

## THE BOOK OF JOB.

## VII.—THE INTERVENTION OF ELIHU.

## FIRST DISCOURSE (CHAPTERS XXXII. 6—XXXIII. 33).

IN his opening discourse Elihu undertakes to prove both that God does speak to men at sundry times and in divers manners, and that He chastens men in love rather than in anger,—the proof being that the Divine chastening is corrective and medicinal :

'tis a physic  
That's bitter to sweet end.

This double thesis is woven into one with singular skill, and yet in the simplest and most natural way. His first thesis, that God speaks to men, Elihu proves (1) by generalizing the experience of Eliphaz (Comp. Chap. xxxiii. 15–18 with Chap. iv. 12–21, and especially Chap. xxxiii. 15 with Chap. iv. 13), and shewing that as God spoke to *him* in dream and vision, so also He speaks to all men ; (2) by generalizing the experience of Job, and shewing that all men are taught, as he was taught, by pain, by the discipline of sorrow and experience ; and (3) by generalizing (as I suspect) his own experience, and shewing that as he himself had gained his new “conviction” by an angel or messenger, who had interpreted him to himself, so also all men are “shewn what is right” by some of the great company of teachers and interpreters at the command of God. But while thus proving his first thesis, Elihu is careful to prove his second also. For again and again (Chap. xxxiii. 17, 18, 23–26, 29, 30) he points out that the end of God in these several modes of disclosing his will to men is an end of mercy and

compassion; that He speaks to them in order to train them in righteousness, and thus to bring back their souls from death, that they may grow light in the light of life. In this simple yet skilful way his two themes are fused into a single argument of remarkable and perennial interest and force.

But this argument is preceded by the exordium, which has so deeply—and, as I think, so unreasonably—stirred the ire of the critics. For Chapter xxxii. contains the general exordium to his whole “discourse;” while in Chapter xxxiii., Verses 1–7, we have only the exordium to the first section of that discourse. Before we touch the argument of Elihu, then, we must at least glance at this general exordium, in which he addresses himself to the Friends, and, as I am inclined to believe, to the circle of bystanders, before he enters on his reply to Job. I am much mistaken if a fair and sympathetic exposition of it will not suffice to clear it from the aspersions which have been so long and so plentifully lavished upon it.

#### CHAPTERS XXXII. AND XXXIII.

- CHAP. XXXII.     *Young am I, and ye are very old ;  
Therefore I was afraid,  
And durst not shew you my conviction.*
7.                     *I said, “ Let age speak,  
And the multitude of years teach wisdom :”*
8.                     *But it is the spirit that is in man,  
And the inspiration of the Almighty which giveth him understanding ;*
9.                     *It is not the great who are wise,  
Nor the old who understand what is right :*
10.                    *Therefore I say, “ Hearken unto me,  
I, even I, will shew you my conviction.”*
11.                    *Behold, I waited for your words,  
I gave ear to your arguments,  
Till ye had thoroughly searched out what to say ;*

12. *But though I have straitly marked you,  
Lo, none of you hath refuted Job,  
Nor answered his words.*
13. *Lest ye should say, "We have found out wisdom,"  
God, not man, shall vanquish him.*
14. *He indeed hath not directed his words against me,  
But neither will I answer him with your arguments.*
15. *They were broken down; they answered no more;  
They were bereft of words:*
16. *And I waited, but they spake not;  
They were at a stand, and answered no more.*
17. *But now I will reply for myself,  
I, even I, will shew my conviction;*
18. *For I am full of words,  
The spirit in my breast constraineth me;*
19. *My breast is like wine that hath no vent,  
Like new wineskins it is ready to burst:*
20. *I will speak, that I may get me ease,  
I will open my lips and reply.*
21. *No, indeed, I will accept no man's person,  
And I will flatter no man;*
22. *For I know not how to flatter:  
Speedily would my Maker cut me off [if I did].*

