

SERMON.

“Rejoice, O young man, in thy youth, and let thy heart cheer thee in the days of thy youth, and walk in the ways of thine heart, and in the sight of thine eyes: but know thou, that for all these things God will bring thee into judgment.”—ECCLES. xi. 9.

MAN, as material and spiritual, is linked to two distinct worlds or systems of things. Duties devolve upon him from his relation to each, and it is the great practical difficulty of life to adjust the respective claims of the two. Human nature is one, but it is compound; and so different in kind is the one part of it from the other, that there often seems to be in man two natures, as there are in him two springs of action. On the one hand, man is flesh and blood, with impulses, appetites, passions, desires, craving for instant gratification; and he is in a beautiful world filled with objects and arrangements adapted and designed to meet all the hunger and thirst of his sentient nature, and thus to give him that gratification which, with all the imperiousness of instinct and necessity, he demands. But in this earthly there is a heavenly citizen. Man is also a spiritual being, having in him “a connexion exquisite of distant worlds,” spiritual capacities which no created thing can compass or fill, imperative convictions of duty which are felt to be everlasting in obligation, and which must be obeyed, though feeble sense and quivering nerve and fibre shrink back from the work.

It is from the fact that there is in us this double nature that the practical difficulties of life arise. One-sided views of our nature cause us to attach too much importance to par-