
JOB 38: 1 Then the LORD answered Job out of the whirlwind,

The Lord answers Job out of a whirlwind, and challenges him to answer, Job 38:1-3. He convinces him of ignorance and weakness, by an enumeration of some of his mighty works; particularly of the creation of the earth, Job 38:4-7. The sea and the deeps, Job 38:8-18. The light, Job 38:19-21. Snow, hail, thunder, lightning, rain, dew, ice, and hoar-frost, Job 38:22-30. Different constellations, and the ordinances of heaven influencing the earth, Job 38:31-33. Shows his own power and wisdom in the atmosphere, particularly in the thunder, lightnings, and rain, Job 38:34-38. His providence in reference to the brute creation, Job 38:39-41.

Verse 1

The Lord answered Job out of the whirlwind - It is not סופה *supah*, as in the preceding chapter, Job 37:9; but סורה *searah*, which signifies something turbulent, tumultuous, or violently agitated; and here may signify what we call a tempest, and was intended to fill Job's mind with solemnity, and an awful sense of the majesty of God. The Chaldee has, a whirlwind of grief, making the whole rather allegorical than real; impressing the scene on Job's imagination.

JOB 38: 2 "Who is this who darkens counsel by words without knowledge?"

Verse 2

Who is this that darkeneth counsel - As if he had said, Who art thou who pretendest to speak on the deep things of God, and the administration of his justice and providence, which thou canst not comprehend; and leavest my counsels and designs the darker for thy explanation?

JOB 38: 3 Brace yourself like a man, for I will question you, then you answer me!

Verse 3

Gird up now thy loins - I will not confound thee with my terrors; dismiss all fearful apprehensions from thy mind; now act like a man, כגבר *kegeber*, like a hero: stand and vindicate thyself. For I will demand of thee - I will ask thee a series of questions more easy of solution than those which thou hast affected to discuss already; and then thou shalt have the opportunity of answering for thyself. The most impressive and convincing manner of arguing is allowed to be that by interrogation, which the Almighty here adopts. The best orations delivered by the ancients were formed after this manner. That celebrated oration of Cicero against Catiline, which is allowed to be his masterpiece, begins with a multitude of short questions, closely pressed upon each other. See the end of the chapter, Job 38:40 (note).

JOB 38: 4 "Where were you when I laid the foundations of the earth? Declare, if you have understanding.

Verse 4

Where wast thou when I laid the foundations of the earth? - Thou hast a limited and derived being; thou art only of yesterday; what canst thou know? Didst thou see me create the world?

JOB 38: 5 Who determined its measures, if you know?

Or who stretched the line on it?

Verse 5

Who hath laid the measures thereof - Who hath adjusted its polar and equatorial distances from the center?

Who hath stretched the line - Who hath formed its zones and its great circles, and adjusted the whole of its magnitude and gravity to the orbit in which it was to move, as well as its distance from that great center about which it was to revolve? These questions show the difficulty of the subject; and that there was an unfathomable depth of counsel and design in the formation of the earth.

JOB 38: 6 Whereupon were its foundations fastened? Or who laid its cornerstone,

Verse 6

Whereupon are the foundations thereof fastened? - How does it continue to revolve in the immensity of space? What supports it? Has it foundations like a building, and is it fastened with a key-stone, to keep the mighty fabric in union?

JOB 38: 7 when the morning stars sang together, and all the sons of God shouted for joy?

Verse 7

When the morning stars sang together - This must refer to some intelligent beings who existed before the creation of the visible heavens and earth: and it is supposed that this and the following clause refer to the same beings; that by the sons of God, and the morning stars, the angelic host is meant; as they are supposed to be first, though perhaps not chief, in the order of creation. For the latter clause the Chaldee has, "All the troops of angels." Perhaps their creation may be included in the term heavens, Gen 1:1: "In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth." These witnessed the progress of the creation; and, when God had finished his work, celebrated his wisdom and power in the highest strains.

JOB 38: 8 "Or who shut up the sea with doors, when it broke out of the womb,

Verse 8

Who shut up the sea with doors - Who gathered the waters together into one place, and fixed the sea its limits, so that it cannot overpass them to inundate the earth?

When it brake forth, as if it had issued out of the womb? - This is a very fine metaphor. The sea is represented as a newly born infant issuing from the womb of the void and formless chaos; and the delicate circumstance of the liquor amnii, which bursts out previously to the birth of the foetus, alluded to. The allusion to the birth of a child is carried on in the next verse.

JOB 38: 9 when I made clouds its garment, and wrapped it in thick darkness,

Verse 9

When I make the cloud the garment - Alluding to the cloth in which the new-born infant is first received. The cloud was the same to the newly raised vapor, as the above recipient to the new-born child.