- CHAP. XXXIII. *But hear now, O Job, my words,  
And give ear to all my pleas;*
2. *Behold, now, I open my mouth,  
My tongue speaketh within my palate:*
3. *My words shall be sincere as my heart,  
And my lips shall utter knowledge purely.*
4. *The Spirit of God hath created me,  
And the inspiration of the Almighty quickened me.*
5. *Answer me, if thou canst;  
Array thyself before me: stand forth.*
6. *Lo, I, like you, am of God,  
I also am moulded of clay!*
7. *Lo, dread of me need not affright thee,  
Nor my dignity weigh heavily upon thee!*
8. *But thou hast spoken in mine ears,  
And surely I heard a sound of words [such as these].—*
9. *"Pure am I, free from sin;  
Spotless, and there is no iniquity in me:*

10. Behold, he seeketh a quarrel with me,  
He holdeth me for his foe :
11. He thrusteth my feet into the stocks,  
He watcheth all my ways !”
12. Behold, in this—I will answer thee—thou art not just ;  
For God is too great for man.
13. Wherefore didst thou contend against Him.  
That of none of his dealings will He give account ?
14. Nay, but in one way God does speak,  
Yea, in two, only man heedeth not :
15. In dreams, in visions of the night,  
When deep sleep fallcth on men,  
In slumberings upon the bed,
16. Then He openeth the ear of men,  
And secretly admonisheth them,
17. That He may witheraw man from his deeds,  
And hide from him his pride ;
18. That He may hold back his soul from the pit,  
And his life from perishing by the dart :
19. Or he is chastened with pain upon his couch,  
So that he writheth in great agony,
20. And his appetite abhorreth food,  
And his soul dainty viands ;
21. His flesh wasteth out of sight,  
And his bones, which were unseen, stand out,
22. Yea, his soul draweth nigh to the grave,  
And his life to the angels of death ;
23. Yet if there be an angel to interpret for him,  
One out of a thousand,  
To shew man what is right,  
Then doth He pity him, and say,  
“ Deliver him from going down into the grave,  
I have found a ransom :”
25. His flesh becometh fresher than a child’s,  
He returneth to the days of his youth ;
26. He prayeth unto God, and He accepteth him,  
He beholdeth his face with cries of joy ;  
For He restoreth unto man his uprightness :
27. He chanteth unto men, and saith,  
“ I had sinned and perverted right,  
But I am not requited as I deserve ;

23. *He hath rescued my soul from going down to the grave,  
I live and behold the light."*
27. *Behold, God doeth all these things,  
Twice, thrice, with man,*
30. *To bring back his soul from the grave,  
That it may grow light in the light of life.*
31. *Mark well, O Job, hearken unto me;  
Hold thy peace, and I will speak on :*
32. *Yet if thou hast aught to say, answer thou me,  
Speak, for I desire to find thee innocent ;*
33. *If not, hear thou me :  
Hold thy peace, and I will teach thee wisdom.*

In the exordium of his discourse Elihu first of all addresses himself to the discomfited Friends, alleging (*Chapter xxxii., Verse 6*) his youth and his reverence for age as the reasons which had so long kept him silent, although he was possessed by a strong and intimate "conviction" which he burned to utter. For it is no mere "opinion" that has grown hot within him as he has listened to them, but a deep inward persuasion. He is about to tell them, not what he thinks merely, but what he knows—that of which he is inwardly and fully convinced. According to the received opinion, "With many years is wisdom;" and Elihu is far from denying that age brings sagacity, or from treating with contempt the prophetic strain to which old experience doth attain (*Verse 7*). But age is not the only, not even the highest, source of wisdom. It is as men live and walk after the spirit (*πνεῦμα*) which they derive from God that they prepare themselves to receive the inspiration of the Almighty. *This*—as in another form Job had asserted in *Chapter xxviii.*—is the true source of wisdom, whether to old or young, great or simple (*Verses 8, 9*). And no doubt in this

