A DIRECTORY

FOR THE

AFFLICTED;

BEING

SELECT EXTRACTS FROM THE FIRST FOURTEEN CHAPTERS OF THE REV. JOSEPH CARYL'S COMMENTARY ON THE BOOK OF JOB.

BY

JOHN BERRIE,
DALKEITH.

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M.DCCC.XXIV.
TO THE READER.

In the course of Divine Providence, I have often had occasion to consult the Book of Job, which may well be styled, "The Afflicted Man's Companion," and in these exercises I experienced much benefit in the perusal of Mr. Caryl's Commentary on that part of the inspired writings, which occupied the learned and pious author's time and attention for more than twenty years during the civil wars. I was induced to make extracts from the whole work; but it is only the first part of these which is now published, comprehending the first fourteen chapters, which contain an account of Job's troubles; his behaviour under them; with his replies to certain accusations brought against him by his three friends. The second part, consisting of extracts taken from the remain-
der of the book, will be published in due time, if the present selection meet with a favourable reception, and time and opportunity be afforded for preparing them for the press. It is my humble hope that this small volume may be found useful; not only to the afflicted themselves, but likewise to those who converse with and desire to comfort them.

The only apology offered for introducing the following Selected Sentences to the notice of the public, is, that many of that numerous class of mankind for whom they are chiefly intended, (the afflicted,) have neither leisure nor opportunity to read the voluminous and valuable work from which they are extracted.

That the divine blessing may render them profitable to all who may peruse them, is the sincere desire of

THE EDITOR.

Dalkeith,
October 22, 1824.
The following Extract is taken from Dr. Calamy and S. Palmer's Non-Conformist's Memorial.

"JOSEPH CARYL, A. M. of Exeter College, Oxford, where Wood speaks of him as a noted disputant. [He was born of genteel parents, in London, 1602.] He was preacher to the Honourable Society Lincoln's Inn, where he continued several years with applause; and he was a Member of the Westminster Assembly. In 1653, he was appointed one of the Triers for the approbation of Ministers. He was sent by the Parliament to attend the King at Holmby-house; and was one of the Commissioners in the Treaty of the Isle of Wight.

Soon after his ejectment in 1662, he gathered a congregation in the neighbourhood of St. Magnus, near London Bridge, to whom he preached, as the times would permit. His church increased so much, that, at his death, he left 136 communicants. He was a moderate independent; a man of great piety, learning, and modesty. He died at his house in Bury Street, February 7, 1673, aged seventy-one. In the summer of that year, his church chose Dr. John Owen for their pastor; and, 1708, they built a new Meeting-house in Berry Street, at which time Dr. Isaac Watts was their pastor.

When that band of worthies was ejected from their congregations by the Act of Uniformity, 1662, Mr. Caryl's farewell sermon is founded upon Rev. iii. 4. 'And they shall walk with me in white, for they are worthy.'

'They shall walk with Christ. They shall enjoy peace and intimacy with him as his friends. They shall walk in white garments, which is expressive of their state of justification, but particularly of their character, which is truly honourable in the sight of
God and men; and likewise of their inward peace and joy, arising from the testimony of conscience, the witness of the spirit, and a well-grounded hope of future glory; in consequence of which they may now glory in tribulation.

"Hence he takes occasion to caution Christians against everything that would wound their consciences, and defile their garments. He exhorts them to adopt Job's resolution, chap. xxvii. 6. To maintain purity of heart and life; that angelic robe which the world can neither strip off nor sully with its reproaches.

"Finally, this walking with Christ has respect to the heavenly glory of which his transfiguration was a type.

"Having told his hearers that it had been the great object of his labours among them, to bring them into this holy and happy state, he concludes thus, 'It shall be the desire and prayer of my heart, that if I should have no more opportunities among you, as you have been stirred up to get this white robe of grace, you and I may meet in glory, where we shall never part; that will be the answer of all our prayers, and the issue of all our labours; then we shall have as much joy as we can hold for ever.'"

Mr. Henry Dorney, in a letter to his brother, says, "That famous and laborious minister, Mr. Joseph Caryl, your ancient friend and companion, is departed this life. His death is greatly lamented by the people of God throughout this city. His labours were great, his studies incessant, his conversation unspotted, his charity, faith, zeal, and wisdom, gave a fragrant smell among the churches and servants of Christ. His sickness, though painful, was borne with patience and joy in believing; and so he parted from time to eternity, under the full sail of desire and joy in the Holy Spirit. He lived his Sermons."—Dorney's Divine Contemplations, Letter CXIII. page 343.
The following recommendation of the Rev. Mr. Caryl's Exposition of the Book of Job, is given by the celebrated Mr. Hervey, author of Theron and Aspasia, &c. "Mr. Caryl, in expounding this book, has acquitted himself as a master in Israel; his thoughts are beautiful and animated; his criticisms are correct and judicious; his language, considering the time he wrote, remarkably pure and strong; his doctrines are truly edifying, because, generally speaking, they are evangelical. What is very necessary, but a very difficult task in explaining this part of Scripture, the connexion of sentiment is discovered; the bearings and dependencies of the argument are pointed out; and the transitions from one passage to another are shown to be not wild and disorderly, but just, regular, and graceful."

We cordially recommend the Extracts from this excellent work by Mr. Berrie, as judiciously made, and concisely expressed, and as eminently calculated to promote the edification and comfort of the afflicted.

JOHN COLQUHOUN, D.D.
Leith.

JOHN BROWN, Minister,
Whitburn.

EBENEZER BROWN,
Inverkeithing.

THOMAS BROWN,
Dalkeith.
SELECT EXTRACTS, &c.

THE INTRODUCTION.

It is uncertain who was the writer of this book. The sum and principal subject of it is contained in these words, "Many are the afflictions of the righteous, but the Lord delivereth him out of them all." The main question is whether it consists with the justice and goodness of God to afflict a righteous person, or that it should go well with the wicked and ill with the righteous?

And another question, which arises out of the former is, whether we may judge of the sincerity or hypocrisy of any person by the present dispensations of God towards him?

The whole dispute and argument of Job's friends may be reduced to one syllogism: He that is greatly afflicted is certainly either a great and open sinner, or a vile hypocrite. But Job thou art afflicted; therefore thou art certainly an unprincipled hypocrite, if not an open sinner.
This is the sum of the whole disputation; yet in the prosecution many other useful truths are handled—such as the character of a faithful head of a family, the discoveries of nature, of morals, and the attributes of God, &c. So that it may well be said that this book contains excellencies of wisdom and holiness. It teaches us how to bear our crosses, and points out Job as a pattern of patience under affliction. It shows us that God sometimes afflicts his children in sovereignty, and that however severely they are assaulted, he will never leave them to be totally or finally overthrown; and it warns us against trusting in creature comforts when enjoyed in the greatest abundance.

This book exposes the falsehood of Satan and worldly men, when they say that the people of God follow him solely for their own ends, and it also reproves those who judge of their spiritual estate by some rash speeches that may fall from them in their conflict; and it confutes those who judge of men's spiritual estate by the manner God deals with them in their outward concerns.

"It is matter of consolation, that no temptation can take hold of God's children, but he will enable them to bear or make a way for escape; they can never be brought so low, but he can deliver and raise them up.

"Let all learn to glorify God, and speak well of him in every condition. Though Job sometimes in vehemency of spirit overshot himself, yet he recovers again and breathes sweetly con-
cerning God, even when he was writing bitter things against him. What could express a more holy and submissive frame of heart, than to say, 'Though he slay me, yet will I trust in him?''

JOB. CHAPTER I.

"Verse 1. 'There was a man in the land of Uz, whose name was Job, and that man was perfect and upright, and one that feared God and eschewed evil.'

"There was such a man, but it is not precisely known at what time he lived, though it is probable it was between the time of Abraham and Moses.

"The land of Uz appears to have been on the borders of the Sabeans, and in Lam. iv. 11. Jeremiah speaks of them as Edomites. It is generally allowed that they were profane and superstitious, yet Job lived holily and justly among them, from which observe, that God hath his servants in the worst of places. It is a high commendation, as well as a great honour, to be good and do good, amongst those that are evil. True grace will shine as a light even in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation.

Job was a perfect man, not absolutely, but in comparison of those that were all over spotted with filthiness, or only painted with godliness. A perfect man is one whom you may know by his tongue, and his actions are a tran-"
script of his inner-man; perfect being taken for inward soundness, upright denotes justice and equity, so it is expounded, Psa. xv.

"The fear of God is a holy filial affection, awing the whole man to obey the whole will of God; or it is put for the external or instituted worship of God.

"To eschew evil, is to turn from it with reluctance and abhorrence; Job's heart rose against evil, and that is the strength of holiness, it is not enough not to commit it.

"God first describes Job's spiritual estate, hence observe, that gracious habits and spiritual blessings are not only the choicest, but those only can render a man happy. When God gives a man true grace, he gives the one thing necessary, so he need not be discontented with his own lot, nor envy the condition of any other.

"As in this description, Job's graces are put before his riches, so sincerity is preferred before all his other graces; sincere and sound-hearted persons are esteemed by God as perfect. Truth of grace is perfection here, and all who are sincere before God, are just and honest in all their ways before men, which is a great ornament to a profession of Godliness, and none but such as show the reality of their grace by their conduct, have a right to make a profession before men.

"God is pleased with nothing we do, unless we do it in his fear; holy fear contains in it every grace we receive from God, and all the worship we render to him, it keeps both heart
and life clean. Godly persons oppose all sin and avoid all occasions of evil, we cannot avoid sin if we will not avoid the occasion.

"Verse 2. 'And there were born unto him seven sons and three daughters.'

Children are the blessing of the Lord; they are put first, as being the best part of his inheritance. He was father and master of a large family, yet we never hear that he excused himself as many do, that they have not time for the worship of God, or any thing to give to the poor, because they have families to provide for. All who make such excuses, would do well to consider, that what is prudently given in alms, is put into the best fund for the benefit of their children; there is a Dutch proverb, that there is nothing gained by stealing, nor lost by praying.

"Verse 3. 'His substance also was seven thousand sheep, and three thousand camels, and five hundred yoke of oxen, and three hundred she-asses, and a very great household; so that this man was the greatest of all the men of the east.'

"Though riches are but external and accidental, yet it is common to call a wealthy man, a man of substance; it is only by having heavenly wisdom, that we inherit substance. Cattle were more esteemed in those days than gold and silver, and, having life, they are more excellent in their nature. Job was the greatest man in riches, honour, power, and in grace; and that is the best greatness of all; his outward high station is set forth so fully, that the
universal and sudden change might be the more conspicuous, and discover his patience the more fully by the sad reverse, as Ruth i. 21, 'I went out full, but the Lord hath brought me home again empty.' To be very great and very good, shows that a man is good indeed. In Job we see the rich man get through the needle's eye, because all his camels and riches did not take up so much room in his heart as one single thread. All his outward estate was kept without. To renounce the world, is to cast it out of our affections, not out of our possession; if you would go the ready way to attain the things of this life, walk in the ways of God; Woe to those that get a wound to their consciences by getting riches, Job served God so frequently, that it is called continually, yet he grows in wealth abundantly. The time we spend in prayer and other offices of religion, &c. whets our tools and oils our wheels, and promotes and gets a blessing upon all we go about. Piety and charity are ordinarily the surest way of thriving; but Job's prosperity and piety being mentioned before his affliction, teaches us, that neither can preserve us from the calamities of this life, as Job's mistaken friends thought.

"Verse 4. 'And his sons went and feasted in their houses, every one his day; and sent and called for their three sisters to eat and drink with them.'

"Job's happiness is here described by the concord of his children, they harmoniously feasted together at their own homes, without mixing with strangers at public entertainments.
Though feasting may be very lawful, and even laudable on some occasions, when it is in moderation, and the conversation edifying; but it becomes sinful when a person cannot afford the expense, and are thereby prevented from complying with the calls of providence in distributing to the necessities of others, or when it is unseasonable, as when the Lord is threatening or inflicting judgments, or when it issues in surfeiting or drunkenness; for such feasting the land mourns. The sons of Job did not feast alone, and the sisters did not intrude upon them, they came by their special invitation.

"The mutual agreement of children is a great blessing and comfort to their parents. How many have their hearts rent by the contentions and disputes of their children. When attending a feast beware of spending too much time, so as thereby to neglect and unfit thyself for the worship and service of God.

"Verse 5. 'And it was so, when the days of their feasting were gone about, that Job sent and sanctified them, and rose up early in the morning, and offered burnt-offerings according to the number of them all, for Job said, it may be that my sons have sinned and cursed God in their hearts; thus did Job continually.'

"Job could not infuse holy habits into his children, but he sent an order for them to separate and prepare themselves for the sacrifice. To cleanse is called sanctifying, Exodus xix. 14.; Gen. xxxv. 2.; and it appears they all obeyed, for he offered burnt-offerings according to the number of them all, which teaches
us that every soul must believe for himself, and that parents ought to pray for each of their children particularly, and that even grown up children should obey with reverence and submission the lawful commands and directions of their parents. The chief and special care of parents should be for the souls of their children.

"A holy person desires that all others were made holy, and if by means of their counsel and instruction they become holy, it may be said that they have sanctified them. Special preparation is necessary for every holy duty. Ps. xxvi. 6. We are to take heed how we hear.

"Job's diligence and zeal is apparent from the time of his performing this service and duty. It is our duty to dedicate the first and best of every day to God. Job had a special reason for this service. For though he knew that his sons had not openly and avowedly blasphemed God, yet he was afraid that they might have neglected a due reverence of God in their thoughts; for he knew that the heart is deceitful, and that it quickly conceives and also conceals its vain and vile productions. It is dangerous to let any sin lie a moment on the conscience unrepented of, for it will be reckoned by God a cursing of him in our hearts.

"A tender conscience is grieved when there is ground of suspicion, and we may suspect that we have sinned when we have been praying, much more when we have been feasting. The sins of the world are described, Luke xvii.
They ate, they drank, they bought, they sold, they planted,' &c. and there is none of these evil in themselves. Therefore we ought to keep our hearts with all manner of keeping, even in our lawful transactions. A good man turns his suspicions of others faults and failings into prayers for their pardon, not into slanders that they may be defamed.

"Job's offering sacrifice as often as his sons did feast, teaches us, that when we do any thing from a conscience of duty, we will persevere in it; we may be said to do a thing continually, when we do it seasonably; to have the heart in a praying frame, and to pray when duty requires it, is to pray always. Nature may have good moods, but grace is steady.

"In these five verses we have the prosperity and sincerity of Job, and the holiness and piety of his life. God having thus qualified him, proceeds to try him in the furnace of affliction.

"Verse 6. 'Now there was a day when the sons of God came to present themselves before the Lord, and Satan came also among them.'*

"Angels are the sons of God by creation; they are mighty in power, and always ready

* It doth not derogate from the credibility of Job's story in general, to admit that this discourse between God and Satan is parabolical. Like that of Micaiah, it is designed to represent the malice of Satan against good men, and to show the divine restraint that he is under.
cheerfully to obey him, therefore said to present themselves before the Lord. And what is the difference between these angels and this Satan? Only sin. The angel sinning, presently became an adversary to God and man. All opposition to what is good is Satan; hence our Lord said to Peter, 'Get thee behind me, Satan.' Satan is said to come among the sons of God, in allusion to the dealings of men in their assemblies; and there is no necessity to try to find a similarity in every particular. Satan did not offer himself for any good purpose, but came thither by the overruling power of God.

"Verse 7. 'And the Lord said unto Satan, Whence comest thou? Then Satan answered the Lord, and said, From going to and fro in the earth, and from walking up and down in it.'

"This question may seem to chide and show a dislike of what Satan had been about, but chiefly to draw a confession from him, or perhaps to show that he was under the divine control, and accountable for what he did. The word translated 'going to and fro,' signifies, to compass, or make a circuit by any kind of motion."

* The answer shows that he is very restless, yet very active; and it may intimate that he kept within the bounds allotted him: for the dragon is cast out into the earth; and while we are on it we are within his reach; and with so much subtilty, swiftness, and industry doth he penetrate into all the corners of it, so there is no security from his temptations in any place.—Henry.
"Verse 8. "And the Lord said unto Satan, Hast thou considered my servant Job, that there is none like him in the earth, a perfect and an upright man, one that feareth God and escheweth evil?"

"God calls Job his servant, as being his special right and property; and by way of distinction, as to his riches, he is the greatest man of the east, but in reference to his holiness he has no equal upon earth. Though all the saints are conformed in their nature to the will of God, which is holiness, yet they differ in degree; we should not content ourselves that we are like others in grace, but study to excel therein. He that is a servant of Christ is not only free but noble; he is under the special care as well as enjoys the peculiar love of God; and he has a perfect knowledge of, and will give a true testimony of every one.

"It is not he that commendeth himself, or is commended of others, but whom the Lord commendeth, that is approved of him, and they who are so need not mind though all the world be silent or even slander them.

"The Lord's question to Satan may be, Hast thou taken notice of? or affirmatively, thou hast considered my servant Job, and set thyself to tempt and try him.

"The most eminently godly are exposed to the most violent temptations from Satan."

* The holiness and happiness of the saints are the shame and torment of the devil and of his children.
"God having spoken of Job as a man does of that which he glories in. Though Satan does not attempt to deny God's testimony of him, yet he represents Job as mercenary, and of course an hypocrite.

"Verse 9. 'Then Satan answered the Lord, and said, Doth Job fear God for nought?' Some render, Doth Job fear God in vain? No. He looked for riches and he hath attained them. When a man's actions are fair, to accuse his intentions is devilish. Envy and malice accuses what others do well, while love excuses what is ill done.

"Is it lawful to have an eye to our own advantage while we do our duty?

"Must we serve God for nought in that strict sense? There is no man doth, or possibly can, serve God for nought. For he hath bestowed so many benefits, and promised so many more, they outvalue all the services of the creature. 2d, The more blessings any man receives the more he ought to serve God. 3d, It is lawful to have respect to benefits both received and promised by way of motive, Heb. xi. 26. and xii. 2. 4th, But reference to benefits is sinful, when we make them either the sole or supreme cause of our obedience.

"In all our duties we must set the glory of God in the throne; our desire of heaven on the right; and the fear of hell on the left hand;

But God knows all their malice and devices against his servants, and is ready to appear for them even before they are accused.—Henry.
our desire of outward comfort at the footstool. Thus we must marshal and rank our respect to God and ourselves, and we may look on secular advantages as fruits of holiness and encouragements to it, but not as proper causes producing it.

"Satan's speech seems to imply, 1st, That riches will make any man serve God. 2d, That God can have no servants from love. 3d, That Job had no desire to please God but to benefit himself.

"As there is nothing we should dread more than being hypocrites, so there is nothing we should dread less than being called so without cause.

"Verse 10. 'Hast not thou made an hedge about him and about his house, and about all that he hath on every side? thou hast blessed the work of his hands, and his substance is increased in the land.'

"Here Satan answers God's question, by putting another, in which he discovers how grievously he is vexed at the prosperity of Job, and particularly enumerates the favours he had conferred on him, that he might thereby debase and lessen the value of Job's obedience, and contradict the character that God had given of him; by which, from the use he made of them in what he proposes in the following verse, he discovers himself to be the father of lies, yet they contain truths full of consolation to the people of God, as,

"1st, The safety of the man or nation to whom God himself becomes an hedge or wall,
Zech. ii. 5; 'I will be unto her a wall of fire round about.' He hath not left the least gap for Satan or any annoyance to come in; the hedge surrounds on every side, so that their mighty and malicious enemies cannot touch the meanest thing that belongs to them. Christ assures his disciples that the very hairs of their head are numbered, as if he had said, your enemies cannot pull off a hair from your head, but God will call them to an account for it.

"2dly. That whom God blesses, they are blessed indeed; and therefore the people of God may, and ought to seek their Father's blessing on all their lawful undertakings. All success is from the Lord; but he does not work that we should be idle, nor has he promised to bless the indolent. It is absurd to say, Lord help us, while we neglect the use of the means that are in our power; we should beware of standing still in regard of attention and diligence, but as to fear and diffidence we may.

"Verse 11. 'But put forth thine hand now and touch all that he hath, and he will curse thee to thy face.'

"To put forth the hand signifies to help, Psa. cxliv. 7, Acts iv. 30, by stretching forth thine hand to heal, and sometimes to hurt or punish, Isa. v. 25, ix. 12. Then Satan's meaning is, let him feel the weight of thine hand in sore affliction, either strike him thyself, or give me a commission to deprive him of all that which thou hast given him, and thou mayest take my word for it, that as soon as thou takes
away his riches, he will withdraw his service and show that he is an hypocrite.

"To touch signifies a sore affliction, Chapter xix. 21, and it signifies a light affliction, Gen. xxvi. 11. It is certain, that if God do but touch the highest and greatest estate in the world, it will quickly fall to pieces.

