

I doubt if he has any moral right to speak in that most holy Name. For if the all-mastering motive be absent, if the love of Christ constrain him not, how can his desires and his doings be such as the Unseen Judge will either approve or bless ?

The fourth stanza explains why the prophet laboured, though vainly, to keep silence. It was because of the malicious reports of his utterances, which were carefully circulated by his watchful antagonists. They beset him on every side; like Pashchur, they were to him a "magor-missabib," an environing terror (cf. vi. 25), as they listened to his harangues, and eagerly invited each other to inform against him as a traitor (The words "Inform ye, and let us inform against him!" or "Denounce ye, and let us denounce him!" may be an ancient gloss upon the term *dibbah*, "ill report," "calumny;" Gen. xxxvii. 2; Num. xiii. 32; Job xvii. 5. For the construction, cf. Job xxxi. 37. They spoil the symmetry of the line. That *dibbah* really means "defaming," or "slander," appears not only from the passages in which it occurs, but also from the Arabic *dabûb*, "one who creeps about with slander," from *dabba*, "to move gently or slowly about." The Heb. *ragal*, *riggel*, "to go about slandering," and *rakil*, "slander," are analogous).

And not only open enemies thus conspired for the prophet's destruction. Even professed friends (for the phrase, cf. xxxviii. 22; Ps. xli. 10) were treacherously watchful to catch him tripping (cf. ix. 2, xii. 6). Those on whom he had a natural claim for sympathy and protection, bore a secret and determined grudge against him. His unpopularity was complete, and his position full of peril. We have in the thirty-first and several