indirect, but surely not immodest, way Elihu does here claim for his "conviction" that he had received it straight from God—that it was too pure and good to be anything short of an inspiration from Heaven. It is because he felt himself "moved" by God that he—even he, young as he is—claims attention for the conviction he is about to "shew" (*Verse 10*). No one can charge him with having been either "swift to speak" or "slow to hear." With curious and attentive sense he had waited for the words of the aged men who had come to "comfort" Job, and weighed them when they were uttered. With impatient surprise he had marked how they had had to hunt for arguments, and to "search for what they should say." With shame and indignation he had seen with what small success they had searched for pleas, how utterly they had failed to give Job any answer worthy of the name, to meet his arguments with counter arguments of superior force (*Verses 11, 12*). He can only account for their failure by supposing that, lest men so wise, and so persuaded of their own wisdom, should grow arrogant in an hour of triumph, and conclude that Wisdom dwelt with them and would die with them, God had doomed them to fail, and reserved the victory to Himself (*Verse 13*). And he is encouraged to speak at last, not only by the fact that he is moved to speak by God, but also because he is conscious that the point to which he has been moved by the inspiration of the Almighty is one which neither Job nor the Friends had touched—that he is about to take up a position which the Friends had failed to occupy, against which therefore Job had marshalled none of his arguments (*Verse 14*). It would almost seem that

Elihu had caught a glimpse, a prevision, of St. Paul's canon, that God chooses the foolish things of the world to put to shame the wise, and weak things to put to shame the strong (1 Cor. i. 26-29), in order that no flesh may glory in his presence.

Verses 15-20 are so mere a repetition of Verses 11-14, that I am disposed to think Elihu, at this point, turns from the Friends, to whom he had hitherto addressed himself, and, before he commences his address to Job (Chap. xxxiii. 1, *et seq.*), appeals to the audience, the circle of bystanders on the *mezbele*, whose presence and whose interest in the debate we are too apt to forget. The supposition derives some support from, as indeed it was suggested by, the fact that in Verses 15 and 16 the pronouns are in the third person plural, instead of, as before, in the second. All the Commentators whom I have consulted take this as an instance of "the polite indirection" of address common in Hebrew, which often uses "they" and "them," as a German might, for "ye" or "you." But in other passages of his discourse (Chap. xxxiv. 2, 4, 7, 10, 16, 34-37) Elihu, as all are agreed, does appeal to the bystanders, the "wise men" and "men of understanding," who were listening to the discussion.<sup>1</sup> May it not be that he also addresses them here? May it not be that he appeals to *them* for the truth of what he has just said, calls on them to confess that the Friends had been utterly discomfited and broken down by the cogency and vehemence of Job's replies, so that words and thoughts alike failed them, and demands whether it is not full time that the discussion

<sup>1</sup> The whole of Chapter xxxiv. is addressed to the audience, though in the Verses I have cited this fact is more apparent, is indeed expressly indicated.

were removed to other and higher ground? I am disposed to think that in this hypothesis we have the key to the change in his tone at this point of his exordium, though there is no change in the matter of it.

To whomsoever he speaks, Elihu once more professes his intention to lift the argument to higher ground. He is "full of words" (*Verse 18*)—full of "matter," as our Authorized Version puts it, the Original expression indicating "genuine and irrepressible convictions," which ferment within his breast like wine that has no vent; his breast is burdened and strained by them like new wineskins ready to burst (*Verse 19*), insomuch that, though in this case the new wine has been poured into new skins, the new truth into a fresh young heart, he *must* speak that he may get him ease; he is being suffocated by the inward fermentation and struggle of his spirit, and must get *room to breathe*—for that is the real force of his expression—by uttering what is in his heart (*Verse 20*). To be silent would be to be unfaithful to his convictions out of deference to mere authority, from fear of incurring the censure or the suspicions of the grave and reverend men before and around him. He fears the anger of God more than the censure of man, the pain of being untrue more than the shame of rebuke; and therefore he will speak out his new truth in scorn of consequence (*Verses 21, 22*).

No one whose hard yet happy fate it has been to contribute to the progress of human thought, by confronting accepted dogmas with broader and larger views of truth; no one who, by the steady pressure of a growing conviction, or of a genuine inspiration from



above, has been compelled to put new wine into old skins, and has heard the Church, as well as the world, mutter, "The old is better;" no one who from love to God has been driven to overcome all fear of man, can fail to sympathize with the complex emotions by which the whole being of Elihu was stirred—with his impatience and indignation at seeing the championship of Truth assumed by partial, incompetent, and prejudiced hands; with his fear lest by giving a shock to received opinions he should injure the weak unwary minds which confuse form with substance and dogma with religion, or offend men whom he esteemed and revered, or so damage the cause he had espoused by his immature and unskilful handling of it as to retard its triumph; with his inexpressible relief when the rubicon was once passed, when his convictions were uttered, and left to the sure arbitrament of Time and of Him who shapes it to a perfect end. Looked at from this sympathetic point of view, Chapter xxxii., which has given such deadly offence to the critics and called down a storm of opprobrium and derision on Elihu's head, will be found to be a graphic and auspicious preface to the discourse in which henceforth he addresses himself to Job. And I am bold to say that, if it be interpreted in this fair and kindly sense, it will be admitted that no charge of immodesty or arrogance can be maintained against it.