"What is it to curse God to his face! see Mal. iii. 14, it is to speak against God's ways, to quarrel and be angry with his providence, or to curse his people.

"Although Satan can only guess at the hearts of men, and at what would be the consequence of bereaving Job of all his enjoyments, yet he boldly asserts, as if it were done already, he will curse thee to thy face. Affliction is the trial of sincerity; bring professors to the fire, and then they show their metal. While religion and prosperity go together, it is hard to say which we are following."

"Verse 12. 'And the Lord said unto Satan, behold all that he hath is in thy power, only upon himself put not forth thine hand; so Satan went forth from the presence of the Lord.'

"It is not always an evidence of God's good will to have our motions granted. Paul besought the Lord thrice, but Satan had his petition

* God declared Job the best man then living; now if Satan can prove him an hypocrite, it follows that God had not one faithful servant among men. But it appeared that the Lord knows them that are his, and is not deceived in any.
granted at once. It is ground of comfort to the Lord's people, that while they are suffering, his will is doing, and that what Satan and evil men desire sinfully, he grants holy; Satan wills it that God may be blasphemed, but God will glorify himself by it.

"From the limitation of Satan's commission learn, that God himself sets the bounds to the afflictions of his people. The season, measure, degree and continuance of them, he keeps in his own hand; and know for thy comfort, O believer! that he himself fills thy cup of sorrow, and thou shalt not have one drop more than he prescribes, nor than he knows to be necessary and will render profitable to thee, 1 Cor. x. 13."

"Verse 13. 'And there was a day when his sons and his daughters were eating and drinking wine in their eldest brother's house.' From this to verse 19, is contained a particular description of Job's affliction, as 1st, The season. 2d, The instruments. 3d, The matter, his outward estate. 4th, The variety. 5th, The suddenness. 6th, The incessant report of these afflictions.

* It is matter of wonder, that God should give Satan such a permission, but he did it for his own glory, the honour of Job, and the encouragement of his own people in all ages; to make a case, which being adjudged, might be a useful precedent. Resolved to lose no time, Satan went forth to fall upon poor Job without delay, who knows nothing of the matter, and is going on in the way of his duty.
It was a notable day, and what can more embitter a cup of sorrow than to have it put into our hands on a day of feasting and rejoicing. If joy be troublesome in our sorrows, what must sorrows be in the midst of our joys. In chusing this time, as well as by bringing such a complication of distress so suddenly upon Job, there is a mixture of malice and cunning; the clearest day of outward comfort may be overclouded before evening.

Verse 14. 'And there came a messenger unto Job, and said, the oxen were plowing, and the asses feeding beside them.'

This is as if he had said, thy cattle were not carelessly exposed, and the sad disaster which has befallen them did not come through the negligence of thy servants. It is true, that the greatest care cannot secure the continuance of our outward possessions; but it is well when we are not to blame for indolence or inattention when they are taken away.

Verse 15. 'And the Sabeans fell upon them and took them away; yea they have slain the servants with the edge of the sword, and I only am escaped alone to tell thee.'

The Sabeans inhabited Arabia-Felix, and lived by robbery. They came like a storm violently upon them, and while they were gratifying their covetous desires they were doing Satan's work. It is said, that Satan stood up and provoked David to number the people. He somehow knows how to lay the bait suitable to our inclinations.
While Satan makes one suffer, he makes others sin; when the Sabeans were plundering and murdering, little did they think they were in Satan's service, no more than those who cast their fellow-creatures into prison for well-doing, think that they are only the devil's drudges; for it is said, Rev. ii. 10. 'The devil shall cast some of you into prison,' and we know he only does it by his agents.

It would increase Job's affliction greatly that the servants lost their lives (it is probable) in faithfully defending his property, neither was it out of any kindness to Job that one escaped to bring the painful tidings with speed and certainty, but that Job might be overwhelmed with the sudden and unexpected intelligence, as there was no room left to doubt of its truth.

Verse 16. 'While he was yet speaking there came also another, and said, the fire of God is fallen from heaven, and hath burnt up the sheep and the servants and consumed them, and I only am escaped alone to tell thee.'

Satan would not allow Job the least breathing. This second charge comes close upon the first: the second messenger tells him that the fire of God (which is supposed to have been some terrible flash of lightning,) hath fallen upon and consumed the sheep in a moment; by which Satan would suggest to Job that God was now become his enemy as well as man, and those afflictions are most grievous wherein God himself appears to be against us. The malice of devils and the rage of men may be endured,
but who can stand before God when he manifests his anger? if when God withdraws his comforts, the soul sinks under the smallest trials, what must it do when God reveals his wrath? it must be overwhelmed altogether in such a complication of distress.

"It might appear as if God had rejected his sacrifices, by his destroying the sheep from which Job had selected his offerings.

"Verse 17. 'While he was yet speaking there came also another, and said, the Chaldeans made out three bands and fell upon the camels and have carried them away; yea, and slain the servants with the edge of the sword, and I only am escaped alone to tell thee.'

"The Chaldeans, who are here to be understood of a nation, (are described to the life,) Hab. Ch. i. Their name is derived from a word which signifies to rob and spoil. It is very rare that God makes one good man his rod to scourge another; he usually employs the worst of men as his instrument to correct and afflict his people. The dirty scullion scourcs the silver vessel, and makes it clear and bright for the master's use.

"Verse 18. 'While he was yet speaking there came also another, and said, thy sons and thy daughters were eating and drinking wine in their eldest brother's house.'

"Verse 19. 'And behold there came a great wind from the wilderness and smote the four corners of the house, and it fell upon the young men, and they are dead, and I only am escaped alone to tell thee.'
"This was the greatest affliction that came upon Job, it being upon his children, and upon them all at once; they were suddenly cut off by a violent death, and to Job, who was so tender of the souls of his children, and so fearful of their sinning at their feasts, it would exceedingly aggravate the affliction that they were buried in the ruins of the house while they were feasting; and no doubt this was reserved to the last, that it might cause him to repine and murmur against God, and thereby Satan would have got the victory, and his prediction would have been fulfilled. The Lord who holdeth the wind in his fists gave Satan power, and he brought a terrible wind, which is issued in with a behold, that we may attend to its awful consequences. Job's children perished by it, yet it was not in wrath to them, but for the trial of the father; we ought not to judge by what men suffer, nor by the manner of their death, of their eternal state. It is said that every pot in Jerusalem shall be holiness unto the Lord, to teach us that men should be holy at their feastings, and at all their refreshment with the creature. From this we see how quickly worldly things may be destroyed, and how foolish it is to seek rest or comfort in them; and when our tribulations abound, let us seek support and consolation from him who can make us more than conquerors through him that loved us.

"When we consider the power and policy of Satan, let us bless God that he cannot stir to do us that mischief which his nature at once i—
clines and enables him to do until God permits him.

"Verse 20. 'Then Job arose and rent his mantle, and shaved his head, and fell down upon the ground and worshipped.'

"The design of Satan in making Job poor to a proverb, was to make him blaspheme God; it is also thought that he suggested to Job, that since God had so little regard to his comfort, why should he be mindful of his honour. But instead of this he testified the greatness of his grief by rending his garment, &c. and also evidenced his deep humiliation under the hand of God, and sorrow for all his sins; he neither despises nor unbelievingly faints; he showed a Christian fortitude, which is quite opposite to stoical apathy. He fell down, and in the exercise of fear and love worshipped God in his heart, and he honoured God by externally waiting upon him according to his appointment. In the temple, when all the service was performed according to the divine prescription, there was beauty and comely order. But a varying and departing from it, would have filled that holy place with deformity, although the outward lustre had been preserved.

"When God afflicts we ought to humble ourselves for our sins; and we may express our sorrow by external gestures, but such expressions of sorrow should always be accompanied with godly sorrow.

"We should remember it is our duty to worship and honour God at all times, and therefore, we should never sorrow as if we had nothing else to do. The people of God turn their
afflictions into prayers or praises; grace makes every condition work glory to God, and he makes all things to work for good to those that honour and love him. They that worship God must do it in spirit, that is, with love, fear and sincerity, and in truth; that is, according to the rule prescribed in God's word, the former strikes at hypocrisy, the latter at idolatry. Internal worship is complete in itself, but however complete external may be, it is never pleasing to God without the internal.

"Verse 21. 'And said, naked came I out of my mother's womb, and naked shall I return thither; the Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away; blessed be the name of the Lord.'"

"This speech expounds the meaning of Job's former actions; nakedness may be taken for the want of all outward comforts. I came a poor helpless naked creature into the world; should not this lay our pride in the dust? death will shake us out of all worldly comforts and possessions; but those who get spiritual riches, shall be adorned and enriched for ever.

"There is nothing said about the time he abode here; indeed it is but a flood and an ebb, and then we launch into the ocean of eternity.

"Job uses the words as an argument, both to support himself and also to acquit God. I have as much as I brought into this world, then what wrong is done me by all that is come upon me? from which observe, that a godly man desires to justify God in all his dealings with him, and that the consideration of what we once were, and of what we must soon be,
may relieve our spirits in the greatest afflictions.

"A mere natural man may repeat the first clause, but he cannot say it with Job's spirit, neither can he add, 'The Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away.' This is ascribing to, and acquiescing in the sovereignty of God, and not a mere confession of the frailty of nature.

"A gift is any good freely bestowed; we have nothing of our own but sin; therefore riches, honours, children, &c. as well as grace and glory, are all the undeserved donations of God.

"Job speaks as if he had done nothing, 'The Lord gave;' yet it may imply the satisfaction he had in his own mind, that what he was now deprived of had been given him by God blessing his honest labours, and had not been obtained by fraud and injustice.—Note, That what we get honestly, we can part with contentedly; but let those who will be rich and obtain it by unlawful means, beware of making God a partner of their guilt, by saying, the Lord gave. He may, and often does give when no means are used, and though unlawful means may be said to be under the eye of his providence, yet they are never under the influence of his blessing. Wicked men may grow rich, but they are never blessed; their prosperity is their curse.

"Let those who swell with pride, because they have abundance, and contempt and despise those that are in want, consider this text, and 1 Tim vi. 17, and they are the best medicine that ever was prescribed for curing pride. Let
the poor look upon this text, and beware of discontent and envy; let none fret because they have so little, or envy others because they have so much. It is 'The Lord that gives;' and this really believed, would satisfy us with our lot, not because we have this or that, but because our God is the disposer; and this will open our hearts and purses, and make us confess with David, all things come of thee, and of thine own have we given thee.

"In all the evils we either feel or fear, let us say 'And the Lord hath taken away.' A view of the absolute sovereignty of God will quiet and support, and enable to say, my Lord may dispose of me and mine as he pleases, I will not only bear it, but take it well, 'Blessed be the name of the Lord.' This is the triumphant conclusion which flows from the former propositions; and it wounded Satan more than all that he had done to Job wounded him.

"As the children of God should labour to bring their hearts to bless and glorify him, in; and for their afflictions, so they become blessings indeed when they are enabled to do so.

"Verse 22. 'In all this Job sinned not, nor charged God foolishly.'

"As if the Holy Ghost had said, it is matter of admiration, that in all this Job did not sin by murmuring thoughts or rash speeches.—Note, That is one of the highest acts of grace, to be composed and submissive under great affliction, and, that whatever is well done by us will receive a full testimony from God."
CHAPTER II.

"Verse 1. 'Again there was a day when the sons of God came to present themselves before the Lord, and Satan came also among them, to present himself before the Lord.'

"Verse 2. 'And the Lord said unto Satan, From whence comest thou? And Satan answered the Lord, and said, From going to and fro in the earth, and from walking up and down in it.'

"Verse 3. 'And the Lord said unto Satan, Hast thou considered my servant Job, that there is none like him in the earth, a perfect and upright man, one that feareth God, and escheweth evil? And still he holdeth fast his integrity, though thou movest me against him, to destroy him without cause.'

"We left Job honourably acquitted, and proved an honest man, and Satan a false accuser; after which, one would have thought that he had got enough of it. But malice is restless. They that falsely accuse the people of God, though the evidence to the contrary be never so plain and full, yet will not cease to calumniate. Instead of confessing his mistake concerning Job, he comes with a farther design against him. Job being known to be armour proof, is, therefore, here set up for a mark, and brought upon trial a second time.

"Job lays hold upon his integrity as a sword to wound his enemies, and as a shield to defend himself. The word signifies not only to be
strong, but to prevail. True grace doth not only oppose, but conquers Satan and all his temptations. Hypocrites, who have but a show of grace, fall off in times of trial. The word movedst carries in it a vehement instigation. Satan is an importunate solicitor against the people of God. He moved God to destroy, that is, to swallow up, or devour Job without any direct charge. But he who does nothing without cause, had reference both to the being and improvement of Job's graces, and this was the reason why he left him in the hands of Satan, and, the issue being so honourable to Job. God retorts upon Satan that he had moved him against Job without cause, which should have shamed and silenced him; but he replies by a proverb.

"Verse 4. 'And Satan answered the Lord, and said, Skin for skin, yea, all that a man hath, will he give for his life.'

"It is a truth, that when a man's life is at stake, he will give all he hath for it, and think he has a good bargain; and it seems to insinuate that the fear of losing his life had made Job humble and submissive under all that had befallen him.

"Life is the most precious treasure, and if our lives are so valuable, what are our souls worth? We should, therefore, beware of sin, which endangers our souls, and we may learn their true value by the estimation that our Lord Jesus Christ had for them, in that he gave not only his riches, and reputation, but his life also to redeem them."
"While life is continued we should study to improve it and other favours, as knowing that we deserve none, and let this influence us patiently to endure every bereavement.

"Verse 5. 'But put forth thine hand now, and touch his bone and his flesh, and he will curse thee to thy face.'*

"Though Satan failed in his former attempt, it does not prevent him from making another motion; when he cannot overcome by one temptation he prepares a stronger. Let us learn from his example to pray always, and not to faint, and when we fail of success, instead of yielding, let us pray more earnestly, and imitate Jacob, who wept and made supplication; and above all, in the name and strength of Christ continue instant in prayer. Seeing a diseased body unfit the mind for holy duties, they are greatly mistaken who amuse themselves with pretending they will repent on a sick or death-bed.

"Verse 6. 'And the Lord said unto Satan, Behold he is in thine hand; but save his life.'

"When God puts any of his servants into Satan's hand he keeps him in his own hand. This devouring lion, like persecutors, who try to ensnare the soul by drawing or terrifying into sin, and when they fail in that, then they inflict death on the body.

* Satan knew it, and we find by experience that nothing is more likely to put the mind into disorder, or cause us speak unadvisedly with our lips, than acute pain.—Henry.
"God says, 'save his life,' because he intended to make Job a monument of mercy as well as of suffering. A godly man is never in such a situation but God has some use of his life; and life and death are in the hand of God. Precious in his sight is the death of his saints.

"From this we may consider and admire the wonderful love of God to us in Christ, when he was sent into the world to save sinners. He was put into the hands of Satan and his instruments; and as if his Father had said, 'afflict him as thou wilt; persecute him in his cradle; slander, revile, and crown him with thorns; but save his life.' No, this bound is not set to the malice of Satan and the rage of men; they are allowed to take life and all. But little did Satan think that he was thereby to destroy himself.

"Verse 7. 'So went Satan forth from the presence of the Lord, and smote Job with sore boils, from the sole of his foot unto his crown.'

"The word for boils signifies a burning, an inflaming ulcer; and if it is painful to have one inflamed boil, what must Job have felt, when covered all over with the very worst kind of boils; and, to add to his distress, it was so sudden and so vehement a stroke, as gave him reason to think that it came from the hand of God.

"As to trust in means is to despise God, so to neglect means is to tempt him. Doubtless Job neither trusted in nor neglected means. But his disease was of that kind that are called the physician's reproach. They could neither discover a natural cause, nor prescribe any cure
for it; in this case physicians were of no value, and, therefore, either to show that all means had proved in vain, or that none durst undertake the cure, it is said,

"Verse 8. 'And he took him a potsherd to scrape himself withal; and he sat down among the ashes.'

"What a sad reverse. This poor man, lately the greatest man of the east, and enjoying health and prosperity, now not only sick and sore, but left without any attendant to minister either medicine or cordials to him, so that he may say, as Ps. cxli. 4. 'No man careth for my soul.' Although care and attention would not have cured him, yet means might have been used to alleviate his sufferings, or by their sympathy to have shown him that respect and attention which is calculated to comfort the distressed. When a man is sick and full of sores, a clean and soft bed may give some temporary repose. But instead of this he sat down among the ashes, which shows what a sad and mournful condition he was come to. For to sit in ashes is an emblem of extreme sorrow, and only used in times of greatest calamity; from which observe, That our humiliation ought to correspond with our troubles, and this is one way of accepting the punishment of our iniquities, and improving present evils for our everlasting good.

"2. That when permitted, Satan can suddenly afflict the body with diseases, and bind it with a spirit of infirmity as with a chain.

"3. That the children of God need not think it strange, when they are brought into
extreme distress, to be forsaken and left by those from whom they expected assistance when they need it most.

"4. That health and strength is a very great blessing, which we should improve, by seeking an interest in and fellowship with him who will never leave nor forsake them that trust in him in any distress.

"Verse 9. 'Then said his wife unto him, Dost thou still retain thine integrity? Curse God, and die.'

"It is probable that Job did not smart so much when Satan smote both flesh and bone, as now, when his wife smote him. And from this we see the reason why Satan spared his wife; and also why he left him the use of his tongue. It appears that it was that it might be the instrument of cursing God. His wife's question is the same words as verse 3. But God speaks them in honour of Job; she speaks them in contempt; and, therefore, turns them into a question, upbraiding and reproaching him, from which, observe, 1st, That those things that commend us most to God render us contemptible before the world. 2d, It is common for Satan and his agents to allege that a profession of holiness is vain and unprofitable. 3d, That from outward troubles, and want of success, he tries to discourage God's people in holy duties, and to dissuade them from them. But a good man hath his fruit in holiness; and, therefore, though he receives no outward or immediate fruit, he still holds fast his integrity, whereas
a hypocrite delights in God no longer than while he gives him worldly favours. She next counsels him to curse God and die. Beza reads, bless God, that is, confess thy sin and prepare to die. But Job's reply confutes this. As Peter acted Satan's part, though unwittingly, yet he got his name by it, *get thee behind me, Satan*; it was Peter's tongue, but Satan tuned it. So Job's wife might be a good woman, though misled by Satan.

"To desire to live is natural, but to be willing to live because God wills it is an act of grace. To die is an act of nature, but to die because God wills it is from grace. Christ is said to be obedient unto death, because he died according to God's decree, and in conformity to his pleasure. To die thus is the duty of a Christian, and the crown of all his obedience. To wish for death because our lives are full of trouble is certainly sinful. God has as much use of our lives in our troubles as in our comforts; passive obedience brings as much glory to God as active doth.

"Precious are the wounds of a friend when he wounds with holy reproof; but when a friend wounds by sinful counsel, or solicitation to sin, they are pernicious wounds. When that which should be our comfort is turned into sorrow, how great is our sorrow?

"One act is enough to assimilate, but it is not enough to denominate. Job doth not call his wife a foolish and wicked woman, but only that she spake as one of the foolish women."
"Verse 10. 'But he said unto her, Thou speakest as one of the foolish women speaketh. What! shall we receive good at the hand of God, and shall we not receive evil? In all this did not Job sin with his lips.'

"Job rebukes his wife, but it is in the spirit of meekness. He speaks comparatively, he doth not charge the whole sex. He labours to convince of folly, which is the readiest way to make one wise. Though there was sharpness in the reproof to search the wound, yet there was none to exasperate the person. It was an exact compound of love and anger, zeal and knowledge.

"Job's question refers to the manner of receiving; we shall receive evil whether we will or not, but we ought to receive it as cheerfully as we receive good. Both good and evil comes to us often at the second hand; but we should take all as from the first, and this will make every good better, and every evil we feel not so bad. Afflictions coming from the creature are as the rod of Moses upon the ground, a biting serpent, but, considered in the hand of God, they are like the serpent in the hand of Moses, a rod to correct and a staff to support us.

"To look on evil as coming from God will enable to bear it quietly.—Note on Eccles. vii. 14. 'Consider that as the day of prosperity was from God, so is the day of adversity, for it follows God hath also set the one over against the other.' So we should bear the one as patiently as we receive the other joyfully. Es-
pecially, as we never deserved the least part of the good that we enjoy; but we have des-
erved more than all the evil that we suffer,
present evils should not make us insensible of or unthankful for past mercies. Whatever a believer loses he hath no reason to be dissatis-
fied; he has a portion that cannot be lost.

"'In all this did not Job sin with his lips.' There is more understood than exprest. It is not a bare acquittal, but a high approbation. To govern the tongue under great and sore af-
Affictions is a rare attainment. Job did not murmur, repine, or blaspheme.