And thick darkness a swaddlingband for it - Here is also an allusion to the first dressings of the new-born child: it is swathed in order to support the body, too tender to bear even careful handling without some medium between the hand of the nurse and the flesh of the child. "The image," says Mr. Good, "is exquisitely maintained: the new-born ocean is represented as issuing from the womb of chaos; and its dress is that of the new-born infant." There is here an allusion also to the creation, as described in Gen 1:1, Gen 1:2. Darkness is there said to be on the face of the Deep. Here it is said, the thick darkness was a swaddlingband for the new-born Sea.

JOB 38: 10 marked out for it my bound, set bars and doors,

Verse 10

And brake up for it my decreed place - This refers to the decree, Gen 1:9: "Let the waters under the heavens be gathered together unto one place."

And set bars and doors - And let the dry land appear. This formed the bars and doors of the sea; the land being everywhere a barrier against the encroachments and inundations of the sea; and great rivers, bays, creeks, etc., the doors by which it passes into the interior of continents, etc.

JOB 38: 11 and said, 'Here you may come, but no further. Here your proud waves shall be stayed?'

Verse 11

Hitherto shalt thou come - Thus far shall thy flux and reflux extend. The tides are marvellously limited and regulated, not only by the lunar and solar attractions, but by the quantum of time also which is required to remove any part of the earth's surface from under the immediate attractive influence of the sun and moon. And this regulation takes place by means of the rotation of the earth round its own axis, which causes one thousand and forty-two miles of its equator to pass from under any given point in the heavens in one hour; and about five hundred and eighty miles in the latitude of London: so that the attracted fluid parts are every moment passing from under the direct attractive influence, and thus the tides cannot generally be raised to any extraordinary height. The attraction of the sun and moon, and the gravitation of its own parts to its own center, which prevent too great a flux on the one hand, and too great a reflux on the other; or, in other words, too high a tide, and too deep an ebb, are also some of those bars and doors by which its proud waves are stayed, and prevented from coming farther; all being regulated by these laws of attraction by the sun and moon, the gravitation of its own parts from the sun and moon, and the diurnal motion round its own axis, by which the fluid parts, easily yielding to the above attraction, are continually moving from under the direct attractive influence. Here a world of wisdom and management was necessary, in order to proportion all these things to each other, so as to procure the great benefits which result from the flux and reflux of the sea, and prevent the evils that must take place, at least occasionally, were not those bars and doors provided. It is well known that the spring-tides happen at the change and full of the moon, at which time she is in conjunction with and opposition to the sun. As these retire from their conjunction, the tides neap till about three days after the first quadrature, when the tides begin again to be more and more elevated, and arrive at their maximum about the third day after the opposition. From this time the tides neap as before till the third day after the last quadrature; and afterwards their daily elevations are continually increased till about the third day after the conjunction, when they recommence their neaping; the principal phenomena of the tides always taking place at or near the some points of every lunar synodic revolution.

JOB 38: 12 "Have you commanded the morning in your days, and caused the dawn to know its place;

Verse 12

Hast thou commanded the morning - This refers to dawn or morning twilight, occasioned by the refraction of the solar rays by means of the atmosphere; so that we receive the light by degrees, which would otherwise burst at once upon our eyes, and injure, if not destroy, our sight; and by which even the body of the sun himself becomes evident several minutes before he rises above the horizon.

Caused the dayspring to know his place - This seems to refer to the different points in which daybreak appears during the course of the earth's revolution in its orbit; and which variety of points of appearing depends on this annual revolution. For, as the earth goes round the sun every year in the ecliptic, one half of which is on the north side of the equinoctial, and the other half on its south side, the sun appears to change his place every day. These are matters which the wisdom of God alone could plan, and which his power alone could execute. It may be just necessary to observe that the dawn does not appear, nor the sun rise exactly in the same point of the horizon, two successive days in the whole year, as he declines forty-three degrees north, and forty-three degrees south, of east; beginning on the 21st of March, and ending on the 22d of December; which variations not only

produce the places of rising and setting, but also the length of day and night. And by this declination north and south, or approach to and recession from the tropics of Cancer and Capricorn, the solar light takes hold of the ends of the earth, Job 38:13, enlightens the arctic and antarctic circles in such a way as it would not do were it always on the equinoctial line; these tropics taking the sun twenty-three and a half degrees north, and as many south, of this line.

JOB 38: 13 that it might take hold of the ends of the earth, and shake the wicked out of it?

