

V. 15. In a dream. In that age when there was no written revelation, God often revealed Himself in dreams. But it is likely that what is meant here is the voice of God speaking through the conscience in the still hours, when the bustle and noise of the daytime are past, and that voice is left alone to compel our ears to hear.

V. 16. He openeth the ears. Men would often gladly close their ears to the voice of conscience, and many a resolute sinner stands upon his head, because God has opened his ears, and he cannot close them. *Sealeth*. "Here it means that God makes the man feel from whom and for what purpose chastisement is sent."—*E. C. Cook*.

V. 17. Purpose. His evil purpose. To withdraw him from an evil purpose would certainly be mercy. *Hide pride*. "It may mean to cover it, so that it may not tempt a man."—*Cook*.

V. 18. The pit. "Pardition. More is meant by this expression here than the grave or corruption. The idea is not distinct, but it is that of some great loss, something terrible connected with the thought of going out of life."—*Levett*. Perishing by the sword. Being cut off by a sudden judgment. The passage means that God speaks to men solemnly, that He may hold them back from sin and thus save them from its dreadful results also.

V. 19. God not only speaks through the conscience; He sometimes lays a man on a bed of affliction, and chastens him with pain. In the latter part of the verse "the old pain gives a stranger meaning: *and with continuous struggles of his soul*."

Vs. 20, 21, describe a man wasted with a long sickness, as Job himself was.

V. 22. The destroyers. "Death and its attendants and precursors: the pangs preceding dissolution. Many commentators suppose that Elihu speaks of the angels of death." See 2 Sam. 24: 16-17; Ps. 78: 49; 2 Ki. 19: 35; Acts 12: 23.

V. 23. This begins the most difficult and most important passage in Elihu's speech. "The word 'messenger' is not always rendered messenger, and even when (as in Matt. 3: 1) our version has messenger it is in the sense of a divine Being, the Messenger of the covenant. There is no reason to suppose that it has another sense in this passage, when all the old versions have *angel*."—*Cook*.

Even if Elihu did not feel the full significance of his own words, yet it is evident that these words describe the office of Christ. Interpreter. "The Jewish prayers show that the interpreter was always identified in their minds with the expected Redeemer of Israel."—*Cook*. His uprightness.—The right way.

V. 24. Then He (God) is gracious unto him, and He (the Interpreter) saith. A ransom, or atonement, as in the margin. "Elihu evidently speaks of a propitiatory offering; in whatever form that may be provided, he is sure that when the great Angel intervenes, the reconciliation must be effected. We have a true, though it may be an undeveloped, anticipation of the truth afterwards revealed."—*Cook*.

V. 25. His flesh shall be fresher. When a man through the chastening of the Lord is brought back into the ways of righteousness, he is restored and renewed. Elihu may refer particularly to physical recovery, but how suggestive his words are of the new birth and the renewing of the inward man.

V. 26. Happy condition of the renewed soul! God looks down with favor, and that soul looks back with joy. Will render. This means either that God will repay the returned one as righteous, or that He will reward the righteous deed of such a one.

Vs. 27-28. "The two verses have this sense: He (the restored penitent) will sing unto men, and say: 'I had sinned and perverted that which was right, and it was not required unto me. He

redeemed my soul from passing into the pit, and my life beholdeth the light with joy.'"—*Cook*.

Vs. 29-30. God oftentimes worked in the ways Elihu had spoken of, by warnings through the conscience, by afflictions, and by the messenger, so that men may be drawn from "the pit," into the light of the living.

REMARKS.

"Woe to him who should be without affliction here below—whom the divine educator should have excluded from his mysterious school! We might well ask ourselves at sight of so alarming a felicity, what then has he done to be thus overlooked? Is he too pure to be passed through the crucible, or too bad, too desperate, to be worth trying there?"—*Vind*.

"No doubt education by sorrow would be useless, if the question were merely of perfecting us; the angel would be perfecting, and God does not chasten them; but it is indispensable to beings who have to be regenerated."—*Vind*.

"Two artists are once frescoing the ceiling of a lofty cathedral, when one of them in order to perceive the effect of his work walked backwards upon the scaffolding. He was just about to step off unconsciously and be hurled to the floor below, when the other painter, seeing his danger, and that it was too late for words to save him, hurled his brush at the lovely picture his friend was painting. The artist rushed forward in indignation, but he was saved, and he blessed his friend who saved his life by marring his picture."—*Peloubet*. Thus our kind Father often defeats our plans, defaces the bright picture we have drawn of our future, in order to save our souls from ruin.

April 13.—Prosperity Restored. Job.

42: 1-10.