"Anger can hardly be silent, and that anger is admirable which speaks and sins not. He that knows not how to be angry knows not how to love. And he that knows not how to re-
prove in love knows not how to be angry. Job, in a prudent and gracious manner, sharply re-
proved his wife, yet lovingly convincing her of folly; at once endeavouring to discover and cure her error.

"Verse 11. 'Now when Job's three friends heard of all this evil that was come upon him, they came every one from his own place; Eliphaz the Temanite, and Bildad the Shuhite, and Zophar the Naamathite: for they had made an appointment together to come to mourn with him, and to comfort him.'

"The pedigree of these men is very uncer-
tain, and it is of small importance from whom they descended. They were Job's friends, which is taken from a word which signifies to eat together as sheep, from which the word
pastor is derived. And having heard of his troubles, they agreed to come and visit him, to mourn with and comfort him.

"No doubt Job's troubles were noised abroad. The afflictions as well as the sins of the godly are carried about upon the wings of fame, and every one descants upon and censures them freely.

"It is a proof of true friendship to mourn with and comfort the afflicted. If we really love God it will abide whatever befall us. And it manifests our love to our brethren to be genuine, when we continue to love and own them when they are despised and reproached by men, or are afflicted by the immediate hand of God. Some friends are like the swallow, they come in summer but flee away in winter. It is very becoming to prevent the invitations of our friends; it is good manners to be an unbidden guest at a house of mourning. It is very improper to judge or censure upon hearsay, but a report is warrant enough to pity and pray for our afflicted friends; some look upon it as a compliment to visit those in affliction. But it is spoken of, James i. 27, as a prominent part of pure religion, and when we visit with an intention to comfort those in distress. Let us beware of acting the part of Job's friends, who added affliction to him whom they meant to comfort. What a sad condition is represented, Ps. lxix. 20, when it is said, 'I looked for some to take pity, but there was none,' &c. and when it was fulfilled on the innocent Lamb of God when he suffered. None of his follow-
ers should think it strange when it is with them as it was with their Lord.*

"Verse 12. 'And when they lifted up their eyes afar off, and knew him not, they lifted up their voice and wept; and they rent every one his mantle and sprinkled dust upon their heads towards heaven.'

"Verse 13. 'So they sat down with him upon the ground seven days and seven nights, and none spake a word unto him; for they saw that his grief was very great.'

"Great afflictions blast the beauty, change and disfigure the face, so that friends cannot know them. Job was now so changed that his friends lift up their voice and wept, thus giving vent to their sorrow, which, as is usual, would revive Job's grief. To show compassion to him, as well as to show their own sorrow, they rent their clothes and sprinkled dust,

* Many a good lesson is to be learned from the trouble of others—we may look on them and receive instruction, and we may say what may comfort and profit them. Job's friends came, not to satisfy their curiosity, much less, as David's false friends, to make inveterate remarks upon him, but to mingle their tears with his, and so to comfort him. It is much more pleasant to visit those to whom comfort belongs, than those to whom we must first speak conviction on account of their ignorance.

From their making an appointment to come.—Note, That good people should make appointments among themselves for doing good, thereby exciting one another to it, and assisting and encouraging one another in it. For carrying on any pious design let hand join in hand.—Henry.
as a memento of mortality. However low we are, God can lay us still lower; and, therefore, it is best to lay ourselves as low as we can, as he does who sits upon the ground when his heart sits down with him too. His friends saw that the pain of his body was great, and that his mind was troubled, for which reason, they sat down with him and kept silence. When a man is resolved to mourn let him mourn, your advice may anger him but it will not help him. Let sorrow have its way a while and that will make way for comfort.”*

CHAPTER III.

“Verse 1. 'After this Job opened his mouth, and cursed his day.'

'At last Job, who had formerly opened his mouth to justify and bless God, with a loud or clear voice cursed his day. Sorrow sometimes stops the mouth. Ps. lxxvii. 4, 'I am so troubled that I cannot speak.' A wise man hath his tongue at his command, he speaks upon mature deliberation; but a fool's tongue commands him. The word here used, to curse, is derived from a root, which signifies light or

* Seven days Job and his friends sat in silence; they might be afraid of speaking lest they should grieve him. When they saw him in such an extraordinary affliction they likely thought comfort did not belong to him, and, suspecting him a hypocrite, they said nothing.—Henry.
unsettled, and so it means any thing or person which we contemn or despise, so it is frequently translated, as well as to curse or blaspheme. The Hebrew word for honour or glory, signifies heavy; and 2 Cor. iv. 17, speaks of a weight of glory. Now, observe, that cursing a father is opposite to the 5th Commandment, 'Thou shalt honour thy father,' &c. —thou shalt look on thy parents as upon persons of weight—so to curse them is to look on them as vile and contemptible.

"Can a man curse persons or things? No. Blessings and cursings are in the hand of God. A day is a part of time, and is incapable of a curse. Job curses either the day of his birth or the day on which he suffered such a world of evils. Jeremiah also cursed his day with a vehement curse. But the apostle says, 'Bless, and curse not.'"

"Verses 2, 3. 'And Job spake and said, Let the day perish wherein I was born, and the night in which it was said, There is a man-child conceived,' or brought forth.

"To perish, signifies not to be, or it is to lose former dignity or respect—to have a mournful being. Let it not be remembered—let it be as if it had never been.

"It must be granted that Job discovered much frailty and some passion in this complaint. But if we consider the acuteness of his pain, the multiplicity of his troubles, with their long continuance, we need not wonder that he did complain; and if we look to his end we shall see patience have a perfect work."
There is indeed a mournful difference between Job's behaviour in the former chapter and what he now speaks.

"Observe, That the holiest person is apt to fail even in the grace in which they excel—witness Moses and Peter.

"2d, Observe, That great sufferings often produce grievous complainings, Ps. lxxvii. 2. lxxxviii. 3—15. Though the Lord gives us waters of gall to drink, when we consider what our sins deserve, we have great reason to be silent. But flesh and blood will cry out under great troubles. And since God bears with his people, they should bear with one another. He that understands man will compassionate the sorrows and not question the sincerity of a complaining brother.

"3d, Observe, That Satan will never fully attain his ends on the children of God. He undertook to make Job curse his God, but when he had done his worst, and spent his malice upon him, Job cursed his day but not his God. So it came far short of what Satan affirmed.

"Verse 4. 'Let that day be darkness; let not God regard it from above, neither let the light shine upon it.'

"Proper darkness is only a privation of light, but it frequently means any sorrowful sad condition. Let not God take any account of it; let it not be honoured with any special work of providence, which might make it to be remembered with honour among men.

"From the two first clauses, as they are placed in succession, learn, That there is no
day so dark, or condition so distressing, but if God regard and take notice of it, man may take comfort and rejoice in it. Even in the hour and power of darkness, if God lifts up the light of his countenance, we shall be safe and happy. Our every day's comfort depends on the blessing and care of God. Some translate Acts xvii. 30, *The time of that ignorance God regarded not—God did overlook that time*; he did not respect it; that is, he lightly passed them by; his eye was not upon them for good, so as to send among them that great blessing, the knowledge of Jesus Christ. When God, in a way of favour, doth but look towards us, our lowest estate is raised up. 'Thou hast regarded the low estate of thine handmaid,' said Mary.

"To have no light is an addition and aggravation of darkness, as Isa. l. 10, 'and hath no light,' expresses one of the saddest conditions of an afflicted soul. 'Neither let the light shine upon it,' is, let there be no comfort, no joy, no good thing in the compass of that day.

"Light, in scripture, expresses all good, as darkness all evil.

"Verse 5. 'Let darkness and the shadow of death stain it; let a cloud dwell upon it, let the blackness of the day terrify it.'

"The shadow of death might be translated image of death, such darkness as is like death. Clouds and darkness together. Job wishes a black cloud so fixed as to eclipse the whole day, and so to be a terrible day by reason of its blackness. Job heaps up words very like in
sound, and all alike in sense. Metaphorical darkness stains the beauty of the creature. Let civil discord and war arise, and then what is honour but greater misery, and riches are but golden thorns. But the darkness of ignorance, guilt, and the displeasure of God, are the worst stains. Hence see what a blessing natural light is, and the outward light of a comfortable condition, but especially the light of God's countenance, which is better than life.

"Verse 6. 'As for that night, let darkness seize upon it; let it not be joined unto the days of the year, let it not come into the number of the months.'

"The word here used signifies thick darkness joined with tempest. Let darkness grasp it and make it still darker.

"The glory of the night is its conjunction to the day. Night is called day, as it is part of the natural day. There is a certain purpose for the summer and for the winter, and also for the day and for the night; and for any of them to be prevented from answering their end is their affliction, (so far as they are capable of it.) It is a great curse upon any creature to be rendered useless.

"Verse 7. 'Lo, let that night be solitary; let no joyful voice come therein.'

"Job would have no meetings that night, and if men will meet, let it be only to mourn together. When we reflect on our misimprovement and abuse of social meetings both in our houses and temples, we have reason to fear that the joyful voice may be suddenly taken from
us. Let us therefore go voluntarily alone, that we may, like Jacob in prayer, wrestle with God for a blessing. This is the sweetest enjoyment of our lives, and is the best way of preparing for and improving our afflictions. But to have the society of friends interrupted, so that they cannot associate together, is one of the greatest afflictions upon earth, and it is quite contrary to the nature and happiness of man.

"Verse 8. 'Let them curse it that curse the day, who are ready to raise up their mournings.'

"Let this night be cursed and mourned over with as enlarged sorrows as those who are hired on purpose to mourn over the saddest spectacles and most calamitous events, some seem to think that their troubles exceed their own sorrows, and, therefore, hire others to appear as mourners; and the love of gain will turn some spirits into any posture, like Balaam, who loved the wages of unrighteousness.

"Verse 9. 'Let the stars of the twilight thereof be dark; let it look for light, but have none, neither let it see the dawning of the day.'

"In the day time star light is not valued, but in the night they are a great ornament, comfort, and guide. They are often a welcome sight to the traveller and mariner. Hence, to be deprived of small comforts may be a great affliction in times of distress.

When the apostle would have us to avoid all evil, he exhorts to abstain from the appearance of evil. So it is as if Job had said, Let it not see the least appearance of day.
"When God looks upon us and expects to find repentance, and behold presumption for faith, and behold unbelief for patience, and behold complaining, &c. no marvel when we look for light and behold darkness, for peace and behold trouble, for success and behold disappointment.

"Verse 10. 'Because it shut not up the doors of my mother's womb, nor hid sorrow from mine eyes.'

"And is this Job so famed for wisdom, and is this the defence he produces for cursing his day in so full and particular a manner? It seems to have more of passion than reason in it.

"Trouble and sorrow take hold of us; and we enter upon and take hold of trouble as soon as we come into this world.

"Some suppose that infants tears is a presage of these sorrows; and well might they weep if they knew what a sea of storms they are launching into, and from which they shall never be fully relieved, till they arrive at the harbour at the end of the voyage.

"Verse 11. 'Why died I not from the womb? why did I not give up the ghost when I came out of the belly?'

"Verse 12. 'Why did the knees prevent me? or why the breasts, that I should suck?'

"The general meaning of these two verses is, That it had been best for me not to have been born, and next best to have died soon after.

"To give up the ghost is a cheerful resignation of ourselves in death."
"In regard of outward troubles, death is the rest of man.
We are not only indebted to God for our lives at first, but also for the continuance of them, and for all the comforts we enjoy as we pass along. We need divine mercy in every step of our journey.
An infant is a very helpless creature. The seed of death is sown as soon as life is communicated.*

Verse 13. 'For now should I have lain still and been quiet, I should have slept: then had I been at rest.'
Job here, in four distinct words, expresses the same thing; and in death there is rest from labour, from trouble and oppression, from sorrow and grief; and what is far better than these to believers, from sin, Satan's temptations, and the law of the members warring against the law of the mind.

* Perhaps Job, reflecting upon his folly in wishing he had never been born, tries to mend it with another little better, that he had died as soon as he was born.
When Satan said, "All that a man hath will he give for his life," in reference to Job, he was greatly mistaken; for no man ever valued life at a lower rate than he did.
The vanity and vexation of spirit that attends human life should reconcile us unto death when it comes; but we must not make it a pretence to quarrel with life while it is continued. To desire to die that we may be with Christ, and get free of sin, is the effect and evidence of grace: but to wish to die only to get rid of the troubles of this life, savours of corruption.—Henry.
"Death brings the body to rest, and so is called sleep; and as we awake after sleep, so there shall be a resurrection from the dead; and this will be effected with infinitely more ease, by the power of God, than we can awake a person from a sound sleep.

"To wish things otherwise than they are, because we suffer, is certainly sinful; but to wish that those things which have dishonoured and offended God had never been done is surely lawful.

"It is lawful to complain under afflictions; but we should complain of or to creatures very little. While we pass over second causes, let us pour our complaints into the bosom of God, adoring his wisdom and justice in these things that we cannot understand. And in bewailing our own or the public calamities, we should endeavour to bear the cross cheerfully. To bear is the patience of necessity; to love to bear is the patience of virtue, and hath in it the highest affection, and the lowest subjection to Christ. To glory in any thing is more than to joy in or take pleasure in it. Col. i. 24. 2 Cor. xii. 10. Rom. v. 3. Gal. vi. 14.

"If we mix faith with our tears, and while we bemoan our condition, believe that God is good and good to us, and that he is able to deliver us, we may wish that the things that are were, not, and pray that God would make a change in our estate.

"Job is angry with his very being. He complains not only of his troubles, but of his
life. This must be numbered among his failings and faults.

"Verse 14. 'With kings and counsellors of the earth, which built desolate places for themselves.'

"Job now shows that he would have had rest, as well as the great and rich or wise. Kings here are such as rule by law, with whom counsellors are joined; and it is well when they are both good, for evil counsellors often make a good man a bad king.

"The word for desolate places is clearly applied to the grave. Ezek. xxvi. 20. Tombs may be called desolate places; for when the bodies are laid there, all the company and friends leave them. Even kings and counsellors, who have stately funerals, are left there by their friends, favourites, and flatterers, and great sums were expended in building and beautifying them, yet it was customary to erect them in desolate places.

"We see how God disappoints the vain conceit of endeavouring to perpetuate our name and greatness in the story of Absalom. 2 Sam. xviii. 18. That ambitious prince was cast into a pit, with a rude heap of stones cast upon him. By which we are taught the folly of preparing a place for a dead body, while the concerns of an immortal soul is neglected.*

* Men have used strange methods to preserve their dignity, if possible, on the other side of death, but it will not do. Death is and will be an irresistible leveler.—Henry.
Verse 15. 'Or with princes that had gold, who filled their houses with silver.'

These houses filled with treasure may be their tombs. In these times they not only bestowed great cost upon their tombs, but they put great store of treasure in them. Josephus says Hircanus opened David's sepulchre, and took out three thousand talents; and it is supposed that the Chaldeans raked up the graves of the Jews, not so much from cruelty as from covetousness.

Observe, That neither power, nor wisdom, nor riches are any privilege against death. How then is it said that righteousness delivereth from death? It may be either from troubles or dangers in a day of public calamity, or from the sting of death, the evil of which is passed to a righteous man; but riches can neither mitigate the pain, nor pull out the sting of death.

Great men are called the men of the world, Ps. 17, as if they were for nothing but this world, and so they have their portion in this life; and their inward thought is, that their houses shall continue for ever. Ps. xlix. The heart is the place where Christ and the thoughts of heaven should lodge. All things below should be outward thoughts. As the inward thoughts of a godly man are upon the things of God, so the inward thoughts of worldly men are after the world, and they may say to their departing souls, (as that trembling emperor,) whether are you going; where is the place of your rest?

Verse 16. 'Or as an hidden untimely
birth I had not been; as infants which never saw light.'

"As if he had said, if I have gone too high in referring to kings, &c. yet surely I should have been as those that never knew themselves to be in this world. It is worthy of notice that the same word signifies both an infant and a giant; and in the grave there is no difference between them.

"Verse 17. 'There the wicked cease from troubling; and there the weary be at rest.'

"The Hebrew usually expresses many things in one word, but here it has diverse words to signify one thing, only differing in degree. The lowest expression for a sinner, notes one that misses a mark. The next signifies a willingness to sin, and an unwillingness to obey; and the one used here signifies wickedness in the height. So Job means here that they had been restless in sin; who could not sleep till they had done mischief, nor scarce sleep for doing mischief; who weary and tire out themselves with vexing and troubling others. The wicked man travaileth with pain all his days. In the grave they cease from troubling; there they are at rest. In Ps. xciv. 'How long shall the wicked triumph?' it is answered, verse 23, 'The Lord shall cut them off in their own wickedness.' As if it had been said, Until the Lord cut them off they will never leave off doing wickedly.

"Verse 18. 'There the prisoners rest together, they hear not the voice of the oppressor.'
"The word for oppressor signifies also an exacter of debt, tribute, or labour; and because at times they are demanded against right and equity, often with violence and cruelty, they may well be called oppressors.

"The voice of an oppressor is the voice of slander and reproach. Ps. xlii. 10, 'As with a sword in my bones, mine enemies reproach me.' The tongue wounds deeper than the sword, and God will punish for hard words as well as hard blows. However he may order the outward dispensations of his providence, his people will soon be brought to the house of silence, where they shall hear the oppressor's voice no more.

"Paul and Silas sung praises in a prison, but they enjoyed the presence of Christ, which can make any place or situation comfortable. But in itself imprisonment is a sad condition. Our Lord speaks of a prison visit as a special service. 'I was in prison, and ye visited me.' We should remember those that are in bonds as bound with them, and they who hear the voice of the oppressor as being ourselves yet in the body, and let this give a relish to, and make us thankful for the comforts of life.

"Verse 19. 'The small and great are there, and the servant is free from his master.'

"The grave knows no difference among men. There is but one distinction that outlives death. Happy are all those who are made righteous by God's grace. Both voluntary and constrained servants is free from their master.
Job speaks of service as a state of affliction and trouble, under which many groan,*

"Job now begins to expostulate, and his main proposition is contained, in verses 20, 23, viz. That there is no reason why a man that lives miserably, and would die willingly, should have his life prolonged. He endeavours to prove the assumption at verse 24, where he shows that he lived in great misery, which he amplifies in the two last verses. This is the sum and scope of this last section.

"Verse 20. 'Wherefore is light given to him that is in misery, and life unto the bitter in soul?'

"The Hebrew word signifies labour. It is translated sorrow, verse 10, guilt, Ps. lv. and mischief, Ps. xciv.; because by these one man molests and vexes another, and makes him miserable. This deep inward sorrow made our Lord say, 'My soul is exceeding sorrowful even unto death;' that is, I am in the lowest depths of sorrow, within one step or degree of death.

"The will and pleasure of God is a sufficient answer to Job's question. Yet as God seldom answers by his bare prerogative, other reasons may be adduced; such as, that life is conti-

* The tedious pomp of state which attends the great is at an end. There all the inconveniencies of a poor and low condition are also over.

Levelled by death, the conqueror and the slave,
The wise and foolish, cowards and the brave
Lik'md and undistinguished in the grave.

Henry.
nued to teach obedience by sufferings, and that grace may be increased; or, that God magnifies his power in supporting and delivering those whom he sets up as patterns to posterity.

"Here is a man weary of light and life. The best things in the world may become burdens to us. Therefore labour after true grace, which was never a burden to any man, or unsavoury to the bitterest soul. When you are weary of all other things, faith and patience will support you.

"It is a trouble to possess good things when we cannot enjoy them. The possession and enjoyment of all temporal things may be separated, but the very possession of spiritual things is joy.

"Verse 21. 'Which long for death, but it cometh not, and dig for it more than for hid treasures.'

"To long is a vehement desire, even as an hungry man for food, or as a believer who has waited long expecting the accomplishment of any promised blessing.

"It cometh not. That is, not so soon as they would have it, for death will come. But is it lawful to desire death? It is an enemy that no man can desire, yet some have expressed as eager a desire after death as ever any dug for secreted treasures; but still there is somewhat else at the bottom of that desire.

"Instead of following Jonah's pattern when we meet with a cross, we should seek to God for relief, for he hath a thousand ways to let
us out of trouble besides sending us to the grave. As death comes to many before they look for it, so some are calling for death before they know how to die. When Solomon praises the dead as better than the living, he personifies a natural man, who says it is better to die than live under oppression. But to bear a burden well is more desirable than deliverance from it, if, while bearing it, we can be doing good.

"Spiritual treasures are called mysteries. Knowledge, life, and comforts are hid. Col. iii. 3; Rev. ii. 17. The best things are hardest to be come by. Those that will have the crown must strive for it. We must dig for heavenly hid treasure! and yet both the treasure and strength to dig it are freely given.

"Verse 22. 'Which rejoice exceedingly, and are glad when they can find the grave.'