Verse 13

That the wicked might be shaken out of it? - The meaning appears to be this: as soon as the light begins to dawn upon the earth, thieves, assassins, murderers, and adulterers, who all hate and shun the light, fly like ferocious beasts to their several dens and hiding places; for such do not dare to come to the light, lest their works be manifest, which are not wrought in God. To this verse the fifteenth appears to belong, as it connects immediately with it, which connection the introduction of the fourteenth verse disturbs. "And from the wicked," such as are mentioned above "their light is withholden;" they love darkness rather than light, because their deeds are evil; and as they prowl after their prey in the night-season, they are obliged to sleep in the day, and thus its "light is withholden" from them. "And the high arm shall be broken;" or, as Mr. Good translates, "The roving of wickedness is broken off." They can no longer pursue their predatory and injurious excursions.

JOB 38: 14 It is changed as clay under the seal, and presented as a garment.

Verse 14

It is turned as clay to the seal - The earth, like soft clay, is capable of modifying itself in endless ways, and assuming infinite forms. As a proof of this, see the astonishing variety of plants, flowers, and fruits, and the infinitely diversified hues, odours, tastes, consistency, and properties, of its vegetable productions. There seems to be an allusion here to the sealing of clay, which I believe has been, and is now, frequent in the East. Six of those Eastern seals for sealing clay, made of brass, the figures and characters all in relief, the interstices being entirely perforated and cut out, so that the upper side of the seal is the same as the lower, now lie before me. They seem to have been used for stamping pottery, as some of the fine clay still appears in the interstices.

And they stand as a garment - The earth receiving these impressions from the solar light and heat, plants and flowers spring up, and decorate its surface as the most beautiful stamped garment does the person of the most sumptuously dressed female. Mr. Good translates the whole verse thus: - "Canst thou cause them to bend round as clay to the mould, so that they are made to sit like a garment?" He supposes that reference is here made to the rays of light; but take his own words: "The image, as it appears to me, is taken directly from the art of pottery, an image of very frequent recurrence in Scripture; and in the present instance admirably forcible in painting the ductility with which the new light of the morning bends round like clay to the mould, and accompanies the earth in every part of its shape so as to fit it, as we are expressly told in the ensuing metaphor, like a garment, as the clay fits the mould itself." Mr. Good supposes that a mould in which the pottery is formed, not a seal by which it is impressed, is referred to here. In this sense I do not see the

metaphor consistent, nor the allusion happy. It is well known that the rays of light never bend. They may be reflected at particular angles, but they never go out of a straight course. A gun might as well be expected to shoot round a corner, as a ray of light to go out of a straight line, or to follow the sinuous or angular windings of a tube, canal, or adit. But if we take in the sun as he advances in his diurnal voyage, or rather the earth, as it turns round its axis from west to east, the metaphor of Mr. Good will be correct enough; but we must leave out bending and ductility, as every part of the earth's surface will be at least successively invested with the light.

JOB 38: 15 From the wicked, their light is withheld. The high arm is broken.

JOB 38: 16 "Have you entered into the springs of the sea? Or have you walked in the recesses of the deep?"

Verse 16

Hast thou entered into the springs of the sea? - Of these springs, inlets, or outlets of the sea, we know just as much as Job. There was prevalent among philosophers an opinion, that through a porous bottom fresh matter was constantly oozing by which the sea was supplied with new materials. But through such pores these materials might as well ooze out as ooze in.

Walked in the search of the depth? - Hast thou walked from the shallow beach through the great ocean's bed, till thou hast arrived at its profoundest depths? In other words, Dost thou know the depths of the sea? Job, we may presume, did not. No man since him has found them out. In multitudes of places they are unfathomed by any means hitherto used by man.

JOB 38: 17 Have the gates of death been revealed to you? Or have you seen the gates of the shadow of death?

Verse 17

Have the gates of death been opened unto thee? - Dost thou know in what the article of death consists? This is as inexplicable as the question, What is animal life?

The doors of the shallow of death? - צלמות tsalmaveth, the intermediate state, the openings into the place of separate spirits. Here two places are distinguished: מות maveth, death, and צלמות tsalmaveth, the shadow of death. It will not do to say, death is the privation of life, for what then would be the shadow of that privation?

JOB 38: 18 Have you comprehended the earth in its breadth? Declare, if you know it all.

Verse 18

The breadth of the earth? - At that time the circumference of the globe was not known, because the earth itself was supposed to be a vast extended plain, bordered all round with the ocean and the sky.

JOB 38: 19 "What is the way to the dwelling of light? As for darkness, where is its place,

Verse 19

Where light dwelleth - What is the source of light? Yea, what is light itself? It is not in the sun, for light was before the sun; but what is light? It is no doubt a substance; but of what kind? and of what are its particles? As to darkness, what is it? Is it philosophical to say, it is the mere privation of light? I shall think philosophy has made some advances to general accuracy and perfection when it proves to us what cold is, and what darkness is, leaving mere privations out of the question.

JOB 38: 20 that you should take it to its bound, that you should discern the paths to its house?