In *Chapter xxxiii.* Elihu turns from the Friends and the bystanders, to address himself directly and by name to Job. He bids him

Cease to lament for that he cannot help,  
And study help for that which he laments.

Young as he is, and comparatively unwise, he undertakes to prove that God does speak to men, and that in many ways ; and he promises Job—

If you can pace your wisdom  
In the good path I would have it go,

you shall see that it is not in anger, but in love, that God afflicts the children of men.

He gives him many reasons why he should listen with patient attention. (1) It is no hasty and unconsidered impulse to which Elihu is about to yield, but a long-pondered and profound conviction. "Behold, now, *I open my mouth*" (*Verse 2*), a phrase which always introduces a grave and deliberate utterance, and implies that the speaker is about to employ words selected "with a leavened and prepared choice." *My tongue speaketh within my palate*, each word being, as it were, carefully tasted and approved before it is allowed to slip from the tongue. (2) He is about to speak from an open and honest heart that desires the truth, and (3) with plain sincerity of speech (*Verse 3*). Job had often complained of the oblique and dishonest utterances of the Friends (*e.g.*, Chap. vi. 25) ; Elihu professes that no dishonesty shall be found in him, that with frank and unfeigned lips he will deliver only that of which his true heart is inwardly and fully persuaded. But (4) the great reason why Job should listen to him while he "shews his conviction" is, that his conviction is not his own, but an inspiration of the Almighty, an inspiration quickened in him by the God whose breath had made him a living soul (*Verse 4* : Comp. Chap. xxxii. 8, and see *Note* on that Verse). Conscious that he has received life and understanding from God his Maker, Elihu stands before Job without fear, and

challenges him to the logical strife (*Verse 5*), the origin of his boldness saving it from all taint of arrogance. Still another reason is (*5*) that Elihu is the very antagonist whom Job has again and again demanded. For Job had often complained, "God is not a man, as I am, whom I might answer" (*Chap. ix. 32*), and prayed that He would lay aside the terrors of his Majesty when He entered into judgment with him (*Chap. xiii. 2*); and now Elihu replies, "Here am I, a man like yourself, moulded"—or, as the expressive word means, *nipped*—"out of the same clay; and yet, though a man, I will speak for God, for I too am from Him, and it is his spirit which gives me understanding. You need have no dread of *me* such as strikes you dumb before the Majesty of Heaven" (*Verses 6, 7*).

That he *may* be fair, impartial, sincere in his reply, and touch the real issue in dispute, Elihu sums up Job's argument so far as he is about to answer it, and sums it up, so far as brevity will allow, in the very words of his opponent. *Verses 9-11* are a model of clear and concise statement, and breathe a candour which many a self-elected champion of the cause of truth would do well to imitate. With a certain incredulous amazement, as of one who could hardly believe his own ears—such is the force of *Verse 8*—and yet was compelled to believe them, so distinctly and vehemently had Job spoken, Elihu had heard from his lips "a sound of words" which he could only take as meaning a claim of innocence on Job's part and a charge of injustice against God. Now that Job had consistently maintained his integrity no reader of the Poem can doubt. In Chapter xii., *Verse 4*, he expressly calls himself "just" and "innocent." In Chap-

ter xvi., Verse 17, he affirms that there was no violence in his hand, and that his prayer was pure. In Chapter x., Verses 13-17, he elaborately contends that God knows his spotless innocence, and yet hunts him down as if he were stained and saturated with an ineradicable guilt. Of all these and many similar passages Elihu gives a fair summary in the words he now attributes to Job: "Pure am I, free from sin; spotless, and there is no iniquity in me. But God seeketh a quarrel with me.—*finds alienations* in me, causes and grounds for hostility," while the other words he attributes to him are simply verbatim citations of words actually used by Job. Thus, "He holdeth me for a foe" in Verse 10 is taken from Chapter xiii. 24, or from Chapter xix. 11; and Verse 11 is taken straight from Chapter xiii. 27. The force of fairness could no farther go; and we cannot be surprised that Job sits silent, and by his silence assents to Elihu's summary as a fair and adequate statement of his argument.