"And finding death, they are affected as they who (seeking for treasures,) find a grave. For when they hit upon a grave they thought themselves sure of treasure.

"Or rather it refers to those who bid death welcome, and are glad when they find themselves stepping into it. If the miseries of this life can make death itself desirable, then certainly the prospect of living in and with Christ will fill us with joy and earnest desires to attain it. It is desire that widens the vessel to take in abundance of joy."

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* Let us live ready for death, and leave the time and every circumstance to the Lord's disposal. Grace
Verse 23. 'Why is light given to a man whose way is hid, and whom God hath hedged in?'

"That which was before the object of Satan's envy is now the object of Job's complaint, a hedge. The one was for protection, the other of thorny trouble to Job. It is as if Job had said, why doth God continue my life when I am in such a condition, that I cannot discover the reason why I am brought into it, nor see any passage out of it? Affliction is not only wrapt up as to the cause and the event, but in the darkness of present duty. Neither know we what to do, but our eyes are upon thee. Ignorance of the particular cause or duty called to, under an affliction, adds greatly to the weight or smart of it.

"Verse 24. 'For my sighing cometh before I eat, and my roarings are poured out like the waters.'

"Heb. Before the face of my bread my sighings come, which notes the continuance of his sorrows. Job's grief was without any intermission, for sorrow and sighing sat as guests continually at his table.

"Sighings are mere secret sorrows, but roarings must be heard, which points out the extremity of Job's sufferings. So David, Ps. xxxii. 3, to show his extremity of pain while he did not confess his sin, says, 'While I kept teaches us, in the midst of life's greatest comforts, to be willing to die, and, under the greatest crosses, to be willing to live.—Henry."
silence' (while I smothered my sins in secret.)
'I roared for the disquietness of my soul.' Silence in not confessing sin causes roaring under the guilt of sin. I am as it were melted into sorrows.

"Verse 25. 'For the thing which I greatly feared is come upon me, and that which I was afraid of is come unto me.'

"Job seems to make this the sum of all complaints. The Hebrew is, I feared a fear and it is come upon me, I long before thought that such a black day might come upon me.

"Query. Was it lawful in Job to be thus fearful? An apostle bids us be careful for nothing. There are divers sorts of fear. Job's was a fear of caution, not of torment and vexation,—a fear opposed to security and presumption, not to joy and consolation. Job's fear was grounded on the uncertainty of creature comforts. He knew that wealth was but brittle ware, and might quickly receive a crack. This fear we ought to carry about us in regard of our spiritual state, though grace be everlasting ware, and though we are high built we must not be high minded. Job's was a fear that made him diligent to prepare for an evil day, not a fear that did eat out all the comfort of a good day,—a fear opposed to hardness of heart, but not opposed to courage and strength of heart. Such a fear as this is a holy fear, a good companion in our best estate, which will not trouble but regulate our lives.

"Note. That holy wisdom and sanctified prudence prepares for evil in our good days.
Lest the disciples in time of peace should forget trouble, Christ says, Matt. xxiv. 25, 'Behold I have told you before.'

"When ungodly men have a good day they think it will last for ever. When they were merry, singing and feasting, Amos vi. 3, they would not allow the thought of a change; for it is added, 'They put the evil day far from them.' Isaiah describes them as making a covenant with death; and when he had been talking of judgments, they say, 'If the overflowing scourge shall pass through, it shall not come unto us.' These are the thoughts of foolish and ungodly men. They have made lies their refuge, and under falsehood have they hid themselves; and so they confidently say, we will fill ourselves with strong drink, and to-morrow shall be as this day, and much more abundant. Many of the people of God do say of the evils that are now upon us, the things which we feared are come. These storms were seen long ago in the clouds, yea in the sunshine; and they who foresaw them with an eye of faith and holy fear, are in best case to grapple with them, and will be gainers by them.

"Dangers unknown easily surprise us, whereas those we fear may either be prevented or prepared for. Trouble will lie heavy enough upon us, even when we look and prepare for it. Therefore say to thyself, I am rich, but before I die I may be poor. Now I have a house, but in a few days I may be turned out. Now I am at liberty, but shortly I may be cast into prison. Now I have wife and
children, but I may soon be bereaved of them, or they may be turned into crosses and afflictions.

"Now, O my soul, art thou prepared to bear these changes? Surely Job questioned himself thus, which made him say, 'That which I greatly feared is come upon me.'

"Verse 26. 'I was not in safety; neither had I rest, neither was I quiet; yet trouble came.'

"This is an addition to, and an exposition of the former verse. The Hebrew root also signifies, I was not secure. From the same root is 'Shiloh,' that is, he whom all may securely trust in and rest upon for safety. Job means, I did not think myself safe, or beyond the reach of danger.

"Job had not a rest in confidence; he did not trust in his outward peace; but he had the rest of contentment even in his outward troubles. A wicked man's conscience is like a troubled sea, even when he enjoys outward peace. But Job enjoyed peace of conscience when his affairs were like a troubled sea.

"The contrast in the conduct of the rich man will illustrate this verse, Luke xii. 9. His house was full, but his heart was fuller of the creature. He makes it a rock to build upon, and a pillow to sleep on. He sings a requiem to his soul. The rich man's words are affirmatives of all Job's negatives. Job's estate was as full as his, but his heart was emptied of all delight in it. I never expected much peace in the world, none at all from it,
yet trouble came. When Job had abundance of all earthly things, he said he was not in safety, &c. Hence observe, that in the springtide of worldly prosperity, we should keep our hearts within the channel. A believer, like Noah's dove, finds no rest; and after all his flights and fluttering among creatures, he must say, Return unto thy rest, O my soul.

"God often wrests worldly enjoyments out of their hands who hold them fastest. Christ gives an instance, in the days of Noah and Lot, when they were secure, buying and selling, &c. as if the world had been their own. Then the flood and the fire came and swept them all away.

"But the way to hold spiritual things is to cleave to them with full purpose of heart. And what Christ says of this life is true of the things of this life; 'He that will lose,' (that is, he who is ready to lose,) 'the things of this life shall save them; and he that will save, (that is, he who is resolved to save) 'the things of this life, shall lose them.' Put them out of your hearts and you may hold them in your hands.


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TO THE CHRISTIAN READER.

A question is started and touched in many books of Scripture, how the justice and goodness of God can be vindicated while his providence distributes good to the evil, and evil to the good. But it is here purposely handled in
a very long disputation between Job the respondent and his three friends opponents. Then in a full determination, first, by Elihu, an acute and wise reasoner, and then by God himself, the most wise and infallible moderator.

There are three principles wherein Job concurs with his three friends—

1st, That all the afflictions which befal man come under the eye and certain knowledge of God.

2dly, That God is the author and efficient cause, the orderer and disposer of all these afflictions and calamities.

3dly, That in regard of his most holy majesty and unquestionable sovereignty, he neither doth nor can do any wrong or injury to any of his creatures, whatsoever affliction he lays, or how long soever he is pleased to continue it upon them.

These three principles, and such conclusions as are immediately deducible from them, are copiously handled by them all, and they all speak very glorious things of the power, wisdom, justice, holiness, and sovereignty of the Lord; but Job far excels the other three.

But they proceed to a fourth principle, which he utterly denies, about which so much of his answer as opposeth their objections wholly consists. That their fourth principle seems to be bottomed on two grounds.

1st, That whosoever is good and doth good, shall receive a present reward, according to the measure of the good he hath done, and that
the wicked shall be paid with present punishments according to the measure of his demerits.

2dly. That if a wicked man flourish in outward prosperity, yet it is very momentary, and suddenly turns to, and ends in visible judgments in this life. And that if at any time a godly man be withered with adversity, yet it is very short and suddenly (in this life) ends in visible blessings. The sum of this is, that a man greatly afflicted and held long under their pressure, is to be numbered with the wicked, though no other evidence appear against him, hence—

The peculiar opinion of Eliphaz, that all the outward evils which overtake a man in this life are the proceeds of his own sin, and so from the process of God's justice, chapter iv. 8. 'They that plough iniquity, and sow wickedness, shall reap the same, which he applies personally to Job, chapter xxii. 5, 6. 'Is not thy wickedness great?' &c.; the whole scope of his speech bends the same way, and is as if he had said to Job, 'Though thy carriage has been so plausible among us, that we are not able to accuse thee of sin, yet those judgments accuse thee, and are sufficient witnesses against thee that thou hast taken a pledge from thy brother for nought.'

Bildad grants that afflictions may fall upon a righteous person, but if God send not deliverance speedily, &c. Then upon the second ground of the fourth principle, such a man may be censured, cast and condemned as unright-
That such was Bildad's judgment is clear, chapter viii. 5, 6. and 20, 21. 'Behold God will not cast away a perfect man,' &c. As if he had said, I cannot assent to Eliphaz affirming, that every man that is afflicted is for his wickedness. I believe that a godly man may be afflicted for the trial and exercise of his graces. But as soon as he cries and calls, the Lord makes his habitation prosperous again.

Zophar differs from the two former, affirming that all afflictions are to be resolved into the absolute will and pleasure of God, &c. chapter xi. 7, 8, 12.; in the rest of his speech he comes nearest the opinion of Bildad, verse 14, 15, 16. and gives out as hard thoughts of Job as the other two, numbering him among the wicked, and assigning him the reward of an hypocrite, chapter xx. 29.

These, I conceive, are the characteristical opinions of Job's three friends about his case, all consistent with these four principles, which they hold in common, all equally concerning Job, and yet some difference among themselves.

But what says Job? He says that the providence of God dispenses outward prosperity and affliction so indifferently to good and bad, that no unerring judgment can possibly be made of any man's spiritual estate upon the view of his temporal. He declares this as his opinion, chapter ix. 22, 23. which is no way at variance with the three first principles, but only with the fourth, which he throughout refutes as unsound, &c.
In the strong hold of this truth, Job secures himself against all the assaults, and scatters all the objections of his opponents, resolving to maintain it to the death.

That he is a sinner, he readily grants; that he is an hypocrite, he flatly denies.

That the Lord was righteous in all his dealings with him, he readily grants.

That himself was unrighteous, because the Lord had dealt so with him, he flatly denies.

He confesses that he needeth the free grace and mercy of God to justify him, but withall asserts that he was perfect enough to justify himself against all the challenges of men.

In these acknowledgments of his sinfulness and denials of insincerity, in these humblings of himself before God, and acquitting of himself before men, in these implorings of mercy from the Lord, and complaining of the unkindness of his brethren, the strength of Job’s answer consists, and it may be thus summed up.

'Tis true, that through the extremity of his pain, the anguish of his spirit, and the provocation of his friends, some unwary speeches slipt from him, for which Elihu reproved him, and of which he repented, all which a gracious God freely pardoned.

Thus I have endeavoured to give a brief account of the argumentative part of this book, and to represent how far in this great controversy the answerer and his objectors agree in judgment, and where they part.

April 28th, 1645.                Joseph Caryl.
CHAPTER IV.

"Verse 1. 'Then Eliphaz, the Temanite, answered, and said

"Verse 2. 'If we assay to commune with thee, wilt thou be grieved? assay or try—commune. It notes serious speaking, wilt thou be grieved? The word signifies to be extremely grieved, even unto rage or fainting. He seems to hint at Job's distempered speeches, wilt thou fall into such a passion again? but however thou take it.

"Who can withhold himself from speaking in such a case as this?

"From this preamble, observe. 1. That reproof is a wholesome, yet a bitter pill, it needs to be wrapt up in gold and sugar, that, pleasing both eye and palate, it may be taken down the better.

"2d, 'That it is no easy thing to bear reproof.' To take a reproof well is as high a point of spiritual wisdom as to give it in a proper manner.

"3d, 'That in some cases it is a duty to reprove however it may be taken.' When we see God dishonoured, and the soul of our brother in danger, we must speak. In such cases we must adventure to save men by fear, plucking them out of the fire. But what is it that he could not forbear? It is, that he supposed that Job acted opposite to his own principles.

"Verse 3. 'Behold thou hast instructed many.' The Hebrew signifies both to correct and teach, because they are usually joined, it
is thou hast taught and directed, and (where need was) corrected many.

"And thou hast strengthened the weak hands." That is those whose hands are weak, by reason of manifold trials, thou hast spoken words to them which have been as sinews to their hands, and strength to their joints, Heb. xii. 12. Wherefore lift up the hands that hang down.

"Verse 4. 'Thy words have upheld him that was falling, and thou hast strengthened the feeble knees.'

"Some afflictions not only make us shake and totter, but either from their nature, number, or duration, are like to overwhelm us.

"Weak, or hanging down hands, may denote a kind of despair of relief from evils felt, and feeble knees may arise from expected evil.

"Job stood ready to uphold such as was ready to fall. Timely assistance and advice may prevent a fall, and strengthen for future trials.

"Observe 1st, That to instruct and comfort others, is not only a man's duty but his praise.

"Job taught many, though he had no direct calling to it. Now, what shall we think of those who neglect to instruct after they have solemnly engaged to be teachers?

"Observe 2d, That charity, especially spiritual charity, is very liberal, and open hearted charity to the soul, is the soul of charity. When words are wisely dispensed, and accompanied with the divine blessing, what can they not do?
"All that had witnessed Job's instructions, as well as Job himself, are called upon by Eliphaz, to observe the great change, behold thou hast instructed many.

Verse 5. 'But now it is come upon thee.' That is, thou art visited with afflictions, and thou faintest. The word signifies an extraordinary fainting, as when a man is so wearied and spent that he knows not what he doth. 'It toucheth thee and thou art troubled.' That is a vehement trouble that fills with amazement.

Observe 1. To commend a man with a But is a wound instead of a commendation.

Observe 2. It is far easier to give instructions to others in trouble than to exemplify them in our own conduct.

It is as if Eliphaz had said to Job, 'Art thou not ashamed to cry out of thy afflictions, after thou hast told others to be quiet and cheerful under theirs?'

The wisdom and patience which is seen in bearing afflictions is far better than that which is heard in exhorting others. The apostle, Romans ii. 19. speaks of it as a matter of shame and blushing, that their actions run so cross to their professions.

Thus we have opened the minor propositions of the first argument, couched in the third and fourth verses, 'thou hast instructed many;' &c. 'yet when trouble comes upon thee, thou faintest and art troubled.' He then draws the conclusion, and from hence infers Job a hypocrite, as
"Verse 6. 'Is not this thy fear, thy confidence, thy hope, and the uprightness of thy ways?"

"The vulgate reads it, 'where is thy fear, &c.' 'what is become of these graces in this thy day of trouble?'

"Mr. Broughton reads, is not thy fear thy confidence, and the uprightness of thy ways thy hope? or, is not thy religion thy hope? and thy right ways thy confidence? didst thou not think that they would have been thy protection? but thou art deceived.

"Eliphaz seems to call Job to make a clearer proof of his religion, and tells him, thou art surely but an hypocrite, for if thy fear were true, it would have preserved thee from these impatient complainings.

"The fear of the Lord is to depart from evil. Therefore, if thou hadst any genuine fear of God indeed, thou wouldest never have cursed thy day.

"The major proposition is plain in verse seventh, for the question, who ever perished, being innocent, &c. is to be resolved into this negative, no innocent person ever perished, &c. And Eliphaz conceives this to be so clear a truth that he challenges Job to give one instance to the contrary: He appeals to experience.

"Verse 7. 'Remember, I pray thee, who ever perished, being innocent? or where were the righteous cut off?'

"Some render, who ever saw the righteous
plucked up by the roots, so as there should be no remembrance nor remainder of them?

"The word for innocent signifies empty. Now a converted person is emptied of all sin, comparatively, not absolutely.

"The righteous who are justified and sanctified in the name of the Lord Jesus cannot be cut off eternally, but in regard of temporal calamities they are on a level with others.

"From Job's substance being destroyed, his children slain, his body diseased, and his mind distempered, Eliphaz not only looked on him as irrecoverably lost, but seems to conclude that Job had good reason to suspect himself a hypocrite on account of his present condition, and also seems to defy him to produce one good man ever being in such a deplorable situation. From Eliphaz sending Job to former experience—Note, That it is our duty, and it may be useful to record the dispensations of providence to both good and bad, and whether personal or public. The dealings of God may appear contrary to his word, but they can never be really so, for his works are an infallible commentary upon his word, and carefully to study them in their connection with each other, would be a good means of obtaining a profitable knowledge of both.

"Eliphaz having called upon Job to examine his memory, the storehouse of the soul, proceeds to produce his own experience.

"Verse 8. 'Even as I have seen, they that plough iniquity and sow wickedness, reap the same.'
"He had carefully observed and duly considered what had occurred.

"Those who plough or work iniquity, are such as sin industriously, and who have the art, and spare no pains to do wickedly. After ploughing comes sowing, and then reaping. It is mystical husbandry. Sowing is spoken of as giving to the poor, 2. Cor. ix. 6. To preaching the word, Luke, viii. 5. To repenting tears, Ps. cxxvi. 5, and to any action, good or bad, Gal. vi. 8. Sin goes on gradually; a ploughing, a sowing, and reaping.

"Reap the same, that is in the issue and consequences of it. If God spared not his own Son, he cannot spare impenitent sinners, who will not accept of Christ. Observe 1st, 'That every sin persisted in shall have a certain sorrowful reward. They that go forth vainly rejoicing in bearing that poisonous seed, shall doubtless come again, and bring their sheaves of sorrow with them. Observe 2d, That the punishment may come long after the commission of sin. The sound of punishment is sometimes at the very heels of sin, but when it comes slowest it often treads hearest.

"The punishment of sin shall be the same, not only in degree, but in likeness; and it often bears the image and superscription of sin upon it, so that we may read its name upon the affliction. Many, since Adonibezek, have had reason to confess, 'As I have done, so God hath requested me.' Eliphaz seems to have had store of instances, and having stated his general observations, That he had often seen the
wicked perish, proceeds to illustrate it by an elegant description of the manner how they are cut off.

"Verse 9. 'By the blast of God they perish, and by the breath of his nostrils are they consumed.'

"They who sow iniquity are often punished by reaping disappointments, which is the blasting of their hopes. They are not only a little withered, but they are utterly consumed, root and branch; some think this is a hint at the manner of the death of Job's children. The septuagint is, by the command of God they perish. It is all one with God to command and accomplish. He can, and sometimes does destroy his enemies, as easily as a man can breathe. Hag. i. 9. 'I did blow upon it.' It comes suddenly, invisibly, and irresistibly. 'Who can stand before his anger, yea, who knoweth the power of his wrath, or blast?' This Eliphaz goes on to show.

"Verse 10. 'The roaring of the lion, and the voice of the fierce lion, and the teeth of the young lions are broken.'

"Verse 11. 'The old lion perished for lack of prey, and the stout lions whelps are scattered abroad.'

The Hebrew has five several names for lions, and they are all here used, to set forth the terrible tearing power, fierceness, and cruelty of proud oppressors.

"It is certain that the wicked in general, and tyrants in particular, expose themselves to the just vengeance of God; and he often scat-
ters and destroys them in this world; yet we find some of them live long and die quietly. They spend all their days in devouring others, and yet God suspends his judgments against some, who, for cruelty, &c. are spoken of, Nahum ii. 11, 12, as lions.

"Perhaps Eliphaz intended in this to reflect upon Job, as if the Lord had measured to him the same measure he had given others.

"The remainder of the chapter contains the third argument, by which Eliphaz labours to convince and reprove Job.

"Invented visions are intended to gain credit to the inventions of man. But this was a true vision, for it was for the confirmation of a truth contained in verse 17, and the matter of the argument in it may be formed thus: That man behaves rashly and sinfully, who would seem more just and pure than his maker. But thou, Job, speakest as if thou were more just than God, therefore thou art acting very sinfully. He confirms this by an argument taken from divine authority from verse 12 to 16, and another from reason is grounded on the common logical rule of arguing from the greater to the less, verses 18, 21.

"Verse 12. 'Now a thing was secretly brought to me, and mine ear received a little thereof; (secretly brought) signifies to do a thing by stealth, so thing or word was brought in suddenly and silently, ' and my narrow ear could drink in but some drops of that ocean that was poured upon me.'
"The Hebrew word for doctrine signifies also catching, receiving, and from the same root comes a word for palate of the mouth, which hints that heavenly doctrine pleases the taste of a heavenly mind; yet in the present state it is only a little they can take in of the truths of God. John xvi. 12. 'I have yet many things to say unto you, but ye cannot bear them now.' Truth is just the mind of God, and that is infinite, and so we cannot comprehend it. Natural men are like sieves, so that every drop of truth they hear runs out; and how can they hold forth the word in a pure conversation, who have not received it into a pure conscience?

"Verse 13. 'In thoughts from the visions of the night, when deep sleep falleth on men.'

"Thoughts in Hebrew signifies the boughs of a tree, and they are called boughs, because they spring from the mind and bear fruit, they are the first-born, the blossoms of the soul, and therefore the word is elegantly translated thought.