GOLDEN TEXT.

Behold we count them happy which endure. James 5: 11.

CONNECTION.

The latter part of Elihu's discourse was uttered while the great storm raged on which announced the approach of Jehovah. Elihu is evidently much impressed by the storm, and his last words are uttered in a broken and hurried manner. The last two verses of ch. 37 contain a summary of his whole discourse, and "Then the Lord answered Job out of the whirlwind." This answer is contained in four chapters and might be summed up in the words of Rom. 11: 33. "Oh the depths of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are His judgments, and His ways past finding out." God's "worthiness of our absolute trust: Let us trust Him, even when we cannot understand His dealings with us or with others. It is quite certain that He is always right, and that what He has done is the most merciful and wisest thing that could be done."

After God has spoken, Job renders absolute submission to Him. He falls in perfectly with the Divine will and blames himself severely for his former murmurs.

EXPOSITION.

V. 1. I know. Job now knew God as he had never known Him before. We have seen the preparations for this knowledge. First came great affliction, filling him with amazement, and disturbing his theories. Next came painful grovelling in the dark; Job trying to understand God's ways with him; and lastly God's revelation of Himself, satisfying Job, while showing that it was not necessary for him to understand, only to trust. Thou canst do everything. Omnipotence. No thought can be witholden.—Omniscience. Job recognizes anew these two attributes. The Almighty God had then seen and permitted Job's trial.

V. 3. Job refers to the words of God (ch. 38: 2), and applies them to himself. "Therefore,

i.e., because I see now that I was, as that reproof intimated, without true knowledge, I uttered, etc."—*Cook*. Job is not the only man that ever spoke rashly about things he understood not, things too wonderful for him. But not every such man makes a confession so frank and humble as this.

V. 4. An humble petition. Contrast Job's attitude towards God here with that in the tenth chapter. I will demand of Thee, rather ask of Thee. Job went asking humbly now. The verse contains a request that God would teach him further. Job wishes to learn of God henceforward, and not to rely on his own judgment, or depend on such enlightenment as his friends could give him.

I have heard of Thee, etc. The faith of Job, and his knowledge, had received sudden illumination. His former knowledge had been comparatively obscure. It was as if he had only known God by hearing, and had now met Him face to face. He now really knew something concerning God's ways, and he could build a tower of faith heaven-high upon that foundation of sure knowledge. All faith must have knowledge for its foundation.

V. 6. Wherefore I abhor myself. In proportion as we truly know God, we are humble. By revealing Himself to Job, God has changed the despairing bitterness of this man into grateful humility. Repent. "The word translated, repent, signifies two contrary things in Scripture; first, to grieve; secondly, to comfort, or to take comfort. . . . Sorrow and comfort meet in true repentance. . . . To repent is to change both the mind and way. It is as if a man had a good mind, and from a painful to a pleasant and delightful way."—*Caryl*. Dust and ashes. The mourner sat down in dust, and sprinkled them over his head and upon his garments. Instead of weeping over his sorrows, Job now laments his sinfulness. He is not guilty of the charges his friends have brought against him, but in the presence of the pure and holy God, he sees distinctly his own unworthiness. His wonder hereafter would be, not that God had benefited him with riches, wealth and health, but that God should ever give His good gifts to so unworthy a one.

V. 7. "After all that was sinful in his (Job's) speeches is blotted out by repentance, there remains only the truth of his innocence, which God Himself testifies to him, and the truth of his holding fast to God in the hot battle of temptation, by which, without his knowing it, he has frustrated the designs of Satan."—*Delfick*. Eliphaz seems to have led in the discourse against Job, and is specially named. Elihu receives no rebuke; he spoke conscientiously, and was most anxious to convince Job of God's mercy and justice in afflicting, and though he does not get at the whole truth concerning God's ways, still the spirit he has shown has been good.

The three friends do not seem to have shown any regret for their misjudgment both of God and of His servant Job. Perhaps they were complacently ignorant that they had done wrong, and were therefore amazed to have God's rebuke; or V. 8. Seven was regarded as a perfect number. The three friends were to bring a sacrifice and Job was to pray for them—Job, the man whom they regarded as condemned of God. They were thus taught that the sin required an atonement and an intercessor, and they were obliged to overcome their pride, and apply to the man they despised for intercession with God. Perhaps the atonement and intercession of Him who was despised and rejected of men was thus dimly suggested to their minds.

V. 9. The three friends, though they had been so obtuse in regard to their own sin, yet did not hesitate about obeying the direct command of God when unmistakably addressed to them. But their obtuseness was sin. The beam was in their eye when they sought to cast the mote out of Job's