Verse 20

Shouldest take it to the bound thereof? - Or, as Mr. Good, translates, "That thou shouldest lay hold of it in its boundary." That thou shouldest go to the very spot where light commences, and where darkness ends; and see the house where each dwells. Here darkness and light are personified, each as a real intelligent being, having a separate existence and local dwelling. But poetry animates everything. It is the region of fictitious existence. I believe this verse should be translated thus: - "For thou canst take Us to its boundary; for thou knowest the paths to its house." This is a strong irony, and there are several others in this Divine speech. Job had valued himself too much on his knowledge; and a chief object of this august speech is to humble his "knowing pride," and to cause him to seek true wisdom and humility where they are to be found.

JOB 38: 21 Surely you know, for you were born then, and the number of your days is great!

Verse 21

Knowest thou - This is another strong and biting irony, and the literal translation proves it: "Thou knowest, because thou was then born; and the number of thy days is great," or multitudinous, רבים rabbim, multitudes.

JOB 38: 22 Have you entered the treasuries of the snow, or have you seen the treasures of the hail,

Verse 22

The treasures of the snow - The places where snow is formed, and the cause of that formation. See on Job 37:6 (note).

Treasures of the hail - It is more easy to account for the formation of snow than of hail. Hail, however, is generally supposed to be drops of rain frozen in their passage through cold regions of the air; and the hail is always in proportion to the size of the raindrop from which it was formed. But this meteor does not appear to be formed from a single drop of water, as it is found to be composed of many small spherules frozen together, the center sometimes soft like snow, and at other times formed of a hard nucleus, which in some cases has been of a brown color, capable of ignition and explosion. In the description given of snow, Job 37:6, it has been stated that both snow and hail owe their formation to electricity; the hail being formed in the higher regions of the air, where the cold is intense, and the electric matter abundant. By this agency it is supposed that a great number of aqueous particles are brought together and frozen, and in their descent collect other particles, so that the density of the substance of the hailstone grows less and less from the center, this being formed first in the higher regions, and the surface being collected in the lower. This theory is not in all cases supported by fact, as in some instances the center has been found soft and snow-like, when the surface has been hard. Hail is the only meteor of this kind, from which no apparent good is derived. Rain and dew invigorate and give life to the whole vegetable world; frost, by expanding the water contained in the earth, pulverizes and renders the soil fertile; snow covers and defends vegetables from being destroyed by too severe a frost; but hail does none of these. It not only does no good, but often much harm - always some. It has a chilling, blasting effect in spring and summer, and cuts the tender plants so as to injure or totally destroy them. In short, the treasures of hail are not well known; and its use in the creation has not yet been ascertained. But frost is God's universal plough, by which he cultivates the whole earth.

JOB 38: 23 which I have reserved against the time of trouble, against the day of battle and war?

Verse 23

Reserved against the time of trouble - לעת צר leeth tsar, "to the season of strictness," i.e., the season when the earth is constringed or bound by the frost.

Against the day of battle and war? - Hailstones being often employed as instruments of God's displeasure against his enemies, and the enemies of his people. There is probably an allusion here to the plague of hail sent on the Egyptians. See Exo 9:23 (note), and the notes there, for more particulars concerning hailstones, remarkable showers of them, etc. There may be also a reference to Jos 10:10-11 (note), where a destructive shower of what are called hailstones fell upon the Canaanitish kings who fought against Israel. See the note there also.

JOB 38: 24 By what way is the lightning distributed, or the east wind scattered on the earth?

Verse 24

By what way is the light parted - Who can accurately describe the cause and operation of a thunder cloud, the cause, nature, and mode of operation of the lightning itself? Is it a simple element or

compound substance? What is its velocity? and why not conductible by every kind of substance, as it is known to exist in all, and, indeed, to be diffused through every portion of nature? How is it parted? How does it take its zigzag form? this is the curious, indescribable, and unknown parting. Are all the causes of positive and negative electricity found out? What are its particles, and how do they cohere, and in what order are they propagated? Much has been said on all these points, and how little of that much satisfactorily!

Scattereth the east wind upon the earth? - םִדְיָ֑ kadim, the eastern storm, euroclydon, or levanter.

JOB 38: 25 Who has cut a channel for the flood water, or the path for the thunderstorm;

Verse 25

Divided a water-course - The original תעלה tealah, from עלה alah, to ascend, may signify rather a cloud, or clouds in general, where the waters are stored up. I cannot see how the overflowings or torrents of water can be said to ascend any other way than by evaporation; and it is by this Divine contrivance that the earth is not only irrigated, but even dried; and by this means too much moisture is not permitted to lie upon the ground, which would not only be injurious to vegetation, but even destroy it. But query, may not a waterspout be intended?