"Prophets were called Seers, because in visions they had either an ocular, or an intellectual sight of the mind of God.

"When a man is fatigued with labour and travel, sleep falls upon him in such a manner that he cannot withstand it. But God by his almighty power makes a revelation of his will, and causes it to take effect not only when men are in a deep natural sleep, but even when they are under the power of spiritual death. Many not only mind earthly things all the day, but
when they awake in the night they are still filled with earthly cares, and love to the world keeps them awake. Happy they to whom God communicates himself in a vision of love, mercy and grace, and thereby enables them to comply with David’s exhortation—‘Commune with your own heart upon your bed, and be still,’ such may expect fresh discoveries of the love of God, and they will not complain of want of sleep upon their beds. We should have more from God if we thought more of him; ‘God sends convictions in the night,’ chapter xxxiii. 14, to 16.

"Verse 14. ‘Fear came upon me, and trembling, which made all my bones to shake.’

"This seems to be a preparation for this divine vision, he was deeply afflicted with it. Fear is caused by the apprehension of some evil. We should serve God in fear, and join trembling with our mirth.

"Verse 15. ‘Then a spirit passed before my face, the hair of my flesh stood up.’

"That God, who often makes angels ministers of his providence, sent this one to reveal his word. This spirit passed before him perhaps as swiftly as a ship moveth with a gale of wind, and produced another effect of fear and consternation, which discovers a conscience of guilt at seeing a spirit pass. From which, learn 1st, That a manifestation from heaven is terrible to man ever since sin entered.

"2d, That God usually humbles, and lays low before he exalts with discoveries of himself and of his truth."
"3d. To become as babes before God, is the best means of improving his revelations to the increase of true wisdom. Those who are high in their own conceits, give no evidence of having attained true saving knowledge.

"Verse 16. ' It stood still, but I could not discern the form thereof; an image was before mine eyes; there was silence, and I heard a voice, saying.

"He could not form an exact idea of it in his own mind, so he could not describe it. His conscience was to be awakened and informed, but not to gratify curiosity, before the message was delivered there was profound silence. When men are to speak for God, or to pray to him, it becomes them to make a solemn pause before they proceed. It is certainly very improper for a creature to appear in the presence of his Creator, with as little forethought or concern, as a horse rusheth into a battle. After this solemn silence he proceeds to say he heard a voice which spake distinctly.

"Verse 17. 'Shall mortal man be more just than God; shall a man be more pure than his Maker?'

"No. It is impossible. Shall sinful mortals compare with the immortal, the invisible God? But suppose man as strong, wise, holy, and excellent, as at his creation, what is he when compared with his infinitely holy and righteous Creator? He is base, weak, foolish, and filthy. The words are a positive and flat denial of all comparison between God and man.
Observe, 1st, That the best men compared with God are evil, and the holiest are impure.
2d, That to complain of God's dealings with us, is to make ourselves more just and pure than God; we are allowed to make our requests known to him, but not to fret against him.
3d, That God in himself is most just and pure, and neither does, nor can do wrong to any creature. Justice and purity are not qualities in God, they are his very nature; it is impossible for God to be unjust.
Lucifer says, Isa. xiv. 'I will be like the Most High,' and it is said of the man of sin, 'That he shall exalt himself above all that is called God.' But however odious these are, the heart of man goes beyond them.
Some think Eliphaz infers, if there was not some great crime for which God thus punishes, then man would be more just than God, for no man would punish his servant without some just cause. Others think it is only a reproof to Job for his unreasonable speeches.
Verse 18. 'Behold, he put no trust in his servants; and his angels he charged with folly.' Eliphaz having laid the dignity of man in the dust by these humbling questions in the former verse. Behold, is an affirmation that there is no comparison between God and angels. He did not credit or confide in these servants, and all the wisdom or stability they have is from the divine bounty, and they may be charged with folly comparatively.
"Angels are servants, as they are messengers, guardians, who comfort and support the saints in all their distress, and carry their souls to heaven at death, and they will gather the elect together at the last day; and it is more honourable to serve God, than to rule the world.

"Since God does not trust the angels, who excel in strength and wisdom, let us learn to trust in God alone, renouncing all dependence on the wisest and best of men. And how absurd and foolish must it be to court or confide in an arm of flesh, after the imperfection of angels is laid before us! Eliphaz prosecutes his argument. If angels, the chiefest and choicest of creatures, ought not to be trusted, what is man?

"Verse 19. 'How much less in them that dwell in houses of clay, whose foundation is in the dust, which are crushed before the moth?'

"This, and the two following verses, describe man as a material mortal substance, and points out the shortness of life, the imperceptible nature of death, and its lasting consequences; yet how stupid! he dies, no man regarding it. But man is more than dust and clay. But what then? doth not their excellency go away, and where is he? Even their wisdom decays while they live, and their learning cannot prevent death.

"Now, if angels cannot approve themselves in God's sight, how much less can man, whose noble and spiritual substance dwells and acts in a body composed of corruptible clay? Yet
it is called a house, because the soul lodges in it, and it is a comely fabric, so compact together, that the most curious buildings in the world are but rude heaps compared to it. Thus the infinite wisdom and power of God is displayed and magnified. But however beautiful a man may appear, he is at his best estate but vanity, the foundation is in the dust. It is foolish to bestow much pains and cost to trim the body, to the neglect of the precious soul. Man is crushed as it were with a moth. Death seizes upon, and consumes us secretly and silently, Isa. 1. 9. They are crushed as a moth, Ps. xxxix.

"Verse 20. 'They are destroyed from morning to evening; they perish for ever without any regarding it.'

"That is, they are liable to destruction every moment. They perish. The word is often used for the dissolution of soul and body; for ever, that is, as long as this world lasts. It notes the utmost term of time, not (that which is without term) eternity. Death puts an end to the business of this world, and to both temporal and spiritual enjoyments, Isa. xxxviii. 18.

"They perish for ever without any regarding, or without any laying it to heart. Solomon says, 'the living will lay it to heart.' He speaks probably, that if any man will at any time lay death to heart, then surely he will, when he goes to the house of mourning. We make a stop at one that lies gasping and dying, but let a cloth be thrown over him and put into the grave, then we go to our business,
buying and selling, yea to coveting and sinning, as if the last man were now buried. Thus men perish for ever without any regarding. Thoughts of death have life in them, when spiritualized and laid to heart.

"Verse 21. 'Doth not their excellency which is in them go away? they die even without wisdom.'

"Not only the house of clay, but the excellency of beauty, wit, riches, honour, &c.; all the goodliness of it fades away; the adorning and polishing goes away. Psa. xlix. 16. 'His glory shall not descend after him.' One of the ancients standing by Caesar's tomb, wept and cried out, 'Where is now the beauty of Caesar? What is become of his magnificence? Where are the armies now? Where are now the honours, triumphs, and trophies of Caesar? All is gone; all is departed; his excellency is gone away.'

"Nothing will stay and go with us, when death comes, but the excellency of the knowledge of Christ.

"'They die even without wisdom,' that is, they prepare not wisely for death, they die before they understand what it is to live, or why they live. He that dies unprepared, dies foolishly. To live meditating on, and preparing for death is wisdom. But it is such a wisdom as is above man; therefore David, Psa. xxxix. 4, prays, 'Lord make me to know mine end, &c. None can teach us this lesson but God himself; for we may preach and you hear about death, &c. and yet remain ignorant of numbering our days aright. Psa. xc. 12. 'So teach
us to number our days,' &c. as if Moses had said, I have been numbering my days, and I can tell no farther than three or four score; yet I cannot apply my heart unto wisdom. To number our days so as to apply our hearts unto wisdom, is a special part of wisdom."

CHAPTER V.

"From verses 1—5, contains the 4th argument.

"He compares and finds Job very unlike the saints. Scarce any of them ever suffered such things as thou hast done. But none of them, under their afflictions, ever behaved as thou dost; and when compared to the wicked he finds him like to them. Thou repinest and vexest thyself after the manner of foolish and silly wicked ones.

"He would next prove Job an hypocrite, from his sufferings being similar to the judgments which God pours upon the wicked.

"Verse 1. 'Call now, if there be any that will answer thee; and to which of the saints wilt thou turn?'

"God hath given us examples to walk by. He saith, 'Be ye holy, for I am holy,' and Christ is not only the principle of holiness, but also the pattern of holiness. 1 Pet. ii. 21, 'Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example;' and Matt. ii. 29, 'Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me.' It is a yoke of affliction as well as of instruction. He calls it
his yoke, not only because he appoints it for his people, but because, as a servant, he bore that yoke himself. It is not only, take my yoke upon you for the matter, but learn of me the manner how to bear it. Besides these unerring examples, the saints are held up to our imitation. Take, my brethren, the prophets for an example of suffering affliction and of patience. It was certainly a good advice to Job, to look to, and compare himself with, the saints. From which of them have you learned to be proud, or earthly-minded, or impatient under the hand of God? That man hath reason to suspect he hath done evil, who does what a good man never did, or ever repented having done it. Thus Eliphaz ranks Job with the wicked, because (he thought) he could not find any of the saints like himself, and (in his opinion) he might see himself very like the wicked.

"Verse 2. 'For wrath killeth the foolish man, and envy slayeth the silly one.'

"The word fool, signifies one who is either master but of little knowledge, or that which he has masters him. Eliphaz seems thus to number Job with fools, because he conceived him rash and intemperate, having no government of himself.

"He speaks as if Job's complaints arose from these two impure and filthy springs, wrath and envy. As if he had said, Thou art wroth at thine own poverty, sickness, and sores, and envious at the plenty, health, and ease of others. And may not folly and simpli-
city challenge that man for theirs, whose spirit thus resents his own evils or his neighbour's good?

"Every wicked man is a foolish and a silly man. Sin is pure folly. The wisdom of the wicked is in their own conceit, and there is more hope of a fool than of such, that is, of those who are sensible of their own failings, and are willing to become fools that they may be wise.

"To have an heart to bless God for bestowing blessings upon others, is itself a great blessing. Whereas an envious man stands always in his own light, and cannot rejoice in his own mercies for grieving at the good of others. Eliphaz had said, chap. iv. 8, 'I have seen,' &c. and now he applies to Job, both in his rise and fall, another part of his own experience, which seems to answer an objection that might be made against what he said he had seen, viz. Many wicked men plough iniquity enough, and sow wickedness abundantly, and yet they reap a full harvest of riches, &c. I grant it, saith Eliphaz, but this does not weaken my former assertion, for

"Verse 3. 'I have seen the foolish taking root: but suddenly I cursed his habitation.'

"He flourishes and takes root, but he withers and is quickly pulled up. The worst of men may enjoy the best of outward comforts, and in their greatest fulness and abundance. But outward things are to us as we are. To a good man they are good, and to a fool they are not good, because he is not good himself.
Observe, The difference of spiritual good things, though they find us not good, the possession of them will make us good; they have a transforming influence: but wordly good things have injured many a good man. The enjoyment of outward good things is no evidence of being good.

"And suddenly I cursed his habitation," that is, I have smitten his habitation quite through with a curse. The curses in the Psalms are often predictions from the Spirit of God, not maledictions from David; these curses are prophecies, not prayers; they foresee and foretell evils, but they desire them not.

"While thousands admire and envy wicked great ones, and think none happy but such as they are, a godly man looks through all their outward glory, and pities and mourns over them as miserable creatures.*

"Verse 4. 'His children are (or were) far from safety.' That is, they are in extreme danger and peril; they walk in the regions of trouble continually.

"They are crushed in the gate,' which intimates the publicity of their destruction, and that all business shall go against them.

"'Neither is there any to deliver them.' None shall be found either able or willing to rescue them from oppressors, or protect them from danger.†

* The outward estate may flourish, but the soul cannot prosper that taketh root in the earth.—Henry.

† They who believe the word of God can see a curse in the house of the wicked, Prov. iii. 33, though it be never so finely or firmly built.—Henry.
"Verse 5. 'Whose harvest the hungry eateth up.' That is, all he hath gotten by right or wrong; by industry or by deceit; by secret practices or open violence; he shall not reap what he sowed; the labour shall be his, and the benefit shall be reaped by others. The hungry shall eat up his harvest.

"The man who fraudulently takes from others, and hoards up for himself and children, shall be deprived of it by others.

"'He taketh it even out of the thorns.' When a man seeks riches with much care and anxiety of mind, it may be said he gets them out of the thorns. Or rather, when a hungry man comes with a commission from God to eat the harvest of the foolish, he will press through thorns to obtain them, that is, notwithstanding all the care of the worldly wise man to protect them.

"A godly man's care is to maintain communion with Christ so as to grow in grace; and yet their spiritual harvest would be ruined, and their prayers and cares prove unavailing, if Christ did not keep it for them. His care of his people's spiritual welfare is such a thorn hedge as the devil cannot break through. We are kept by the power of God as with a garrison, 1 Pet. i. 5.

"'And the robber swalloweth up their substance.' Some translate, The thirsty shall drink or swallow up their wealth. So there is both the hungry and thirsty to consume their substance.

"To show a man his condition by repres
senting another, and to seem relating the history of our foreign observations only when we mean the person to whom we speak, is a forcible way of giving instruction and admonition.

"Thus Eliphaz, in the fate of the foolish man, would represent to Job the desolation brought upon himself by these troops of hungry and thirsty robbers, who swallowed all his substance at one morsel, and supped it up at one draught.

"Eliphaz, having thus reproved and tried to convince Job, now exhorts him. First, from verse 6—16 inclusive. The sum of which is, That he would earnestly beseech him to beg pardon, seek unto, and commit himself and his cause unto God. The second branch of the exhortation is from verse 17 to end, and the scope is, That Job would humble himself, and patiently submit unto and under the correcting hand of God, and quietly wait his time of deliverance.

"He produces two arguments to enforce his exhortation, the matter of which is contained in verse 8. The first is taken either from the efficient or meritorious cause of his afflictions in verse 6, 7.

"The 2d argument is contained in verse 9 to 12, and is founded on the power, wisdom, and goodness of God; as if he had said, Who would not seek unto a God who is infinitely able to deliver? Who would not commit his cause unto him who is gracious and ready to deliver, and who is infinite in wisdom to find out ways and means of deliverance, even when,
to the eye of sense and reason, our condition seems altogether desperate?

"Verse 6. 'Although affliction cometh not forth of the dust, neither doth trouble spring out of the ground.'

"The word for affliction signifies also iniquity; the soil where it grows is man's heart; the effect is mentioned, affliction. The cause iniquity is supposed, the mother and the daughter are called by the same name.

"Trouble properly signifies toilsome labour as a fruit of sin. Thy troubles are not like these herbs that grow spontaneously out of the earth. There is some hand or other that both plants and waters them. Man weaves a spider's web out of his own bowels, and then he is entangled in the same web. The troubles which seize upon him are twisted with his own fingers. As if Eliphaz had said, the sin wherein thou wast born hath given conception to all the sorrows of thy life; wherefore, then, dost thou complain of the day wherein thou wast born?

"Verse 7. 'Yet man is born unto trouble, as the sparks fly upward.'

"As the sparks have a principle in themselves by which they ascend, so it is a natural course for man, as soon as he is born, to sin and work his own sorrow. He needs no tutor; sinning and sorrowing are not his art but his nature. Sorrow and sin are the portion, and all the portion, that man hath by nature, and these we are possessed of as soon as born; we need not wait the death of our parents for the
inheritance, they divide it all to every child, and yet keep it all to themselves.

"Verse 8. 'I would seek unto God, and unto God would I commit my cause.'

"This verse is an application of the doctrine contained in the two former verses. Heb. Unto God I would put my word or turn my speech. The committing of our cause to God, supposes first a resignation of ourselves unto him. I will lay myself down at his feet, and tell him my case, then let him do with me as seemeth good in his eyes. Unto God, the great and impartial judge of heaven and earth, I refer myself to his arbitration.

"From Eliphaz reproving and then exhorting Job, learn, That, as it is our duty to reprove, so we ought to advise and exhort our brother with meekness.

"Under affliction we should seek unto God, to know the cause; to obtain strength and patience to bear them; for mitigation under, or deliverance from them; but especially, that we may have the blessing of God with them. We have as much need of his blessing with our daily rod as with daily bread.

"Sorrows as well as sins are too heavy for us. Let us, therefore, cast our burden on, and commit our cause to God, which is at once our duty and safety. When in great distress, David committed himself and his cause to God very pleasantly, 2 Sam. xxv. 25, 26. He that suffers in a good cause, and hath a good conscience, may commit all his causes to God, and in the mercy of the Most High he shall not
miscarry. But God will not accept the trust of a bad cause.

"Verse 9. 'Which doeth great things, and unsearchable marvellous things without number.'

"From this general assertion, Eliphaz, in a variety of particulars, shows, that God is infinite in wisdom, power, and goodness; and, therefore, we should seek unto God; and this contains the second argument to support his exhortation. He speaks of his power, 1st, In natural things, verse 10. 2d, In civil things,—in destroying the plots of the wicked, verse 12, 13, 14; in protecting the poor, verse 15; and in the end aimed at in these mighty works, verse 11; and by the future benefit of them, verse 16, is the goodness of God shown forth.

"In this description of the great and marvellous works of God, Eliphaz intends, 1st, To prove what he had said, verse 6. 2dly, To humble Job and silence his inquiries. 3dly, To exhibit God as able to deliver him, seeing he had done such wonders, and thereby to comfort him.

"Which doeth, notes not only a perfect but a continued act. Let us manifest our zeal for, and love unto, the Lord, by doing great things for him, as well as by expecting great things from him.

"The causes and end of many of God's works are unsearchable; they are hid from us. We need not search to satisfy a vain curiosity; but we may search, with a view to honour, adore,
and trust in God, and to reverence and submit to all his dispensations.

"Things are marvellous whose cause cannot be found. And God has done so many marvellous things, that it may well be said they are without number. We at once provoke and dishonour the Lord, by imagining that he is not able to supply our need. Men soon weary of those that come often for favours. But our Lord says, 'Hitherto have ye asked nothing.'

"Christ speaks with admiration: 'O woman! great is thy faith.' O that the people of this nation would make him say, O great is thy love, thy faith, repentance, and zeal! How glorious is thy reformation!

"His pardons also are without number. He multiplies to pardon, Isa. lv. The argument of Moses is truly admirable; it is not, as is usual with men, 'Lord, this is the first fault;' but it is, 'Pardon, I beseech thee, the iniquity of this people, as thou hast forgiven them from Egypt until now.' As if he had said, 'Lord, because thou hast pardoned them so often, therefore, I beseech thee, pardon them now.' It is a most wicked argument to sin because God will pardon often. But when we have sinned, it is a holy argument to move God to pardon again, because he has done it often before. Let us do great things for God, and good things for one another, without number.

"Verse 10. 'Who giveth rain upon the earth, and sendeth waters upon the fields.'

"Every shower of rain drops down this truth, That God doth great things. By the
rain, we are to understand all those supports of natural life which are fruits of rain. It is a great, wonderful, and unsearchable work of God to send rain. The fullest clouds distil no more than the rock in the wilderness, till the Lord speak to them, Jer. x. 13. It rains by appointment, Amos iv. 8. We ought to observe and own a special hand in giving it. *Can the heavens give rain?* Let this check our natural atheism, in looking only to the motion of the winds, or changes of the moon, for rain.

"And since we must depend on God for natural blessings, how much more for spiritual? if for the rain of the clouds, how much more for the influences of the Spirit to accompany and make effectual the word on the heart.

"Verse 11. 'To set up on high those that be low; that those who mourn may be exalted to safety.'

"This is a hint to Job, That if he would seek unto, and commit his cause unto God, though he was now very low, yet he might soon be exalted to joy and safety. For the power, wisdom, and goodness of God are usually displayed in raising up the meek.

"The low are either those that are low in their own eyes, or are made low by others. Grace is the cause of the former, and oppression of the latter. The former are humble, the latter are humbled. The Lord sets both these on high.

"The Hebrew word for exalted implies safety; but it is added, to show that it is a full and perfect safety to which God exalts his
mourners and oppressed servants, they that are low and mourning are nearest to exaltation and safety. God can and will raise his people beyond the reach of all enemies. But the wicked are also sometimes exalted. God exalts them to a high place though they know it not. But does he exalt them to a safe place? No. Psa. lxxxiii, 'Thou hast set them in slippery places.' Though the people of God have many cruel and subtile enemies, yet they shall be exalted to safety.

"For, Verse 12. 'He disappointeth the devices of the crafty;' or he defeateth the purposes of the subtile. The crafty lay fine plots and projects, but the Lord breaks them; then they are defeated and disappointed.