And yet, though Elihu states the argument with such careful and anxious impartiality, *this* is not the argument which he at once proceeds to meet. Its implied charge against the injustice of God and the worthlessness of human virtue he leaves to be discussed in his second and third discourses. And, therefore, having prepared the way for that discussion, he proceeds to handle a nearer and easier charge. For, throughout his Argument, Job had also implied and asserted God's indifference—that He would not speak to men, would not listen and reply to *him*, and had besought Him to abandon an indifference so cruel, to hear and to speak. Even in his last Monologue Job had complained, "I cry to thee, and thou answerest.

me not" (Chap. xxx. 20), and sighed in despair, "O that the Almighty *would* hear me!" (Chap. xxxi. 35.)

In all this, replies Elihu, still preserving his accent of surprise, in your whole contention you are unwise and unjust (*Verse 12*), as I will shew you. God is not inequitable. The righteous man is the better for his righteousness. And God does speak to men in divers ways. He is too great to *dispute* with you, indeed, to come at your call, to defend Himself against the vaunts of one who can only vindicate himself by accusing Him. How (*Verse 13*) could you be so unwise as to contend against Him, to affront Him by affirming, that of none of his dealings would He give account? Was *that* the way to make Him speak? And how (*Verse 14*) could you be so unjust? It is not true that He gives no account of Himself and of his dealings with men. He speaks to them in more ways than one.

Two, nay, three (Comp. *Verses 14, 29*) of these ways Elihu proceeds to specify.

First, God quickens men to thought and moral emotion in the silence and slumber of the night; deep religious intuitions and yearnings take form in visions (*Verses 15-18*). Then, should these fail of their proper effect, He chastens and corrects men with pain, leaving them to learn the evil of their doings from the evils they produce (*Verses 19-22*). And then, if even these should fail, He sends a messenger—man or spirit—to interpret their thoughts and emotions to them, to explain the meaning and purpose of the painful experiences through which they have passed, to convince them that the way of righteousness is the way of life and peace (*Verses 23, 24*). And all these methods of instruction and correction are sent in love, not in wrath;

with a view to teach men their duty and incline them to do it; to restore their uprightness, and so to bring back light and joy into their life (*Verses 25--30*).

The first method of Divine Approach is through the Gate of Dreams. No doubt the special reference of *Verse 15* is to such ominous and oracular visions as that which shook the soul of Eliphaz with its revelation of the holiness of God and of the frailty of man (Chap. iv. 12-24), visions which, as we saw when studying that passage, while they resolve the doubts over which men have been brooding, are hardly to be distinguished from the movements of their own unaided consciousness, and are at times simply the products of the conscious spirit when freed, by slumber, from the chains of will and habit and prejudice. By such solemn visitations as these God has in all ages "uncovered the ear" of men otherwise deaf to his instructions, and *sealed*, or stamped, on their minds the special admonition of which they stood in need (*Verse 16*); or—for this *may be* the force of the image—conveyed to them, in this *sealed* and private way, the confidential hint or warning He wished them to receive. But many a lesser man than Eliphaz, many a man to whom no solemn and stately vision has been vouchsafed, has nevertheless discovered, when deep sleep has fallen upon him, in dreams and visions of the night, that

His conscience has a thousand several tongues,  
And every tongue brings in a several tale,  
And every tale condemns him for . . .

a sinner. The pageantry and the pursuing voices of a quickened conscience—acting more fully when slumber has relaxed the will—have often been a sufficient punishment for a crime against the majesty of con-

science ; and sometimes at least they have sufficed to withdraw men from an evil course on which they had entered, or were about to enter, shattering all the obstinate defences of the pride which disposed them to complete a course of folly and sin simply because they had commenced it (*Verse 17*). "To hide his pride from him" seems to be a peculiar expression for wearying a man of his pride, making him sick of the self-confidence by which he has so often been betrayed. And the Divine purpose in this method of speaking to the soul is most merciful and kindly ; for God thus speaks to men, not to affright and punish them simply, but to save them from the perdition to which, in their arrogance and folly, they are hastening on (*Verse 18*).