A way for the lightning of thunder - "A path for the bolt of thunder." God is represented as directing the course even of the lightning; he launches the bolt, and makes the path in which it is to run. To grasp, manage, and dart the thunderbolt or lightning, was a work which heathenism gave to Jupiter, its supreme god. None of the inferior deities were capable of this. But who can thunder with a voice like the Almighty? He is The Thunderer.

JOB 38: 26 To cause it to rain on a land where no man is; on the wilderness, in which there is no man;

Verse 26

To cause it to rain on the earth - It is well known that rain falls copiously in thunder-storms. The flash is first seen, the clap is next heard, and last the rain descends. The lightning travels all lengths in no perceivable succession of time. Sound is propagated at the rate of 1142 feet in a second. Rain travels still more slowly, and will be seen sooner or later according to the weight of the drops, and the distance of the cloud from the place of the spectator. Now the flash, the clap, and the rain, take place all in the same moment, but are discernible by us in the succession already mentioned, and for the reasons given above; and more at large in the note on Job 36:29, etc. But how are these things formed? The lightning is represented as coming immediately from the hand of God. The clap is the effect of the lightning, which causes a vacuum in that part of the atmosphere through which it passes; the air rushing in to restore the equilibrium may cause much of the noise that is heard in the clap. An easy experiment on the airpump illustrates this: Take a glass receiver open at both ends, over one end tie a piece of sheep's bladder wet, and let it stand till thoroughly dry. Then place the open end on the plate of the airpump, and exhaust the air slowly from under it. The bladder soon becomes concave, owing to the pressure of the atmospheric air on it, the supporting air in the

receiver being partly thrown out. Carry on the exhaustion, and the air presses at the rate of fifteen pounds on every square inch; see on Job 28:28 (note). The fibres of the bladder, being no longer capable of bearing the pressure of the atmospheric column upon the receiver, are torn to pieces, with a noise equal to the report of a musket, which is occasioned by the air rushing in to restore the equilibrium. Imagine a rapid succession of such experiments, and you have the peal of thunder, the rupture of the first bladder being the clap. But the explosion of the gases (oxygen and hydrogen) of which water is composed will also account for the noise. See below. But how does the thunder cause rain? By the most accurate and incontestable experiments it is proved that water is a composition of two elastic airs or gases as they are called, oxygen and hydrogen. In 100 parts of water there are 88 $\frac{1}{4}$ of oxygen, and 11 $\frac{3}{4}$ of hydrogen. Pass a succession of electric sparks through water by means of a proper apparatus, and the two gases are produced in the proportions mentioned above. To decompose water by galvanism: - Take a narrow glass tube three or four inches long; fit each end with a cork penetrated by a piece of slender iron wire, and fill the tube with water. Let the ends of the two wires within the tube be distant from each other about three quarters of an inch, and let one be made to communicate with the top, the other with the bottom of a galvanic pile in action. On making this communication, bubbles of air will be formed, and ascend to the top of the tube, the water decreasing as it is decomposed. The oxygen and hydrogen formed by this experiment may be recomposed into the same weight of water. Take any quantity of the oxygen and hydrogen gases in the proportions already mentioned; ignite them by the electric spark, and they produce a quantity of water equal in weight to the gases employed. Thus, then, we can convert water into air, and reconvert this air into water; and the proportions hold as above. I have repeatedly seen this done, and assisted in doing it, but cannot, in this place, describe every thing in detail. Now to the purpose of this note: the rain descending after the flash and the peal. The electric spark or matter of lightning, passing through the atmosphere, ignites and decomposes the oxygen and hydrogen, which explode, and the water which was formed of these two falls down in the form of rain. The explosion of the gases, as well as the rushing in of the circumambient air to restore the equilibrium, will account for the clap and peal: as the decomposition and ignition of them will account for the water or rain which is the attendant of a thunder storm. Thus by the lightning of thunder God causes it to rain on the earth. How marvellous and instructive are his ways!

JOB 38: 27 to satisfy the waste and desolate ground, to cause the tender grass to grow?

Verse 27

To satisfy the desolate and waste - The thunder cloud not only explodes over inhabited countries, that the air may be purified and the rain sent down to fertilize the earth, but it is conducted over deserts where there is no human inhabitant; and this to cause the bud of the tender herb to spring forth: for there are beasts, fowls, and insects, that inhabit the desert and the wilderness, and must be nourished by the productions of the ground. Every tribe of animals was made by the hand of God, and even the lowest of them is supported by his kind providence.

JOB 38: 28 Does the rain have a father? Or who fathers the drops of dew?

Verse 28

Hath the rain a father? - Or, Who is the father of the rain? We have seen above one part of the apparatus by which God produces it; other causes have been mentioned on Job 36:27, etc.