"'So their hands cannot perform their enterprise.' Every business requires invention and action; their crafty heads were at work before, now their hands are employed, what they devise craftily, they would act industriously; but they cannot accomplish it. It is a great and wonderful work of God to disappoint the devices, and stop the enterprise of crafty men. Craft prevails no farther and no longer on earth, than serves to accomplish the counsels of heaven, and fulfil what infinite wisdom hath devised; therefore when you see any devices of the crafty thrive, know that God is serving himself by them, and that they are but acting what his hand and counsel hath determined before to be done, Acts iv. 28. No sinful device of man ever did or ever shall prevail, beyond a contribution to the just and holy pur-
pose of God. All their successes are disappointments, who intentionally oppose, though they really accomplish, the good pleasure and purpose of God. Thus we see their devices defeated; and now we shall see them entangled in their devices, and ruined in their enterprise; for,

"Verse 13. 'He taketh the wise in their own craftiness.' The Hebrew imports a taking by force, and also by skill or stratagem. He binds them as with a chain; for the wisdom of this world is foolishness with God: for it is written, He taketh, &c. 1 Cor. iii. 19.

"Their craftiness is the very means and instrument by which God apprehends them. No wisdom or craft of man, can stand before the wisdom and power of God. He turneth the counsels of wicked men against themselves.

"Not only are their devices disappointed: 'But the counsel of the froward is carried headlong.' The original word signifies to hasten, and thence to be precipitate, rash, or foolish in counsel.

"They who will not take time to consult about what they do, may have time enough to repent of what they have done: and they who will not take the time and trouble to do what, upon deliberate investigation, they found proper to be done, lose all the time they took for such consultation.

"There is a farther aggravation of the misery of crafty froward counsellors.

Verse 14. 'They meet with darkness in the day-time, and grope in the noon-day as in the night.'
"They are puzzled to find out and discover those things, which are as clear as the light; or the darkness of trouble falls on them in the day of their prosperity.

"To grope is the description of a blind man. His hand is instead of an eye to direct his way. It is a sore judgment not to see when there is light, when abused light is punished with want of sight, or when light is sent, and eyes taken away, Isa. vi. 9, 10. Mysteries are plain when the Lord opens, and the plainest things are mysteries when he shuts, the eyes of our understandings.

"Thus Eliphaz hath set forth the power and justice of God against crafty counsellors; now he shows the opposite effect of his power and goodness.

"Verse 15. 'But he saveth the poor from the sword, from their mouth, and from the hand of the mighty.'

"These are God's poor, the wicked poor are no more under God's protection than wicked oppressors. The Hebrew for poor is from a root signifying desire, and poverty of spirit is pronounced blessed, because the poor in spirit are full of desires after spiritual riches. Both the civil poor man, and the spiritual poor soul, would fain be enriched; therefore, for the oppression of the poor and the cry of the needy, the Lord arises, and he saves his poor from the slaying sword, the slandering tongue, the oppressing hand; to be saved from all these destructions is complete salvation. Why is it said God saves the poor, when he will save all
who fear him, high and low, rich and poor? because the poor are most easily oppressed, and are usually most oppressed.

"Thus Eliphaz hath shown the great, marvellous, and unsearchable works of God. 1st, To wicked crafty oppressors; 2d, To poor helpless innocents. He shuts up this narration, showing the effect on the poor, namely, hope; and, on the wicked, shame and confusion of face.

"Verse 16. 'So the poor hath hope, and iniquity stoppeth her mouth.'

"This Hebrew word for poor, signifies empty of comforts, drawn dry. In allusion to ponds or rivers that surround forts or cities for defence, being drawn dry, Isa. xix. 6, and this explains Isa. xxxiii. 21; that the Lord will be a perpetual defence.

"So the poor hath hope. The wonders which God doth is a ground of hope, and God's poor know that it is no vain thing to hope in God for good, even when health, wealth, and friends leave them; Christ their hope will never leave them, and therefore they may live upon him for every promised blessing. Eliphaz doth not say, now they have liberty, prosperity, &c. but so they have hope, which is a better possession than all the great and good things of this world.

"Iniquity; for men of iniquity stop their own mouths; that is, the wicked, seeing these wonderful works of God, have not a word to say, nor a counsel to give, against the godly; or their mouths are stopped from shame, and they
stand speechless at the marvellous works of God, Isa. lii. 15, Psa. cvii. 42.

"The saints ought to live so holyly, as to put to silence the ignorance of foolish men.

"The wicked by unrighteous acts have stopped other men's mouths; so God, by terrible things in righteousness, will stop their mouths.

Verse 17. 'Behold, happy is the man whom God correcteth.' This calls for attention and admiration. Truly it is a strange sight; an afflicted man a happy man, a bush burning and yet bearing fruit, the taste of which makes a heaven on earth. Happiness is the enjoyment of good equal to all our desires; among all the notions and devices of happiness, no natural man would ever think of this in the text; it is a paradox.

"Some read, behold the blessedness of that man whom God corrects. Do not think that every afflicted man is happy; many are at once corrected and miserable. Afflictions in themselves are grievous; and if God did not correct our corrections, they would prove poison instead of medicine. It is not correction, but the presence and blessing of God in it and with it, which gives happiness.

"When a man is in no danger of losing his soul nor his Saviour, he cannot be unhappy in the worst condition, much less under the correcting hand of his heavenly Father.

"The word correct, signifies to reprove, convince or argue a man out of any error, by the force of reason or divine authority. The infer-
ence is, 'There fore despise not thou the chas-
tening of the Almighty.'

"Despise, signifies to reject or cast off a
ting with loathing; 2d, as useless and un-
profitable, 3d, as slighting it as unworthy of
notice. As a good man will not despise the
least comfort, so he will take notice of the least
cross.

"Despise not, &c. that is, highly to esteem
the chastening of the Lord. We must put af-
flictions among our comforts, and rank them
with our blessings.

"Chastening. The original verb signifies
to instruct. God mixes a rod with his word,
and chastening with teaching; and therefore
it is sometimes used for teaching, and some-
times for chastening.

"Chastening properly belongs to children,
and hath a double aspect; 1st, upon our pri-
vilege and relation to God as our Father; 2d,
it views us as foolish unruly children, and there-
fore we go almost all our days with a rod at
our backs. And seeing he is the Almighty
possessed of power to accomplish all his purpo-
ses, all-sufficient to support under every trou-
ble, the all-nourishing God to comfort and che-
rish his children; therefore they must not de-
spise his chastenings."

* Do not despise, that is, be not averse to it, do not
think ill of it, do not overlook and disregard it: but
take notice of it, reverence it as the voice of God.
Correction is an evidence of sinship, and a mean of
sanctification.
"Verse 18. 'For he maketh sore and bindeth up; he woundeth, and his hands make whole.'

"Here is God as a judge wounding, and as an all-sufficient friend binding up; as if the very act by which God smites, had an influence upon the healing, and a tendency to restore his afflicted ones.

"This verse shows why we should not despise the chastening of the Almighty. If you will not allow that a man is happy when he is sore, will you not allow that he is happy when bound up by such an hand? If you will not grant that a man is happy when wounded, you cannot deny that he is happy when thus healed. It is true of God, above all others, that one and the same hand smites and cures.

"Observe, 1st, That when God wounds, it is preparatory to his healing his people.

"2d, That however deep wounds God inflicts on his own servants, he never makes a wound too deep for his own cure; yea, he can heal the deepest wound which the malice and power of man can make.

"Eliphaz speaks this in general; but he now addresses Job in particular; and, in prosecuting his argument, gives a promise of deliverance.

"Verse 19. 'He shall deliver thee in six troubles, yea in seven there shall no evil touch thee.'

"To deliver, notes the snatching of a man out of the hand of an enemy, out of the mouth of danger, out of every strait, which is the meaning of the word trouble here.
"In seven there shall no evil touch thee. The evil of sin shall not pollute thee; thy trouble shall purge, not defile thee; and he shall preserve thee from the evil of punishment. To be kept from the evil of trouble, is a deliverance from trouble, even while we endure it. It is as if Eliphaz had said, I will descend to particulars, and reckon up the greatest outward evils that befall the sons of men or the children of God, and I affirm that the Lord will deliver thee. *

"Verse 20. 'In famine he shall redeem thee from death, and in war from the power of the sword.'

"This may not only refer to a deliverance from famine, by a supply of provisions, but a rejoicing in God in the absence of earthly supplies; like Hab. iii. 17, who triumphs in God while he supposes the world starving; he sees and enjoys all things in God, though the world should afford nothing. That person is well fed and taught, who can rejoice while starving.

"And in the second evil, war, when surrounded with instruments of death, in the hands of infuriated men, worse than wild beasts, God can put a covering on the head, and protect those that trust in him. But though the servants of Christ should fall by these common calamities, yet he knows how to distinguish his

* The six and seven troubles intimate, that we may expect a succession of troubles after many look for more, but God will deliver his own out of them all. Former deliverances are earnestly of farther deliverances.
children when sword and famine do not; and if they are not delivered from them, they are delivered by them, and when overcome by one instrument of death they conquer all.

"Verse 21. 'Thou shalt be hid from the scourge of the tongue, neither shalt thou be afraid of destruction when it cometh.'

"To detract, traduce, or slander, is the same to the credit of a man that a scourge is to the back. The tongue of an open slanderer, is compared to an arrow by day, and to a serpent that comes behind, when it is done secretly.

"It is said a bishop must be no striker; but the apostle could hardly think that sons of violence should be so much as admitted to a probation about that office, but it may signify striking with the tongue: therefore let not a bishop be a striker with his tongue in passion, much less in spleen or for self ends. *The tongue is a terrible engine.* It is a sad thing when the people of God are wounded by the tongues of wicked men, but it is much worse when the people of God scourge one another. It is a great mercy to be preserved from the scourge of the tongue, Psa. xxxi. 20; let all learn to bridle the tongue, for they that smite with the tongue, shall perish with the tongue.

"Destruction means a confluence of all kinds of evil meeting together; but when it comes thou shalt have this privilege, not to be afraid of it. *

*The most inoffensive men cannot secure themselves from calumny, reproach, and false accusation;
Verse 22. 'At destruction and famine thou shalt laugh.' But is it not sinful to laugh at these? there is a sinful laughter which arises from unbelief, Gen. xviii. 12; from contempt and slighting of counsel, 2 Chron. xxx. 10, 'But they laugh them to scorn.'

Commendable laughter springs from faith, Gen. xvii. 17; from holy courage and well-grounded confidence; from an assurance of shelter and protection from, or support under, the greatest dangers, even in famine and destruction. This can only be obtained, by fixing on such a promise as Psa. xxxvii. 19, 'They shall not be ashamed in the evil day, and in the days of famine they shall be satisfied.' Hence the apostle says, 'We glory in tribulations; and are more than conquerors;' and when speaking of the last enemy, he brings in the believing soul in a holy triumph, laughing at, and even jeering death, O death! where is thy sting? &c.

'Neither shalt thou be afraid of the beasts of the earth.' Thou shalt not be afraid of the natural cruelty, the casual hurtfulness, or the judiciary rage of beasts, when sent by God to punish the beastliness of men. How it comes to pass that beasts of the earth hurt not godly men, is expressed in the next verse.

Verse 23. 'For thou shalt be in league with the stones of the field.' The promise was from these a man cannot hide himself, but God can hide him, so that the most malicious slanders should not disturb his peace, and make them to be so little heeded by others, as not to blemish his reputation.
to be delivered from the fear of beasts, but to certify thee of it, God will not suffer so much as a stone to do thee hurt. God can do us good by any thing, and nothing can do us good without him; and God can produce our comforts out of impossibilities to nature; even when Stephen was killed by stones, he might be said to be in league with them, God turned these stones into bread for him, and made every stone a glorious diamond in his crown of martyrdom.

"And the beasts of the field shall be at peace with thee." That is, by the power of God they shall be made peaceable to thee. This is the same in proportion with being in league with stones. It was the privilege of man by creation to have power over the beasts; and it is the ordinary privilege of every believer to be at peace with them, and the most flourishing state of the church is represented under this notion, Isa. xi. 6.

"Observe, That every creature by sin is made dangerous and hurtful to man; but when God becomes our friend, he can quickly make all other things friendly to us; also he can make men who have as little sense as stones, and less reason than beasts, to be peaceful and useful to his people.

"At verse 19, we had a promise of deliverance even in six or seven troubles. From verse 24—27, we have the result of all, an assurance of a fourfold blessing, every one confirmed as a truth in itself, and brought home to Job, verse 27.
"Verse 24. 'And thou shalt know that thy tabernacle shall be in peace.' That is, thou shalt experimentally know that thy whole estate and family shall be in peace; that is, thou shalt neither be invaded by foreigners, nor have any insurrection in thy borders, nor any unkind contentions in thy family.

"Peace in a large sense is opposed to any kind of trouble or adversity. It gives sweetness and beauty to all our blessings; without peace, riches are but golden thorns, honour is but higher misery, health but stronger afflictions: pure ordinances and a peaceable habitation are Jerusalem's perfection on earth.

"Observe 1st, That all outward blessings are in themselves but fading and perishing. 2d, To be assured of a mercy, is better than the enjoyment of it; he saith not only thou shalt have peace in thy tabernacle, but thou shalt know it.

"To be delivered from perishing, is the first part of that great blessing we receive by Christ. These second consists in the conveyance of good to us, as pardon of sins, &c. But the third consists in our everlasting assurance to enjoy all this; this is the perfection of bliss.

"'And thou shalt visit thy habitation, and not sin.' It is a greater mercy to be delivered from one sin than from sword and famine. Grace is better than peace, and holiness than abundance; riches, honour, and health, are all obscured in this one blessing, a holy humble heart.
"Thou shalt, as a master, view and direct, and call to account thy family, and not sin, namely, by winking at the characters of any of thy domestics, and yet thou shalt have peace.

"Verse 25. 'Thou shalt know also that thy seed shall be great, and thine offspring as the grass of the earth.'

"It is supposed that Eliphaz aimed at the death of Job's children. Thy children perished miserably, but if thou wouldest return, that blessing should be restored; thy posterity should be as the grass for beauty and multitude.

"Neither grace nor blessings of any kind doth infallibly run in blood, yet the children of the godly have many promises made to them.

"As parents are afflicted in the afflictions of their children, so they are blessed in their joys. Relations share mutually in both comforts and crosses. A flourishing numerous family is a great outward blessing. But some have the choicest of blessings who want them. Sons and daughters are greatly prized, but they are not the best blessing. 'Thou shalt have a name and a place better than of sons and daughters.'* Isaiah lvi. 3.

"Verse 26. 'Thou shalt come to thy grave in a full age, like as a shock of corn

* It is a comfort to parents to see the propriety, especially the spiritual propriety, of their children. If they are truly good, they are truly great, how small a figure soever they make in the world.
cometh in his season.' This includes a willingness to die. Thou shalt not be hurried to thy grave as the foolish rich man was; Luke xii. and likewise the honour and solemnity of burying like Abijah. He only shall be buried with honour.

"In a full age, may be to the utmost length of human life, or one that liveth long and comfortable like Moses, whose eye was not dim, &c.

"Though all good men do not live to grey hairs, yet it is an universal truth that they all die in a good old age; that is, their work is done, and they are ready for death; it is harvest time with them though cropt in the prime of life; they are not taken away till they are ripe: whereas a wicked man living an hundred years hath no full old age, much less a good old age; he is ripe for destruction, but never ripe for death. A happy death is the close of temporal, and the commencement of eternal happiness. 'Blessed are the dead that die in the Lord.'*

"Eliphaz next calls upon Job to attend to the sum of all he had said.

"Verse 27. 'Lo this, we have searched it, so it is; hear it, and know thou it for thy good.'

"He asserts the truth of what he had spoken, so it is; then he asks Job to hear it. He be-

* It is well our times are in God's hand, for those who are his shall die at the best time. However their death may seem to us untimely, it will never be unseasonable.
gan and now concludes in the plural. He supposes he had spoken agreeably to the mind of his two friends; we have not taken these things on trust, we have learned them by experience, after careful examination.

"Hear thou it, that is, believe and obey. When God hears man he grants their requests, and when man hears God, he yields and obeys.

"And know thou it for thy good." Hebrew, for thyself, that is, for thy profit. The great end of knowing is, that we may thereby become holy and obedient.

"Observe 1st, That truth deserves a most serious investigation; and, having found it by searching the Scriptures, and attending carefully to the book of providence, we may with confidence communicate it to others.

"2d, That it is necessary to make particular application of general doctrinal truths, for we may know much without being led to a corresponding practice.

"3dly, That a godly man may make a profitable use of any truth of God; for all truths are intended to furnish the man of God for every good work.

"Eliphaz says, 'Know thou it for thy good. If thou art a godly man, all the good things I have spoken belong to thee; all the delicious promises of the pardon of sin, the love of God, &c. yea, Christ himself, will be all in all to thee.' But unbelievers are strangers to the promises; they know not a letter of scripture for their good, the very promises are threatenings to them.
"It is not enough to hear and know the truth, but we must improve it, and be made wiser and better by it; receive the impression of it, and submit to the commanding power of it; know it for thyself, that is, with application to thyself and thy own case; not only, this is true, but this is true concerning me. That which we thus hear and know for ourselves, we hear and know for our good, as the meat we digest we are nourished by, and that is indeed a good sermon that doth us good.

"The whole of this discourse is to convince and humble Job under the hand of God.

CHAPTER VI.

"From Verse 1—7. is Job's reply, and is as if he had said, It is easy to say others complain too much when we feel nothing. But is it any wonder to hear a man groan who hath an oppressive load upon his back? or to hear a man complain whose flesh is filled with poisonous arrows shot from a bent bow drawn by omnipotency? Dost thou not see that all my comforts are taken from me, and if thou hadst duly considered my case, all thy reproofs might have been spared, and they may be justly retorted upon thyself?

"Verse 1. 'But Job answered and said.' As a man ought to give a reason of the hope that is in him, so he should be able to produce a reason of his sorrowful complaints. Silence when we are charged either makes a full con-
viction, or strengthens suspicion. And if Job had held his peace, he had either confessed himself guilty, or caused his friends more and more to suspect his sincerity. To right ourselves is not a matter of indifference but of duty.

"Verse 2. 'Oh that my grief were thoroughly weighed.' Weighed so exactly as that there might be a clear discovery how heavy my sorrows really are, Job desires to be weighed in an even balance.

"And my calamity laid in the balances together.' It is our duty to weigh all the circumstances of our brother's affliction thoroughly, and put ourselves in the case of the afflicted, and thereby make another's grief our own. Until this is done, we should neither judge nor censure any person.

Observe, that no man who is not, or hath not been afflicted, can conceive what another suffers who is under affliction. Job seems to have thought that his friends had not duly considered his afflictions; for if they had, he adds,

"Verse 3. 'For now it would be heavier than the sand of the sea.' Who can tell what that is in weight which is heavier than the heaviest? For although the sand of the sea were laid into one heap it would not be so heavy as my present distresses.

"Hence observe afflictions are heavy burdens. The judgments of God are often called burdens. As man by sin burdens God, so God by affliction burdens man. Sins are heavy burdens to the godly. Job's pained body was a
heavy affliction, but the distress in his mind seems to have been still greater.

" 'Therefore my words are swallowed up.' That is, I want words to express my grief; and not to be able to express our grief is a great aggravation and increase of it. Some afflictions exceed all complaints, and are too big for expression. Some read, 'Therefore my words are bitter, I feed upon gall and wormwood, and no wonder if my words taste of them.'

" Verse 4. 'For the arrows of the Almighty are within me, the poison whereof drinketh up my spirit; the terrors of God do set themselves in array against me.'

" Job compares his afflictions to an arrow for sharpness, and to an army for terribleness. Afflictions are like arrows, swift, sharp, secret, killing; they are called the arrows of the Almighty, because they are sent home to the mark with a force that shows that his arm bends and draws the bow; besides those shot into Job are compared to poisoned arrows which kill by infection. The word for terror signifies the most terrible affrightment, they are the same. The arrow is the affliction itself, and the terror is the consequence of it.

" The providence of God observes a rule, and is harmonious even in those things that appear to us a heap of confusion. The word is applied to the marshalling of an army. So when Job says, the terrors of God are set in array, it intimates that God determined to afflict him by a regular attack.
“Observe 1. When God by a multitude of afflictions appears as an enemy to his servants, they can hold out no longer.

“2. These wounds make our hearts bleed most, which we apprehend are from his anger whom we have chosen as our only friend.

“The apostle, 2 Cor. v. 11, says, ‘Knowing experimentally, or by faith, the terrors of the Lord, we persuade men.’ Oh take heed; provoke not the terrors of the Lord against you. The troubles and terrors which are upon the spirit far exceed all other distresses.

“Sinners, and secure ones, what will you do when God brings armies of terrors to charge upon you? Isaiah xxxiii. 14. ‘If those who have a shield of faith to keep off these arrows, and Christ for a refuge to flee unto, are thus afraid when these terrors are arrayed against them, what will become of you’ who have neither shield nor shelter?

