

Maker. At times, 'tis true, he seems caught up into the highest heavens. That twenty-third Psalm marks such a moment of illumination. But that was the great exception. There are two ways of looking on God—the way that makes Him a Being to be feared rather than loved; the way that makes Him a Being to be loved rather than feared. We are in danger of making God a Being to be feared rather than loved. If we look on Him as one who works arbitrarily here and not according to law, like David we may often cry in bitter anguish: "When shall I appear before God?" He thought that God and not Absalom had driven him out of Jerusalem; that God had told Shimei to pelt him with curses and stones. This was the Jewish nature projected on God. The Jew referred everything directly to Him. A beautiful face was a face of God. They had their mountains of God and their rivers of God. And in like manner their misfortunes were from God. They thought that God worked arbitrarily and not through the process of nature; that he was ready to descend in wrath for the most trivial mistakes. They thus made Him a Being to be feared rather than loved. No wonder that David felt the canker of despair. God, he thought, was withdrawn from him. "When shall I appear before God?" We do well to emulate the Jew by referring everything to God, even our most trivial acts.

But let us never forget that He works naturally here; and that the causes of our misfortune lie, not in the Creator, but in the limitations of the Creature. This is the higher Christian way of making God a Being to be loved rather than feared. No matter what mistakes we make, He is unchangeable. His laws, 'tis true, are irrevocable. Transgression demands its dole. The universe is a continual give and take. Give Jerusalem to Absalom and David must take the desert. Yet the Great Being of God throbs in sympathy with His Creatures. The filial bond between David and his son was severed. The conditions were such that David could not remain in Jerusalem. But God was still with David, touched with his infirmity. Had David reasoned thus, he would have felt less dejection. Had he said: "My misfortune is due to the Eternal laws of being. Conditions have arisen that prevent my staying in Jerusalem. The unfilial conduct of Absalom and not the wrath of God has driven me hence. But God is still love. And though the earthly Jerusalem is no longer mine, there is still the City which hath foundations whose builder and maker is God."—had David said that, he would have taken the right idea out of misfortune; his sorrow would have merged into joy.

Now, associated with this idea of God was his conception of worship. What David chiefly lamented was not that he had been driven from