The drops of dew? - אגלֵי egley, the sphericles, the small round drops or globules. Dew is a dense moist vapor, found on the earth in spring and summer mornings, in the form of a mizzling rain. Dr. Hutton defines it, "a thin, light, insensible mist or rain, descending with a slow motion, and falling while the sun is below the horizon. It appears to differ from rain as less from more. Its origin and matter are doubtless from the vapours and exhalations that rise from the earth and water." Various experiments have been instituted to ascertain whether dew arises from the earth, or descends from the atmosphere; and those pro and con have alternately preponderated. The question is not yet decided; and we cannot yet tell any more than Job which hath begotten the drops of dew, the atmosphere or the earth. Is it water deposited from the atmosphere, when the surface of the ground is colder than the air?

JOB 38: 29 Out of whose womb came the ice? The gray frost of the sky, who has given birth to it?

Verse 29

Out of whose womb came the ice? - Ice is a solid, transparent, and brittle body, formed of water by means of cold. Some philosophers suppose that ice is only the re-establishment of water in its natural state; that the mere absence of fire is sufficient to account for this re-establishment; and that the fluidity of water is a real fusion, like that of metals exposed to the action of fire; and differing only in this, that a greater portion of fire is necessary to one than the other. Ice, therefore, is supposed to be the natural state of water; so that in its natural state water is solid, and becomes fluid only by the action of fire, as solid metallic bodies are brought into a state of fusion by the same means. Ice is lighter than water, its specific gravity being to that of water as eight to nine. This rarefaction of ice is supposed to be owing to the air-bubbles produced in water by freezing, and which, being considerably larger in proportion to the water frozen, render the body so much specifically lighter; hence ice always floats on water. The air-bubbles, during their production, acquire a great expansive power, so as to burst the containing vessels, be they ever so strong. See examples in the note on Job 37:10 (note).

The hoary frost of heaven, who hath gendered it? - Hoar-frost is the congelation of dew, in frosty mornings, on the grass. It consists of an assemblage of little crystals of ice, which are of various figures, according to the different disposition of the vapours when met and condensed by the cold. Its production is owing to some laws with which we are not yet acquainted. Of this subject, after the lapse and experience of between two and three thousand years, we know about as much as Job did. And the question, What hath engendered the hoar-frost of heaven! is, to this hour, nearly as inexplicable to us as it was to him! Is it enough to say that hoar-frost is water deposited from the atmosphere at a low temperature, so as to produce congelation?

JOB 38: 30 The waters become hard like stone, when the surface of the deep is frozen.

Verse 30

The waters are hid as with a stone - Here is a reference to freezing in the winter, as we may learn from some of the constellations mentioned below, which arise above our horizon, in the winter months. The word יתחבבאו yithchabbau is understood by the versions in general as implying hardening or congelation; and we know in some intense frosts the ice becomes as hard as a stone; and even the face of the deep - the very seas themselves, not only in the polar circles, but even in northern countries, Norway, Sweden, Denmark, Holland, and parts of Germany, are really frozen, and locked up from all the purposes of navigation for several months in winter.

JOB 38: 31 "Can you bind the cluster of the Pleiades, or loosen the cords of Orion?"

Verse 31

Canst thou bind the sweet influences of Pleiades - The Pleiades are a constellation in the sign Taurus. They consist of six stars visible to the naked eye; to a good eye, in a clear night, seven are discernible; but with a telescope ten times the number may be readily counted. They make their appearance in the spring. Orion may be seen in the morning, towards the end of October, and is visible through November, December, and January; and hence, says Mr. Good, it becomes a correct and elegant synecdoche for the winter at large. The Pleiades are elegantly opposed to Orion, as the vernal renovation of nature is opposed to its wintry destruction; the mild and open benignity of spring, to the severe and icy inactivity of winter. I have already expressed my mind on these supposed constellations, and must refer to my notes on Job 9:9, etc., and to the learned notes of Doctor Hales and Mr. Mason Good on these texts. They appear certain, where I am obliged to doubt; and, from their view of the subject, make very useful and important deductions. I find reluctance in departing from the ancient versions. In this case, these learned men follow them; I cannot, because I do not see the evidence of the groundwork; and I dare not draw conclusions from premises which seem to me precarious, or which I do not understand. I wish, therefore, the reader to examine and judge for himself.

Coverdale renders the Job 38:31 and Job 38:32 verses thus:

Hast thou brought the VII starres together? Or, Art thou able to breake the circle of heaven? Canst thou bringe forth the morynge starre, or the evenynge starre, at convenient tyme, and conveye them home agayne?

JOB 38: 32 Can you lead the constellations out in their season? Or can you guide the Bear with her cubs?

Verse 32

Mazzaroth in his season? - This is generally understood to mean the signs of the zodiac. מזרות Mazzaroth, according to Parkhurst, comes from מזר mazar, to corrupt; and he supposes it to mean that pestilential wind in Arabia, called simoom, the season of which is the summer heats.