“Verse 5. ‘Doth the wild ass bray when he hath grass? or loweth the ox over his fodder?’

“This is as if Job had said, both wild and tame creatures are content when they have plenty of suitable food; and thereby owns that he would be more unreasonable than the brute beasts if he complained without sufficient reason.

“Those who bray and low over their grass and fodder, discover the want of a gracious principle; for true grace will not bray or low even when there is no grass or fodder; spiritual
enjoyments will make a good man put up with temporal inconveniencies.*

"Verse 6. 'Can that which is unsavoury be eaten without salt, or is there any taste in the white of an egg?'

"Unsavoury refers to indiscreet speeches, which want the seasoning either of wit, wisdom, or truth, which gives a seasoning to words, as salt gives a relish to meat.

"The white of an egg is an emblem of things without taste; and so the sum of all is, that Job said he had very insipid, tasteless things presented to him.

"Verse 7. 'The things that my soul refused to touch, are as my sorrowful meat.' Some say the sorrowful meat is a representation of his affections from the hand of God. Others that they refer to the reproofs and councils of his friends. I am made to feed upon that which I would not willingly come near, sores and sorrows are my companions; or Job alleges that the speech of Eliphaz was misapplied and unsuitable. 'Let your speech be always with grace, seasoned with salt.' Col. iv. 6. Not only with the salt of truth, but with wisdom and discretion, and therefore it is added, 'that ye may know how to answer every man;' that is, what you say may be fitting his case and present condition.

"Observe, that not only untrue, but also

* Since Job was deprived of all his comforts, he must be a stock or a stone, and not have the sense of an ox or a wild ass, if he did not give some vent to his grief.
misapplied words, are unsavoury, and may be hurtful.*

"Job having defended his former complaint of life, and desire of death, renews his request, and enlarges his reasons for it.

"Verse 8. 'O that I might have my request!' Hebrew, who would give me that my request? the word notes a strong desire and prayer. Christ uttered strong cries to be delivered from death, and Job sent up strong cries for death.

"'And that God would grant me the thing that I long for.' From this it appears that Job was satisfied that his comforts should not end, though his life ended before his earthly comforts were restored, and thus he seems to answer Eliaphaz who made great promises of outward felicity.

"Verse 9. 'Even that it would please God to destroy me.' Some read, that he who hath begun, would make an end in destroying me. All on a sudden, some express a wish to die; and hastily call for death; but Job repeats his request; 'That he would let loose his hand and cut me off.' The word signifies to loose the bond.

"Observe, That assurance of a better life

* It is improper to use ourselves or our children to be nice and dainty about meats or drink, because we know not how we or they may be reduced, nor how that which we now disdain may be made acceptable by necessity. He complains he had nothing offered him that was proper for his relief; what they offered was in itself tasteless, and, when applied to him, as loathsome as the most sorrowful meat.
will carry the soul through the bitterest pains of death with joy. We have no reason to think that stoical apathy begat this desire in Job; but, like Paul, he knew that he had Christ while he lived, and should gain at his death; this formed his request, and now he shows the effect.

"Verse 10. 'Then should I yet have comfort, yea, I would harden myself in sorrow.' Notwithstanding my sorrows, the very hope that death is near could revive me. Job having taken up this hope that he would have comfort, says, let God do what he pleaseth.

"'Let him not spare.' There is preventing and delivering mercy, and David, Psa. xxxix. prays for sparing mercy; O spare me, &c. that is, abate and mitigate my sufferings that I die not; but Job prays not to be spared at all.

"'For I have not concealed the words of the Holy One,' either by my own silence, or imposing silence on others, or by any corrupt glosses, nor by corrupt practice or conversation. The lives of Christians should publish the word of life. The best way of preaching the word, is by practice; that man speaks enough for his willingness to die, who lives speaking and doing the will of God; and he is in a very miserable case who hath no other reason why he desires to die, but only because he is in misery. God is the holy One, all holiness is in God, and God is so holy, that properly he only is holy.

"Observe, That true holiness consists in conformity to the nature of God, so believers are said to be partakers of the divine nature, and also in conformity to the will of God.
From these passionate words, which had better been spared, let us

"Observe, That we should soften ourselves in sorrow, that our hearts being made tender may be made better; but if we harden ourselves, we provoke God to proceed in his controversy; for when he judgeth he will overcome. And it is great presumption to dare the Almighty, and to say, Let him not spare. We are much indebted to God for sparing mercy, and instead of despising, we should improve it.

"Verse 11. 'What is my strength that I should hope? or what is my strength that I should bear? but there is little difference, for hope is the support of the soul.' It seems a reply to Eliphaz, do you think I have endured these afflictions in my own strength? surely I have prayed to God, and he hath held me up by his power. God loves to manifest what his strength can do in a weak creature, as well as what his grace and mercy can do for a sinful creature.

"I have no reason to expect to see such good days as you speak of; not that Job rested all his hope upon his own strength, for we find him resolving that he would trust or hope in God though he died, therefore he did hope while he lived; but he here expresses his grief and pain, as an answer to the sour reproof and sweet promises of Eliphaz.

"But what is mine end, that I should prolong my life? or my desire of life? what is the fag end or winter of a man's life, but clouds and darkness? or rather, what is my death, that I
should desire to live? I know not what should make me afraid of the end of my life; why then should I not desire death? and why should you be so angry with me for desiring it?

"When the Psalmist describes the troubles and conflicts of a godly man, together with the flourishing outward pomp of the wicked, he concludes, 'Mark the perfect, and behold the upright, for the end of that man is peace.'

"The lengthening of our days is the shortening of them, and all the time we live is but a passage unto, and should be a preparation for death.

"Verse 12. 'Is my strength the strength of stones? or is my flesh of brass?'

"Those words may refer to the former part of verse 11; 'Am I made of such hard metal, that I am able to stand this trial? only stones can be thus trampled on, and brass thus hammered, without pain and dying. The spirit of a man, that is, his courage and resolution, is far stronger than his flesh; namely, his natural temper and constitution; and yet that cannot hold out for ever, for the spirit should fail before me."

Verse 13. 'Is not my help in me? and is wisdom driven quite from me?'

"Both this and the next verse is of very difficult construction and understanding: for there is no man that hath help in himself for any na-

* Note. All things considered, we have no reason to count on the long continuance of life in this world. Our strength is decaying, and will soon be exhausted.
tural work, much less for any spiritual work, especially for a holy carriage under affliction, or to deliver himself out of it.

"Some read, what though I have not help in me, is wisdom driven quite from me?

"Observe, That a godly man in the darkest night of affliction and sorrow, finds a light of holy wisdom to answer all the objections of his enemies, or the suspicions of his friends.

"Do you think I have nothing to reply by way of apology for what I have spoken or done? It is true, my worldly comforts are quite driven from me, but it is a mercy that wisdom is not departed from me. I am afflicted, but you should not on that account suspect, but pity me.

"Verse 14. 'To him that is afflicted, pity should be showed from his friend; but he forsaketh the fear of the Almighty.'

"The word signifies, him that is melted; to be afflicted and melted is the same, Psal. xxii. 15. Pity imports the strongest affections, and all kind offices done in love, in times of trouble, and in cases of extremity.

"Eliphaz having said, Ch. iv. Is this thy fear, or where is thy religion? it is likely that Job retorts, Is this your religion to deal so harshly with a distressed friend? surely you have forsaken the fear of the Almighty.

"Observe, That it is the common duty of friends, and the special duty of godly friends, to pity and help one another in affliction; and the fear of God is ever joined with love to our brethren, 1 John iv. 20.
"In affliction, the love of man to man is made most visible; a true friend can hardly be discovered in prosperity, and a false friend can hardly be hid in adversity.

"Job having charged his friends with unkindness, proceeds to illustrate it by a similitude, which he states, verse 15; explains, 16, 17, 18; confirms, verse 19, 20; applies, verse 21. The sum is, that Job had found his friends like those brooks that have least water when there is most need of it.

"Verse 15. 'My brethren have dealt deceitfully as a brook, and as the stream of brooks they pass away.'

"It imports perfidious dealing of any kind. To pass away, signifies motion and consumption: so violent torrents come to nothing; their motion spends them.

"Observe, that it is painful to be deceived by any; but to be deceived by a brother in the faith is worst of all. It is double unfaithfulness. Psa. lv. 'To be reproached and wronged by my guide, &c. lies heavy upon my spirit.'

"Verse 16. 'Which are blackish by reason of the ice, and wherein the snow is hid.'

"Job compares those friends who administer no comfort in time of trouble, to brooks that overflow with water when we have no need of it; but in cold winter weather are locked up with frosts, or in summer are exhaled and dried up by the sun, as it follows.

"Verse 17. 'What time they wax warm they vanish; when it is hot they are consumed out of their place.'

"When you saw them frozen, you might
think them lasting streams, but at the next thaw they are consumed; as soon as heat comes they are dissolved, and soon become dry. Such friends I have, (might Job say,) and indeed such is the friendship of mankind, unless so far as influenced by divine grace, and delivered from its natural baseness.

"Verse 18. 'The paths of their way are turned aside; they go to nothing and perish.'

"That is, these streams are as if they had never been, the rain filled them, but having no spring to maintain them, the cold froze them, and the warmth of the sun emptied them. Turned aside, signifies to gather up or contract into a narrow compass. They go to nothing, &c. an idol is expressed by the same word, 1 Sam. xii. 21; and the apostle, 1 Cor. viii. says an idol is nothing in the world, and that which is useless, is as good as nothing.

"Verse 19. 'The troops of Tema looked, the companies of Sheba waited for them.'*

"Observe, That a probability of finding, is ground enough for seeking. A fig-tree having leaves, shows that it may have fruit growing, and the time of gathering figs not being past, were sufficient reasons for the Lord Christ to go and seek fruit upon it; for in this he acted

* Where we have met with relief and comfort, we are apt to expect it again, but it doth not always follow: for Job's disappointment of his expectations from his friends, is here compared to the confusion which seized the caravans of the merchants, when they find heaps of sand where they expected floods of water, having seen plenty there in winter.
according to the rules of human reason, not of divine omniscience.

"None that seek the water of life, and wait upon Christ for it, shall be disappointed; for he is the living fountain, whose waters fail not.

"Verse 20. 'They were confounded, because they had hoped; they came thither, and were ashamed.'

"They were ashamed, because they were disappointed; the word signifies to dig, that we may hide a thing. A man that is ashamed, cannot endure the pain of being seen.

"Jesus Christ shall so abundantly satisfy the desires, and so fully supply all the wants, of every believing soul, that it is expressed by this word, 'Whosoever believeth on him shall not be ashamed.' Hopes delayed trouble us, but hopes deceived confound and make us hide our heads.

"Now we have the application of this similitude. In the delineation I have given of these inconstant and unfaithful streams of water, I give a representation of your conduct, O ye my friends, towards me.

"Verse 21. 'For now ye are nothing; ye see my casting down, and are afraid.'

"Casting down is from a word that signifies dejection and consternation of spirit. Ye see how all is broken and lost, and what is the help ye give me? ye are of no more use to me in the way of refreshing, than those deceitful streams were to the troops of Tema. Do ye supply me with comfort or counsel? no; ye are afraid to come nigh me, lest ye catch my dis TEMPER; and though ye have come to see me,
yet ye are not moved with compassion, so as to

give me any assistance.

"Whatever complacency we may take, or
whatever confidence we put in creatures, one
time or other we shall say of them, now ye are
nothing.

"Perhaps God suffers men to be unfaithful
to one another, to teach all to trust in him
alone, who only hath preserved this honour
without a stain; never to forsake them who
trust in him, however forlorn and miserable
their condition may be.

"Job having by an elegant similitude
pointed out the unkindness of his friends, and
the severe disappointment they had given him,
now upbraids them, and appeals to them-
selves if he had asked any favours. He no
doubt would be glad to see them, expecting
their sympathy; but he says,

"Verse 22. 'Did I say, bring unto me, or
give a reward for me of your substance?'

"As if he had said, I have not requested
any loan or contribution from you to compen-
sate, or in the smallest degree to alleviate, the
losses I have sustained. Although I might
urge the total ruin of my estate, which is come
upon me by the hand of God, and not by any
fault or folly of mine; and that I was always
ready to help any that was in distress.

"A good man is very reluctant to give his
friends any trouble on his account, even when
his troubles are very great.

"All that I expected from you was comfort
and counsel, and that would not have put you
to much expense; or if you could not have ad-
ministered any comfort to me, yet you need not have added so largely to my sorrows, by charg-
ing me with impatience and hypocrisy. Or did I say,

"Verse 23. 'Deliver me from the enemies' hand, or redeem me from the hand of the mighty?'

"To redeem, signifies to bring back a thing by price or force. Did I desire you to levy an army, to recover or make reprisals on the Sa-
beans and Chaldeans, or to purchase from them what they had robbed from me?

"If I had called upon you to assist in re-
covering my estate, then you might have sup-
possed that the loss of it was the cause of my impatience.

"But Job's not seeking their aid, does not excuse them for not giving him that help they saw he needed, and they were able to afford.

"Even when we expect little from men, we may get less; but when we expect much from God, we have abundantly more than we can ask or think, Eph. iii. 20.

"Job now professes his resolution to attend to what they had yet to say, and expresses his readiness to yield to conviction.

"Verse 24. 'Teach me, and I will hold my tongue; and cause me to understand where-
in I have erred.'

"Job promises silence, that he might hear and consider what they should say to him. To be swift to hear, and slow to speak, is the best way to attain wisdom.

"That man is in a fair way to discover truth, that acknowledges he may err.
"The word signifies to convince, by reason or argument, and whenever you, by plain instructions, make me to understand my error, I shall readily acknowledge my fault, and resolve to do so no more. It is the desire of every honest man to discover truth; and so soon as arguments used appear conclusive, however opposite to his former views, he embraces them as right and acceptable words.

"Verse 25. 'How forcible are right words! but what doth your arguing reprove?"

"Words are right in the matter, when they are true; in the manner, when they are plain; and in their use, when properly applied; and when these meet together, how forcible and strong are such words! Fair reasoning has a commanding power; but all that you have said, does not deserve the name of an argument.

"Job having expressed willingness to hear what they had to say, and to yield to the force of any argument they might produce, proceeds to expostulate with them for making so light of what he had said.

"Verse 26. 'Do ye imagine to reprove words, and the speeches of one that is desperate, which are as wind?"

"The word for imagine, notes a very curious, exquisite, and elaborate invention of any thing. Job seems to refer to the opinion that his friends had of his words; do you think that your words are strong and full of reason, and that mine is but idle talk?

"Is it fair to take some of my passionate expressions, as proofs of impiety?

"Should any man's state be judged by some
hasty words, which a sudden and great affliction may extort from him? A small degree of charity would have made an excuse, at least it would have prevented such severe censures—you would not like to have been served so. He next states two things that aggravated their unkind treatment.

"Verse 27. 'Yea, ye overwhelm the fatherless, and ye dig a pit for your friend.'

"Thus he sets forth their cruelty towards him, in a very odious light. Orphans and fatherless are usually full of sorrows, and therefore to be left fatherless, and to be comfortless are the same. In this large sense, Job says, ye overwhelm me, who am poor and desolate, without a friend to succour or sympathize with me.

"The sin of oppression is greatly aggravated, when it is practised upon the fatherless and helpless, who are not able to defend themselves.

"The more duty or respect we owe to any man, the greater is our sin when we neglect or contemn him.

"You are not only unkind to me; but, under colour of friendship, you ensnare me; when you came to see me, I thought I might speak freely, and that the more bitter my complaints were, you would have the more readily sympathized with and tried to comfort me. And this freedom of speech which their apparent concern for him made him use, exposed him to their censures; and so they might be said to dig a pit for him.
"Job seems to suppose that his friends intended to cast him down into the pit of despair, by charging him with hypocrisy.

"Verse 28. 'Now, therefore, be content to look upon me; for it is evident unto you if I lie.'

"To lie, is to speak what is false, with intent to deceive, or to fail and come short of that which we have given others reason to expect from us. Truth is the daughter of time, and so is a lie; for time will bring to light that work of darkness.

"I am not afraid to look you in the face; you shall read nothing in my countenance either of fear or falsehood. Integrity is very bold.

"Or rather, look upon my ulcers, and see that I do not lie; that is, that I do not complain without cause, nor quarrel with God, by calling my condition worse than it is; therefore do not turn away from me in disgust; let us have a little more discourse, and the truth will appear.

"Verse 29. 'Return, I pray you, let it not be iniquity; yea, return again, my righteousness is in it.'

"Return, that is, weigh the matter better; consider whether I speak not as one constrained to this seeming impatience from real sorrow, rather than professed hypocrisy.

"Some translate there shall not be iniquity, that is, in my words, or in what I shall speak; so it is connected with my righteousness is in it; that is, that I am in the right, and free
from blame in this business; yea return again. He doubles his advice, to show his earnest desire that they would coolly consider his case, and what he had yet to say in his own defence. Job doth not rail upon his friends; but be-seeches them to be better advised: and, seeing we must give an account of every idle word, much more of every unjust censure, it is necessary to give strict attention to what we have said; for the more a good cause is searched into, the better it will appear. A godly man is not gilded, but gold: whereas an hypocrite may be gilded over with good words; but search him to the bottom, and all is rottenness.

"My righteousness is in it," that is, I am in the right in this matter; and that, though I have not kept my temper as I ought, yet I keep my integrity, and have not said, or done, or suffered any thing, that will prove me not an honest man.

"Verse 30. 'Is there iniquity in my tongue? cannot my taste discern perverse things?'

"This concludes the directory to his friends, and is a preparatory to what he intends in the next chapter.

"Is there iniquity in my tongue? Have I spoken any thing that could infect or poison you, or dishonour God?"

"The taste, or palate, is that faculty of the soul whereby we distinguish truth from falsehood. Here Job speaks of doctrines or actions. If a thing be perversely or properly spoken, cannot I taste it quickly? Hence the word of God is compared to milk and strong meat;
FROM CARYL ON JOB.

that is, easy and more mysterious parts of truth. False doctrine, or true doctrine falsely applied, is a perverse thing; it perverts reason, scripture, and the souls of men. Holy doctrine draws men to God, but that which is perverse in its nature is perverting in its effect.

"Is there iniquity in my tongue?" This is an assertion, that there is no iniquity in my tongue, that is, none of that iniquity that you charge me with. The tongue often discovers the iniquity of the heart. Job perseveres in justifying himself against men, though he had not a word to plead for himself against God.

CHAPTER VII.

"Job, having refuted Eliphaz's arguments, and expostulated with his friends about their unkindness, and admonished them, proceeds to confirm his request to die: 1st, From the general condition of man's life, verse 1. 2dly, From the peculiar condition of some men. 3dly, From his own condition; from which he apprehends nothing but death could relieve him, verse 3—6. He turns to his former complaints, and abases himself before God; and concludes confessing his sin, and desiring pardon.

"Verse 1. 'Is there not an appointed time to man upon earth? Are not his days also like the days of an hireling?'

"Heb. Is there not a warfare to man upon earth? Our life is fitly compared to a warfare,
on account of the travails, dangers, and either victory and triumph, or slavery and death, as the issue of our lives.

"The life of man is a continual bickering with a world of enemies. Observe, That the life of man is measured out by the will of God. That man, Luke xii. is termed a fool, who resolved upon many years to live, and yet could not live till next morning. But this must not lessen our care to preserve our lives. As it is in spirituals, so also in temporals. Though only the elect are saved, yet none are saved by their election. Infants are not saved barely by election; they must be united to Christ, or else they cannot be saved. But they who grow in years must also grow in the graces of sanctification, otherwise they are not saved by the grace of election.

"Since there is an appointed time, we should learn patiently to wait upon God; willing to die at his call. As to disobey what God commands, so to be unwilling to live all the time God pleases, is equally sinful.

"An hireling is one who works a certain time for a specified reward. This clause is much the same in sense with the former. He speaks of mankind in general; of the master as well as the servant. His days are like the days of an hireling.

"When I have so many evidences and symptoms of death before me, why should I not think the period of my life at hand, and desire that my days were summed up, and that I may see the end of these troubles?"
"And why shouldst thou, Eliphaz, try to prevent my complaint against my life, or my desire of death, by giving me hopes of many prosperous days in this world? Or, pray mistake me not; as if I thought the time appointed of God could be anticipated. No; I know it cannot; though I take the liberty, in such language, to express my present uneasiness.

"Verse 2. 'As a servant earnestly desireth the shadow, and as an hireling looketh for the reward of his work.'

"The shadow means that which is most refreshing and desirable to a labourer. The same word signifies desire earnestly; and also to gape and draw in the air pantingly. Christ gives the character of the hireling, John x. His reward is the object he has in view. But he that works for Christ finds his reward in his work, and his eye is upon his work as a reward.

