompanied by the most tender care; not merely of good animals, such as sheep and lambs, or the like, but of lions and lionesses, which certainly are very redoubtable. And the eagle — an object of interest to God particularly; yea, and further, He had chosen to make the ostrich; and although the ostrich is no bird of flight, but simply a very fast runner, still, there it was, and could beat a racehorse for a good while. Who is it? — was it you, Job, that managed all these things? Was it you that cared for them all, provided for them all? Were you born when they began? In fact, Job was thoroughly laid low on every point, and, in every possible way, overwhelmed with the sense of his ignorance and presumption in talking about the far more wonderful ways of a God dealing with a man’s heart, man’s soul, man’s circumstances now. The Lord does not express that last part. It was God showing His majesty, power, wisdom and goodness in outward things. If that were true of God, how much more in spiritual things? And this is the

great lesson of the Book that Job had to apply. And it had its effect.

“I know that thou canst do everything, and that no thought can be withholden from thee.” Not only no word; he had spoken wrongly. “Who is he that hideth counsel without knowledge?” Why, it was himself; he owns it. This is his great confession, “I have heard of thee by the hearing of the ear” — I knew it objectively; but now that I have made it my own, applied it to my own soul, my own circumstances, my own state — “now mine eye seeth thee. Wherefore I abhor myself, and repent in dust and ashes.’ There was the great moral victory that God had accomplished in the face of Satan and in the face of the three friends of Job, and in the face of Job himself. For what he had said might have provoked anyone but God. And so it is that we see the wonderful goodness of the Lord in the midst of it all.

“And it was so, that after Jehovah had spoken these things unto Job, Jehovah said to Eliphaz the Temanite” — why did He speak to him? He observed that none of these three men said a word. They did not profit by it like Job. If they had properly profited by it they would have joined Job and said, ‘O Lord, forgive our folly; we have sinned not only against Thee, but against our dear friend Job.’ But no, they held their tongues, as so many people do when they are very wrong. They say nothing. They ought to speak out. “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.” When was it that Job spoke the thing that was right? The first statement which I have just now read from Job 40, after the Lord had first spoken; and then the second statement that the Lord added. It was not his fine

speeches. That was not the thing at all that the Lord valued. It was his humbling himself and taking the true place. And the Lord put the others in their place. They did not humble themselves. But the Lord threatened them, and told them — not that they had spoken now, for they had not spoken — “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. Therefore take unto you new seven bullocks and seven rams, and go to my servant Job, and offer up for yourselves a burnt offering, and my servant Job shall pray for you” (vers. 7, 8). He had to become an intercessor for them. “For him will I accept.”

It was all perfectly clear now; so clear, that he could act for those who were wrong. “Lest I deal with you after your folly, in that ye have not spoken of me the thing which is right, like my servant Job.” Now they were bowed; and accordingly they that were sitting in judgment upon Job, took the place of being offenders against God, and looked to Job to entreat the Lord for them.

“And Jehovah turned the captivity of Job, when he prayed for his friends.” There was the returning them good for evil. He prayed for his friends. “Also Jehovah gave Job twice as much as he had before.” Then we find everybody turning round (ver. 11). “So Jehovah blessed the latter end of Job more than his beginning; for he had fourteen thousand sheep” — just twice what he had before. Now that will be accomplished — what answers to that — on the earth.

This is not heavenly recompense at all, but what will be the case with man on the earth. The Old Testament does

not take you off that ground, and even in Job, who was not a Jew, we find the same thing. The time when Israel will be blessed will be the time when the nations will be blessed. Israel is the first-born of the nations, and they will come in subordinately to the Jew. But that time is not arrived, and it will be the perfect contrast of this time. Our place is in Christ, just as, figuratively speaking, mankind was in Adam, as being the one who was the father of them all. Now there is another head, and we are spoken of as being in Him — in Christ. And another thing is true "At that day, ye shall know." The great truth of the Epistles to the Ephesians and to the Colossians, is that in Ephesians we are in Christ for all our blessing; and in Colossians it is Christ in us in order that we may fulfil our responsibility of manifesting Him who is in us. So that if the one is the great comfort of the Christian, the other is the solemn reminder to the Christian. "Ye in Me" — there God was blessing; "I in you" — that you may count upon Me, to fulfil your responsibility here below. Well, we have nothing of that kind here; but we have everything that heart could wish here below. Job was a far greater man than ever — if you count that to consist in the vast things that he possessed; and, further, he was blessed in his family particularly.

"After this lived Job an hundred and forty years." I do not mean by that, and I do not think the words are intended to convey, that Job lived 140 years after this was over, but that the whole life of Job was 140 years; a very respectable age — very. It was not so long as that of Abraham or Isaac; but it was, I think, something about as much as Jacob's, thereabout in a general way, and greater than that of Moses. So it was before Moses, who

in his psalm (Ps. 110) tells us, that “the days of our years are threescore years and ten,” etc. Moses seems to have been the writer of the Book. He and his brother Aaron did not arrive at 140, but Job did. But if you suppose him to have lived 80 years before the 140, it would make him far older than any of the patriarchs. I do not mean some of the elders before the Flood, but after the Flood people did not live to such great ages — except immediately. And so the Book ends with Job dying full of years.

W. K.