JOB 38: 33 Do you know the laws of the heavens? Can you establish its dominion over the earth?

 Verse 33

Knowest thou the ordinances of heaven? - Art thou a thorough astronomer? Art thou acquainted with all the laws of the planetary system? Canst thou account for the difference of their motions, and the influence by which they are retained and revolve in their orbits? And canst thou tell what influence or dominion they exercise on the earth? Sir Isaac Newton has given us much light on many of these things; but to his system, which is most probably the true one, gravity is essential; and yet what this gravity is he could neither explain nor comprehend; and his followers are not one whit wiser than he. No man has ever yet fully found out the ordinances of heaven, and the dominion thereof on the earth.

JOB 38: 34 "Can you lift up your voice to the clouds, That abundance of waters may cover you?"

Verse 34

Canst thou lift up thy voice to the clouds - Canst thou produce lightning and thunder, that water may be formed, and poured down upon the earth? Thunder is called קלוֹת koloth, voices; for it is considered the voice of God: here then Job's voice, קוֹלֶךָ kolecha, is opposed to the voice of Jehovah!

JOB 38: 35 Can you send out lightnings, that they may go? Do they report to you, 'Here we are?'

Verse 35

Canst thou send lightnings - We have already seen that the lightning is supposed to be immediately in the hand and under the management of God. The great god of the heathen, Jupiter Brontes, is represented with the forked lightnings and thunderbolt in his hand. He seems so to grasp the bickering flame that, though it struggles for liberty, it cannot escape from his hold. Lightnings - How much like the sound of thunder is the original word: בְּרָכִים Berakim! Here are both sense and sound.

Here we are? - Will the winged lightnings be thy messengers, as they are mine?

JOB 38: 36 Who has put wisdom in the inward parts? Or who has given understanding to the mind?

Verse 36

Who hath put wisdom in the inward parts? - Who has given לִשְׁכֵּנִי lasechvi, to the contemplative person, understanding? Even the most sedulous attention to a subject, and the deepest contemplation, are not sufficient to investigate truth, without the inspiration of the Almighty, which alone can give understanding. But who has given man the power to conceive and understand? A power which he knows he has, but which he cannot comprehend. Man knows nothing of his own mind, nor of the mode of its operations. This mind we possess, these operations we perform; - and of either do we know any thing? If we know not our own spirit, how can we comprehend that Spirit

which is infinite and eternal? Mr. Good thinks that this verse is a continuation of the subject above, relative to the lightnings, and therefore translates thus: -

Who putteth understanding into the vollies?

And who giveth to the shafts discernment?

All the versions, except the Septuagint, which trifles here, understand the place as we do. Either makes a good sense. The Septuagint has, "Who hath given the knowledge of weaving to women; or the science of embroidery?" Instead of understanding to the heart, the Vulgate has, understanding to the cock; that it might be able to distinguish and proclaim the watches of the night.

JOB 38: 37 Who can number the clouds by wisdom? Or who can pour out the bottles of the sky,

Verse 37

Who can number the clouds - Perhaps the word סֹפֵר saphar, which is commonly rendered to number, may here mean, as in Arabic, to irradiate, as Mr. Good contends; and may refer to those celestial and inimitable tinges which we sometimes behold in the sky.

Bottles of heaven - The clouds: it is an allusion to the girbahs, or bottles made of skin, in which they are accustomed to carry their water from wells and tanks.

JOB 38: 38 when the dust runs into a mass, and the clods of earth stick together?

Verse 38

When the dust groweth into hardness - That is, Who knows how the dust - the elementary particles of matter, were concreted; and how the clods - the several parts of the earth, continue to cohere? What is the principle of cohesion among the different particles of matter, in all metals and minerals? Even water, in a solid form, constitutes a part of several gems, called thence water of crystallization. Who can solve this question? How is it that 90 parts of alumine, 7 of silex, and 1.2 of oxide of iron, constitute the oriental ruby? and that 90 parts of silex and 19 of water, form the precious opal? And how can 46 parts of silex, 14 of alumine, 28 of carbonate of lime, 6.5 of sulphate of lime, 3 of oxide of iron, and 2 of water, enter into the constitution, and form the substance, of the lapis lazuli? How do these solids and fluids of such differing natures grow into hardness, and form this curious mineral? Take another example from that beautiful precious stone, the emerald. Its analysis shows it to be composed of glucine 13, silex 64.5, alumine 16, lime 1.6, and oxide of chrome 3.25. Now how can these dusts, utterly worthless in themselves, grow into hardness, combine, and form one of the most beautiful, and, next to the diamond, the most precious, of all the gems? The almighty and infinitely wise God has done this in a way only known to and comprehensible by himself.