Nor is his purpose less kind and merciful when He adopts the second method of approach, when He speaks to men by pain, when he corrects and chastens them through suffering. The very form of the opening phrase of *Verse 19*—"Or he is *chastened* with pain"—hints at the merciful intention expressly declared in *Verse 18* and fully wrought out in *Verses 24-30*. And it is important that we should notice from the first how Elihu harps on this string, touching it again and again, as if it were familiar to his finger. For his conviction of the scope and function of affliction, and indeed of the final intention of the whole circle of the Divine rule and revelation in all the variety of its forms, differs radically from that of the Friends, who held all suffering to be punitive, and evidently conceived of God as more bent on exacting honour and obedience than on shewing lovingkindness and tender mercy. So far, therefore, from contri-

buting nothing to the argument of the Poem, besides the large and obvious contributions to it already pointed out, Elihu's fundamental assumptions, the very axioms of his theology, are of themselves an immense advance on all we have heretofore met.

In his exposition of the first method of Divine instruction, Elihu probably had Eliphaz in his eye; in expounding the second method it is all but certain that he had Job in his eye. For in describing the man who suffers that he may be strong (*Verses 19-22*), he puts in strokes borrowed from Job's own diagnosis of the symptoms of his loathsome and fatal disease. His ideal sufferer is one who—besides that common sign of sickness, a loathing for wholesome and even for delicate food—“*writheth in great agony* ;” or, as some render it, is chastened “with the constant tumult of his limbs ;” whose “*flesh wasteth out of sight*,” while “*his bones, once unseen, stand out to view*,” so that “*his soul draws nigh to the grave*,” and “*his life to the angels of death*,” *i. e.*, to the angels commissioned to slay him unless he repent. No one can well doubt whence these details were drawn who remembers how Job had sighed, “*I waste away!*” “*My limbs are a shadow!*” “*My leanness beareth witness against me!*” “*My bones burn with heat!*” “*I loathe my life!*” “*My breath is spent! My days are extinct! For me the tomb!*”

But is there no hope even for such a sufferer as this? Oh, yes; for there is no school in which men learn so much, or so fast, as in the school of suffering; there is no experience by which the soul is so purged and chastened as by the experience of pain and loss. The Divine rebuke is as the ploughing up of the hardened



and weed-stained soil that it may bring forth more and better fruit.

O then we bring forth weeds  
When our quick minds lie still ; *but our ills told us*  
*Is as our earing.*

And, moreover, God has a third way in which He draws near to men (*Verses* 23, 24). And as he describes this third method of instruction, it may be that Elihu, who has already generalized the experience of Job and of Eliphaz, turns his eye upon himself. For he himself had been moved and taught by God. The deep "conviction" to which he is now giving utterance was, as he more than once insists (Chap. xxxii. 8 ; Chap. xxxiii. 4), an "inspiration" from above. And this inspiration, this new interpretation of the facts of human life, probably came to him through one of the thousand "messengers" whom God employs to "shew man what is right" and true. But while he claims a Divine teaching and inspiration for himself, Elihu does not claim to be favoured above his fellows. On the contrary, he expressly argues that a similar teaching is vouchsafed to all who prepare themselves for it by "minding spiritual things." God has "a thousand" interpreters, or ways of interpreting his will to men. He is for ever sending messengers to us, not only to "tell us of our ills," but also to explain and enforce the moral intuitions which take form in our "visions," and in the admonitions of sorrow and loss. These messengers come to all, and come with the same end in view—to shew us what is right, and to pour the light and peace of Heaven on our darkened and distracted hearts.

This seems to be the fair and natural sense of *Verses* 23 and 24.