JOB 38: 39 "Can you hunt the prey for the lioness, or satisfy the appetite of the young lions,

Verse 39

Wilt thou hunt the prey for the lion? - Rather the lioness, or strong lion. Hast thou his instinct? Dost thou know the habits and haunts of such animals as he seeks for his food? Thou hast neither his strength, his instinct nor his cunning. In the best Hebrew Bibles, the thirty-ninth chapter begins with this verse, and begins properly, as a new subject now commences, relating to the natural history of the earth, or the animal kingdom; as the preceding chapter does to astronomy and meteorology.

JOB 38: 40 when they crouch in their dens, and lie in wait in the thicket?

Verse 40

When they couch in their dens - Before they are capable of trusting themselves abroad.

Abide in the covert - Before they are able to hunt down the prey by running. It is a fact that the young lions, before they have acquired sufficient strength and swiftness, lie under cover, in order to surprise those animals which they have not fleetness enough to overtake in the forest; and from this circumstance the כפירים kephirim, "young lions, or lions' whelps," have their name: the root is כפר caphar, to cover or hide. See the note on Job 4:11, where six different names are given to the lion, all expressing some distinct quality or state.

JOB 38: 41 Who provides for the raven his prey, when his young ones cry to God, and wander for lack of food?

Verse 41

Who provideth for the raven - This bird is chosen, perhaps, for his voracious appetite, and general hunger for prey, beyond most other fowls. He makes a continual cry, and the cry is that of hunger. He dares not frequent the habitations of men, as he is considered a bird of ill omen, and hated by all. This verse is finely paraphrased by Dr. Young: - "Fond man! the vision of a moment made!

Dream of a dream, and shadow of a shade!

What worlds hast thou produced, what creatures framed,

What insects cherish'd, that thy God is blamed?

When pain'd with hunger, the wild raven's brood

Calls upon God, importunate for food,

Who hears their cry? Who grants their hoarse request,

And stills the glammers of the craving nest?"

On which he has this note: - "The reason given why the raven is particularly mentioned as the care of Providence is, because by her clamorous and importunate voice she particularly seems always calling upon it; thence κορασσω, α κοραξ, is to ask earnestly - Aelian. lib. ii., c. 48. And since there

were ravens on the banks of the Nile, more clamorous than the rest of that species, those probably are meant in this place."

The commencement of Cicero's oration against Catiline, to which I have referred on Job 38:3, is the following: -

Quousque tandem abutere, Catilina, patientia nostra? Quamdiu etiam furor iste tuus nos eludet? Quem ad finem sese effrenata jactabit audacia? Nihilne te nocturnum praesidium palatii-nihil urbis vigiliae, - nihil timor populi, - nihii concursus bonorum omnium, - nihil hic munitissimus habendi senatus locus-nihil horum ora, vultusque moverunt? Patere tua consilia nan sentis? Constrictam jam omnium horum conscientia teneri conjurationem tuam non vides? Quid proxima, quid superiore nocte egeris, - ubi fueris, quos convocaveris, - quid consilii ceperis, quem nostrum ignorare arbitraris? O tempora! O mores! Senatus haec intelligit, - consul videt; hic tamen vivit! Vivit? immo vero eitam in senatum venit; fit publici consilii particeps; notat et designat oculis ad caedem unumquemque nostrum! Nos autem, viri fortes, satisfacere reipublicae videmur, si istius furorem ac tela vitemus! "How long wilt thou, O Catiline, abuse our patience? How long shall thy madness out-brave our justice? To what extremities art thou resolved to push thy unbridled insolence of guilt? Canst thou behold the nocturnal arms that watch the palatium, - the guards of the city, - the consternation of the citizens, - all the wise and worthy clustering into consultation, - the impregnable situation of the seat of the senate, - and the reproachful looks of the fathers of Rome? Canst thou behold all this, and yet remain undaunted and unabashed? Art thou insensible that thy measures are detected? Art thou insensible that this senate, now thoroughly informed, comprehend the whole extent of thy guilt? Show me the senator ignorant of thy practices during the last and preceding night, of the place where you met, the company you summoned, and the crime you concerted. The senate is conscious, - the consul is witness to all this; yet, O how mean and degenerate! the traitor lives! Lives? he mixes with the senate; he shares in our counsels; with a steady eye he surveys us; he anticipates his guilt; he enjoys the murderous thought, and coolly marks us to bleed! Yet we, boldly passive in our country's cause, think we act like Romans, if we can escape his frantic rage!"

The reader will perceive how finely Cicero rushes into this invective, as if the danger had been too immediate to give him leisure for the formality of address and introduction. See Guthrie's Orations of Cicero. Here is eloquence! Here is nature! And in thus speaking her language, the true orator pierces with his lightnings the deepest recesses of the heart. The success of this species of oratory is infallible in the pulpit, when the preacher understands how to manage it.