Even grave and sober Commentators, however, have found in these Verses <sup>1</sup> the whole mystery of Redemption. In the "angel" of *Verse 23* they see "the Angel of the Presence," "the Angel of Jehovah;" and in the "ransom" of *Verse 24* "the Sacrifice of the Cross;" and hence they attribute to Elihu at least some "provision" of the great "mystery of godliness." Such a method of interpretation is, in my judgment, forced and unnatural. To make Elihu in any degree conversant with the propitiation and mediation of Christ is a mere anachronism, and an anachronism rebuked by the plain and obvious sense of the passage itself and of the meaning and intention of the Chapter in general. The word here rendered "angel" expresses the office or function of the angel, and means "messenger," "interpreter," "ambassador," "teacher," "prophet;" it covers any and all, mortal or immortal, whose duty it is to announce and explain and enforce the will of a superior; and therefore it covers the work and function of the man of genius and the man of science as well as those of the prophet or the evangelist, of the learned divine or faithful expositor of the Word. Any man who can "shew" his fellows "what is right" and fair and good is an "angel" in the sense in which that word is used here. And the phrase, "One out of a thousand," implies how many such ministers God has at his command; for "*thousand*" stands for any vast,

<sup>1</sup> In these difficult and much disputed Verses I follow Gesenius and Schlottmann in the main, though not without some slight variations. Schlottmann translates the passage thus—

Ist da für ihn der Engel, der Fürsprecher,  
 der Ein von den Tausend,  
 das er dem Menschen was recht ist verkünde.  
 Und erbarmt sich der und spricht:  
 "erlöse ihn, dass er nicht in die Grabe fahre,  
 ich fand ein Sühne!"

indefinite number; and "one out of a thousand" is not one who in a thousand has no peer, but one whose fellows are every whit as good as he, any one of the great company of teachers and interpreters being competent for the work.

Equally clear in its bearing on these Verses is the general course of thought. The aim of Elihu is, as we have seen, to shew that God has at least three ways of teaching men the truths which lead them, through repentance, to life—the way of vision, the way of experience, the way of revelation or of inspiration. If, taught in any or in all these ways, they see "what is right" and embrace it; if, forsaking their sins, they follow after that which is good, then God delivers them from the death which their sins had provoked. *This* seems to be the natural and unforced order of thought in the Chapter; and to read into it the substance of the Gospel and make Elihu conversant with the Sacrifice and Intercession of "the Man from Heaven" is to attribute as much more to him than he deserves, as those critics ascribe less who can see nothing in him but a bombastic braggart or a chattering and conceited coxcomb.

By this various Divine teaching—which in its largest sense may be expressed by the words, Intuition, Experience, Revelation—man, if he profit by it, is made a new creature; he is restored to health both of body and of soul (*Verses* 25, 26); his youth is renewed; he becomes "as a little child;" and, like a child, he speaks with God as with a Father, looking up into his face with "cries of joy," because He has "restored his uprightness" to him, *i.e.*, made him really upright and pure.

*Verses 27 and 28* give us the pathetic song of the restored and grateful Penitent. In the word "chant" (*Verse 27*) there is doubtless an allusion to the raised and measured tone of Oriental worship. The Mussulmans recite their *suras* and the Hindoos their *shastras* in a chant; and thus in India the verbs "sing" and "read" are, in the common parlance, interchangeable: a native, for instance, will often say of a bird that "it reads finely."<sup>1</sup> So that we are to conceive of the penitent as coming before the Lord to make a public confession both of his sin and of the mercy which is "more than all our sins." *Verses 29 and 30* do but throw the experience of the individual penitent into a general form (hence the repetition of *Verse 28* in *Verse 30*), and assure us that it is no particular and special instance of the gracious discipline of Heaven merely to which Elihu has drawn our thoughts, but God's common method with man, the aim and intention of his discipline for us all.

Thus, as I have already pointed out, Elihu does not simply meet Job's contention that God does not and will not speak to men even when they most need and desire to hear his voice; he also meets Job's feeling that it is cruel and unjust to afflict men who have not provoked punishment by conscious and specific sins. Like the Friends, Job was unable to see that suffering had any but a punitive errand, and could only conclude that, since he was so heavily afflicted, it was God's intention to punish and even to destroy him. No, replies Elihu; affliction is sent for teaching and discipline as well as for punishment, in mercy as well as

<sup>1</sup> See Heber's *India*, vol. i. p. 133.

in wrath. And since you have not been guilty of the specific sins of which your sufferings would have been the natural and inevitable results, the end for which you have been afflicted *must* be your instruction and discipline in righteousness. God's aim is not to bring you down to death, but to bring you back from death, that you may live and behold the light.

And as we listen to this "wise young man" we are at first disposed to say, These were the very truths Job needed and longed to hear. And yet, were they? Though Elihu tacitly admits Job to be innocent of the gross and patent transgressions "running before to judgment," with which he had been charged by the Friends, does he not at the same time assume that Job had unconsciously committed sins of a more inward and secret kind, and that there was in him a latent sinfulness of nature for or from which God was chastening him? Is it not clearly his leading aim to convince Job of sin, if not of sins, to induce contrition, to persuade him to take up the song of the penitent, and confess, "*I have sinned, and perverted that which was right*"?

No doubt Job felt, as we feel, the immense difference in the tone taken by Elihu and that which the Friends had taken—felt how much more just, temperate, and kindly it was, felt that in response to such an invitation as this he would very gladly confess his sins, if only he had any specific sins to confess. But may he not also have felt that, in assuming his sins, or even his sinfulness, Elihu was doing him some injustice, and seeking to wrest from him that consciousness of integrity which he had resolved to hold fast so long as he lived?

That he *was* touched and torn by some such conflicting emotions as these seems implied in the closing

paragraph of the Chapter (*Verses* 31-33). For in these Verses, as the Commentators generally agree, the effect of Elihu's discourse on Job is indirectly portrayed. He may have stirred, or lifted a hand, or opened his lips, as if about to reply to the argument of Elihu, as if to demand proof of the sins which he was summoned to repent and confess, or to deny that in his case suffering had been a school of righteousness. But feeling that "this earlier Daniel come to judgment" had really imported a new element into the discussion, and touched with his tender and sympathetic tone, as also with his frank and obvious desire to repel the charges of the Friends, and to "find him innocent," he may have checked himself, and pressed back the rising words, resolute to hear him to the end. This at least appears to be the implication of the challenge, and of the pauses of Elihu in the last three Verses of the Chapter, and of the unbroken silence of Job.

The most important contribution to the arguments of the Poem made in Elihu's First Discourse are the two on which already so much stress has been laid. (1) That suffering is intended by God as a quickening and loving discipline in righteousness, rather than as an angry and vindictive punishment; that though "adversity be like the period of the former and latter rain—cold, comfortless, and unfriendly to man—yet from that season have their birth the flower and the fruit, the date, the rose, and the pomegranate." And (2) that by the great primitive religious intuitions, which all men share, revealed and expressed in visions, by their common training in the school of suffering, and by the due interpretation of this expe-

rience and these intuitions, conveyed through the wisdom of the wise or the inspiration of God, every man receives a sufficient disclosure of the Divine love to bring him to repentance and to "the light of life." And if Elihu had not added another word, if we owed him nothing but this striking, complete, and wonderfully philosophic definition of the common and constant modes in which God reveals to men the eternal counsels of his will, we should be compelled to confess that he makes a very real and valuable contribution to the argument of the Poem, a contribution as real and valuable to-day as on the day it left his lips.

S. COX.

## THE SECOND EPISTLE TO TIMOTHY.

### CHAPTER I.

*Verses 1, 2.*—*Paul, by the will of God, an Apostle of Jesus Christ.* The Writer was accustomed to refer his apostolate to the gracious purpose of the Father (see commencement of the Epistles to Corinthians, Ephesians, Colossians, and Galatians i. 15, 16). This deep conviction justified the use of a stronger and peculiar phrase in 1 Timothy i. 1. (*κατ' ἐπιταγήν Θεοῦ*), one which referred explicitly to the direct "appointment" and authoritative commission in which the Divine "Will" expressed itself. *According to the promise of life which is in Christ Jesus.* The old interpreters paraphrased the preposition thus, "so as to preach;"<sup>1</sup> and several of the modern commentators deem that *κατά* here means, "with a view to the proclamation of" the promise of life.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Theodoret, *ὥστε με κηρύξαι*.

<sup>2</sup> Huther, Mack, Ellicott, and others. For this use of *κατά*, see 2 Cor. xi. 21.