"Now, saith Job, as a servant earnestly desires the shadow, and the hireling waits for his wages at night, so, and for the same reason, I desire death.

"Verse 3. 'For I am made to possess months of vanity.'—The word signifies, to possess by inheritance; and notes also their continuance. Months of vanity; that is, his days were useless, and had been so a great while. They are empty moons, always in the wane, or ever in the eclipse. I am tired out with, and have no sensible benefit of, my troubles; my hopes are frustrate, and my expectations of relief disappointed. And 'Wearisome nights are appoint-
ed unto me.' This seems to be as if Job had said, when the servant is weary with his work he can lie down at night and rest himself; but I, who am labouring in the heat of this affliction, and would be glad of some repose, yet the night is as troublesome to me as the day; and as the hireling receives his wages, so I would like to see the end and issue of my troubles; but my wages are months of vanity, and my reward nights of trouble. It must very much increase the affliction of sickness and age to a good man, that he is thereby forced from his usefulness. He insists not so much that he hath no pleasure, as that they are days in which he doth no good.

"Observe, That sleep gives some intermission to the cares, and pains, and groans that afflict us; but poor Job could not gain this relief.

"The next verse is a most exact description of a wearisome night.

"Verse 4. 'When I lie down, I say, when shall I arise, and the night be gone? and I am full of tossings to and fro, unto the dawning of the day.'

"What a pitiful plight, to be so full of trouble and torture, and so tossed, as to have no rest night nor day; and what an addition to his affliction, as not to be able to obtain a nap in the morning!

"Observe, It is common for a man in pain to look for relief from change of position, or even from change of time. Let us remember how distressing it is, through pain of body or
agitation of mind, to lie all night telling the clock, and wishing for the day; and to be in this situation day after day, and no hope of recovery, is very trying. While we bless and thank God for good nights, let us pity and pray for all who are suffering adversity.

"He goes on to show what a pitiful spectacle he was, and that it was no wonder he had restless nights and mournful days.

"Verse 5. 'My flesh is clothed with worms and clods of dust; my skin is broken and become loathsome.'

"Job is in his grave-clothes before he dies, and he accounts himself as good as dead; or, like Heman, free among the dead, a member of that corporation already; for he was now in that habit or livery, a gown of worms, set or embroidered with clods of dust. His worn-out skin had many rents in it that needed mending, and he was so filthy as to need washing.

"Seeing our bodies have in them the principles of corruption, and that they may soon become so loathsome, that we may wish to get rid of them, how foolish to pamper or be proud of them, and deck them with fine attire! He carries his complaint still farther.

"Verse 6. 'My days are swifter than a weaver's shuttle, and are spent without hope.'

"The speed of the shuttle is proverbial for all things that are quick and transient. By his days here, we understand his days of comfort and prosperity; but now every hour seems a year, and the remembrance of former times aggravates my present distress. Job said, My
days are spent; and, what is still more, my hope is spent; for I have no expectation of recovery from this disease.

"There are many hints of the quick invisible motion of time in this book, and this is a point so universally known, that every man assents to it; but alas, very few believe it. Hence observe, that common truths neglected, is apt to lead us to make light of every truth.

"Since time once gone cannot be recovered, we should carefully improve it as it passes along. It moves along at an equal rate; though, according to the circumstances in which we are placed, it appears either tedious or quick.

"It is true, that hope is the anchor of the soul, &c. and while hope holds, comfort continues; but even a godly man's hope may lie prostrate, and then all is gone.

"Job, having thus complained of his condition, and vindicated his desire of death, now turns from his friends, and betakes himself to God. The next words are generally understood as an apostrophe to God.

"Verse 7. 'O remember that my life is wind; mine eye shall no more see good.' Here he turns to God, and speaks to him. If men will not hear us, God will; and he can help when men cannot.

"He here represents himself to God as surely and speedily dying; and I shall then be beyond the smart of earthly sorrows, and above the sense of earthly joys; for mine eye shall no more see good.

"When Hezekiah said, I shall not see the
Lord, &c. he means, that he should not behold God in his great works, or in his ordinances.

"Observe, That God is usually the last, but always the best refuge.

"2d, It is an argument moving the Lord to compassion, to mind him of the frailty of our condition. It is said, Deut. xxxii. 36, 'The Lord shall repent himself for his servants;' but when will he do so? 'when he seeth that their power is gone.' &c.; that is, when they have no strong place to defend themselves, and are ready to sink, then the Lord takes this both as an argument and season for him to change the way of his administration to them.

"3d, That however good worldly things are, they will be or no use after death, therefore be so wise as to improve this time, which passes like a shuttle and a blast of wind; to lay up such good things as your eyes shall see when you are laid in the grave, even such things as eye hath not seen.

"Verse 8. 'The eye of him that seeth me, shall see me no more.'

"Death takes us from seeing, and from being seen; as all the good we have seen will be hid from our eyes, so all our glory and excellency will be obscured from the eyes of others in the grave.

"'Thine eyes are upon me, and I am not.' Lord, if thou defer but a little to help me, I shall be laid in the grave, and then help will be too late. Death sweeps all that appears of man into the grave; the world shall no more
enjoy him, nor he the world. This is what is meant by *I am not*, or man's not being.

"We must shortly go to converse with things that are not seen, that are eternal. Thou canst look me into eternity, and frown me into the grave when thou pleasest.

Shouldst thou displeas'd give me a frowning look, I sink, I die, as if with lightning struck.

Sir R. Blackmore.

"In the two following verses, Job explains the above by a similitude.

"Verse 9. 'As the cloud is consumed and vanisheth away.' Hebrew, *It goeth or walketh away.* The sins of believers are compared to a cloud, and the consuming of them is similar to pardoning them, Isa. xlv.

"The sins of natural men are as an abiding cloud; but the sins of the saints are a vanishing cloud. Nothing can consume a cloud of guilt but the power of mercy, and a gale of love breathing through the covenant of grace. Man's life is like a vapour that vanisheth away.

"'So he that goeth down to the grave shall come up no more.' That is, till the general resurrection. Dying is a work that is to be done but once, and therefore it has need to be well done; happy, and only happy, are they that die in the Lord.

"Verse 10. 'He shall return no more to his house, neither shall his place know him any more.'

"For as the little hills are said to rejoice at the showers, so, when a man comes home, his
house and all that he hath, may be said to have a tongue to bid him welcome; but when he
dies, he shall return no more, and then his place shall know him, that is, receive him, no
more.

"From these two verses, observe, That the
wind, the vapours, and the clouds, at once show forth the majesty and glory of God, and the meanness and insignificance of man. Out of the same text of the creature, we should learn the infinite wisdom and power of God, and the frailty and mortality of man. This consideration should excite us to adore and trust in God, and abase ourselves before him.

"Verse 11. 'Therefore I will not refrain my mouth, I will speak in the anguish of my spirit, I will complain in the bitterness of my soul.'

"As if Job had turned all his reason into will, and his will into passion, he repeats, I will, three times in this verse.

"Since death, by the appointment of God, is the end of outward trouble, I will yet farther lay open my miseries before the Lord, and beg of him to hasten me through this land of sorrow, that I may see an end of these troubles, so I will take my fill of complaining. The word rendered complain, signifies to meditate, and implies a forming of what we would say in our thoughts; prayer is expressed by the same word, because it is first formed in the heart. A pained body causes the soul complain, but instead of relief, he usually gets a fresh wound, who is either too loud or too long
in his complaints, as it is too evident Job was, notwithstanding his great distress.

"It is better to die praying and praising, than quarrelling and complaining.

"Verse 12. 'Am I a sea or a whale, that thou settest a watch over me?'

"Job seems to allege, that God was dealing with him in a way not common to man, but as if he needed to be restrained, or tamed, like the boisterous ocean, or outrageous whale.

"The word watch, signifies to guard a thing so narrowly, as that it can neither escape nor do hurt; in Psa. xxxix. the same word is used for setting a watch on the tongue. There is great need to set a watch, and also to pray to God to set a watch on it, to prevent us from swallowing our neighbour's good name, or injuring ourselves by it.

"Some render, Am I a sea or a whale, that thou shouldest inclose me in a prison?

"As man is compared to a sea, for boundless desires, constant motion, &c. so for casting up mire, every wind of temptation stirs up the filthiness of the heart.

"Our fretting and repining under the afflictions he appoints us, shows that we think there is no occasion for them; whereas we are never in heaviness, but there is a need for it in the sight of God.

"Verse 13. 'When I say my bed shall comfort me, my couch shall ease my complaint.'

"The word for comfort, signifies also to mourn and repent; because godly sorrow precedes true comfort. There is a special pro-
mise to the sick, or rather to him that considers the poor, Psa. xli. 'God will make his bed easy and comfortable in his sickness.' Common mercies are to some special blessings. As some enjoy riches and honour by common providence, while others have them by a particular and special promise, and so it is with sleep. The bed is said to comfort, because it is well calculated to recruit and refresh the languishing. But from hence observe, that the most proper means cannot give either ease or comfort of themselves; it is only the blessing of God along with the best means that can render them beneficial. So we see that Job had neither comfort in his bed, nor ease in his couch; for,

"Verse 14. 'Then thou scarest me with dreams, and terrifiest me through visions.'

'Scarest' is often rendered contrite, which implies breaking of the heart by godly sorrow. So I am, as it were bruised, and broken by dreams; for if I have any sleep, it is so far from refreshing, that I am terrified through visions.

"An image or similitude is always represented to, or formed in, the fancy, or it cannot be a dream. Our sleeping, as well as our waking times, are in the hand of God; so without leave, Satan cannot disturb by night or by day.

"Let us pray to God, that we may neither be defiled nor disquieted by dreams. God can easily make that our punishment which has often been our sin, as by the rovings of an un-
sanctified fancy we often contract guilt. Let us seek refreshing sleep from God, and bless him when he bestows it. What awful impressions dreams and visions made on Job's mind, is apparent from

"Verse 15. 'So that my soul chooseth strangling and death, rather than my life.'

"Job gets more and more immoderate in wishing for relief from his present distress; so that he would prefer a violent death to his life. But surely this is his infirmity; yet he still perseveres in the same style.

"Verse 16. 'I loathe it; I would not live alway; let me alone, for my days are vanity.'

"To loathe, signifies the greatest aversion possible. And what a man loathes he longs to be rid of; and trouble makes a little time seem long.

"Let me alone. Deliver me from this woful condition, either by a recovery or by cutting me off: for my days are vanity; that is, they are inconstant, unsatisfying, and disappoints our expectations. Let us, therefore, set our affections on things above, which indeed like this world promiseth much, but is very different as to performance: for it will far exceed the promise, and go infinitely beyond the highest expectation of the believer. It is said, Christ shall come to be admired of his saints; the enjoyments shall go so far beyond their apprehension, that they will be swallowed up in admiration; and there is something in the joy and peace in believing, that will make every soul who has experience
of it to say, I would not live alway; and though he would chuse death rather than sin, as the martyrs did, yet he will not chuse it rather than life, but be content to live as long as God pleases; because life is our opportunity of glorifying God, and preparing for glory.

"Job proceeds to reason with God concerning man in general.

"Verse 17. 'What is man, that thou shouldest magnify him?'

"The question implies a low estimation of man, and a wonder that God should regard him, and even magnify him, by taking such notice of him as to correct him.

"All the victories of Joshua and David, have not rendered them so famous as this conflict hath done Job; his afflictions have magnified him more than all his other greatness, he would never have been heard of as the greatest man of the east. Hence observe, that God magnifies his people as well as glorifies himself by correcting them, and so makes their afflictions work for them an exceeding weight of glory.

"And that thou shouldest set thine heart upon him? That thou shouldest honour, show kindness to, and take such notice of him, so as to rebuke and chasten him because thou lovest him.

"There is Psal. lxii. a caution against setting the heart on riches when they increase; that is, neither to desire to have more, nor to love them, so as to be loth to part with what we have.
"He is the truly rich man, who has his affections set on Christ and divine things, and who is ready to use his wealth and influence in his service.

"Here follows two things, more connected with the question, What is man?

"Verse 18. 'And that thou shouldest visit him every morning and try him every moment?'

"To visit, signifies to show mercy, refresh, deliver, &c. God is as careful to correct as to feed his children: if they are watchful over their ways and the dealings of God with them, they will find, that as sure as the sun riseth, they will find some rod of affliction upon them every day.

"Afflictions are God's searchers; and by them he calls upon us to search and try ourselves and our ways, and turn unto him.

"What is man, that thou shouldest try him every moment? God perseveres in his work till he accomplish his purpose; he sends a variety of adversity and prosperity, to prove and try, to know all that is in the heart, whether they will keep his commandments or not.

"The account that God gives of man, that he is grass, vanity, a lie, &c. is calculated and designed to humble him; yet man flatters himself, and they flatter one another, which renders new experiments necessary every moment to try and humble him.

Verse 19. 'How long wilt thou not depart from me? wilt thou not yet rebuke the rod, or at least mitigate my affliction.' Some translate how long dost thou not spare me? and the next clause favours this view of it.
Let me alone till I swallow down my spittle; the word signifies to loose or untie that which is bound or straitened, and so to deal more gently and tenderly than before; the word is used Josh. i. 5, 'I will never leave thee, or let thee loose from me.'

Job's desire is, that God would loosen the bands of his affliction, and release him from his trouble; O let me have a little intermission, that I may have as much respite as to be able to swallow my spittle.

Observe, that since afflictions that are only for trial are so grievous, what must those be that are penal and proceed from wrath?

2dly, That a conviction of having neglected to improve the gracious presence of God for our sanctification, adds greatly to our pain in any trouble, and should lead us out to a hearty confession of our folly.

Verse 20. 'I have sinned.' As affliction brings sin to remembrance, so a sense of sin should prevent our fretting under afflictions, and it is a proper season to confess our sins: but this of Job's was only a general confession, and is that sufficient? Answer, It may be a sound one. It is one thing not to express particular sins, and another thing purposely to conceal them. Good and bad men speak often the same good words, but from very different principles, such as,

1st, A saint confesses freely, but it is extorted from a wicked man.

2d, He confesses feelingly; he tastes the bitterness of sin while he confesses: whereas
it is the fear of punishment that makes a natural man feel.

"3d, A good man confesses sincerely, and is in earnest both with God and his soul.

"The other casts out his sin as seamen do their goods in a storm, which they would wish back whenever it is over.

"4th, A believer mixes faith with his sorrows in his confessions, which no other man ever did.

"Observe, 1st, That the holiest man has cause to continue confessing his sin. While the ship leaks, the pump must not stand still.

"2d, As the very best are in danger of being lifted up above measure, they have cause daily to engage in the soul-humbling duty of confession.

"3d, Every confession of sin is a fresh obligation to do so no more, and as it gives the soul a taste of the bitterness of sin, so of the sweetness of forgiveness through Christ.

"4th, Confession of sin exalts Christ in our hearts and affections; for we thereby declare our belief of the riches of Christ, and his ability and willingness to take away our sins, and this at once encourages us to confess our enormous load of debt, and increases our love to him who gave his life a ransom for us; and how doth it commend the healing virtue of his blood, when we open to him such mortal wounds and diseases, which he only and easily can cure.

"Lastly, Confession of sin gives glory to every attribute of God, as it owns a debt and our in-
ability to make payment; and all that we enjoy or ever shall receive, must run us deeper in debt to free grace.

"What shall I do unto thee, O thou preserver of men! I can neither escape from, nor satisfy thy justice.

"Observe, That the holiest man cannot atone for one sin, by either sufferings or obedience. All that he can do is imperfect and defiled, and besides, it was a debt before; neither has God any where appointed man's righteousness to be a satisfaction for his sins.

"Observe 2d, That pardon and forgiveness of sin, must come in at the door of free grace. A good work trusted to, is as destructive as sin unrepented of.

"None but God has either power, patience, or wisdom, to be the preserver of foolish, helpless, erring man.

"Why hast thou set me as a mark against thee? It is reasonable to inquire the cause why the Lord smites, and it may be profitable to know. If saints knew what good God intends them by their afflictions, it would enable them to bear them, not only with patience, but with joy.

"I am a burden to myself. The removing of health and other comforts, as well as fears, cares, and pains, are burdens that oppress the spirit. Happy those who obey God's call, and cast them all on the Lord. But a believer can bear all the changes and assaults of creatures with comparative ease, till he apprehends that God is against him, and views him opposing
and wounding him through the creatures. Then he feels a weight which is too heavy for the strongest saint to bear; and when this is accompanied with a fear that his sins are not pardoned, it adds an intolerable weight to all his other burdens. Job seems to point to this with the last words of this answer, as he earnestly begs for pardon.

"Verse 21. 'And why dost thou not pardon my transgression, and take away mine iniquity?' &c.

"Job, having confessed his sin, and inquired of the Lord a reason of his continued sorrows, now applies for pardon of his sins, and of course for the removal of his afflictions, and he desires an answer to his suit speedily, lest help come too late: for he cannot hold out long, he must soon make his bed in the grave, and then being sought for he shall not be found.

"The Septuagint reads it, Why dost thou not forget my transgressions? but it generally imports the lifting up that which lies heavy upon us, and because pardon is the lifting off of sin, therefore it is often put for the act of pardoning.

"The word for take away, signifies to pass away, or to pass by; and transgression notes a violation of the commands of God with a high hand, or a rebellion of the mind, when pride of spirit shows itself.

"Iniquity denotes sin when committed from a crooked purpose.

"God only can pardon sin. When the name of the Lord is proclaimed, Exod. xxxiv.—for-
giving infidelity and transgression; and sin is mentioned last, to show that none can pardon, but he who is invested with all those glorious titles; and, therefore, God only can forgive sin.

"The greatest sins fall within the compass of God's pardoning mercy, and when sin is pardoned, the punishment is remitted.

"Though corruption is mortified, and the actings of it abated in pardoned persons; yet, properly speaking, pardon only takes away guilt, which is the obligation to punishment, and thereby punishment is taken away too.

"The pardoned sinner in God’s account, is as if he had never sinned; yet he must continue praying for pardon. Nathan told David, that God hath put away thy sin, yet David, Psal. li. prays, (O how earnestly!) for pardon again and again. Christ knew that his sheep should con-
tinue for ever, &c. yet how abundantly doth he pray that they may be kept from evil, John xvii. 15. 'I pray not that thou shouldest take them out of the world, but that thou shouldest keep them from the evil.'

"‘For now shall I sleep in the dust.' Only he who hath his treasure and his heart in heaven, can comfortably think of laying down his head in the dust.

"Job complains of restless nights; yet he could think of a time when he should lie quietly in his bed, and not have so much as a wak-
ing moment or distracting dream, till the morn-
ing of the resurrection.

"'Thou shalt seek me in the morning, but
I shall not be.' This is a reinforcement of what he said, verses 7, 8; here he speaks the same thing in a variety of words. The severity of my sickness threatens to prevent thy earliest preparations for my relief.

"Lord, pardon my sins, and give me the comfort of that pardon, and then I will easily bear my afflictions. Matt. ix. 2, 'Son, be of good cheer, thy sins be forgiven thee;' Isa. xxxiii. 24, 'The inhabitant shall not say, I am sick; the people that dwell therein shall be forgiven their iniquity.

"Whenever God removes the guilt of sin, it breaks the power of sin.

"If my sins be not pardoned while I live, I am lost and undone for ever.

"The consideration that we must shortly die, and may die suddenly, should make us very desirous, not only for our sins pardoned and our iniquities taken away, but for the comfortable sense of it.

CHAPTER VIII.

"Verse 1. 'Then answered Bildad the Shuhite, and said,' &c.

"Job having endeavoured to vindicate himself from Eliphaz's rash charge of hypocrisy, is next attacked by Bildad for having impugned the justice of God; and, by threatenings and promises, excites him to repentance.
"He 1st censures all that Job had spoken, verse 2. 2dly, He proposes a question concerning the justice of God, verse 3. 3dly, By the example of Job's children, and his own present condition, and the probability of his deliverance, he asserts the equity of God, verse 4—8; and, from the testimony of antiquity, he draws another argument, verse 8—10; and a third argument from similitudes, first, of a rush, verse 11—13; 2d, of a spider's web, verses 14, 15; 3d, of a flourishing tree, but soon plucked up.

He then sets forth the favour of God to the faithful and sincere, and proclaims the goodness of God to sinners, and even hypocrites, when they truly humble themselves and repent before him.

"Verse 2. 'How long wilt thou speak these things? and how long shall the words of thy mouth be like a strong wind?'

"Thus Bildad undervalues what Job had said, as if it was so contemptible as to be a trouble to hear it, and perhaps in allusion to what Job had said, chap. vi. 26. He speaks of his words as a strong wind, a tempestuous dangerous wind.

"The wind of words blows both good and evil to the world.

"Observe, That reproofs are often founded upon mistakes. Bildad clothes Job's speech in a sense that he abhorred, and then censures accordingly.

"Bildad prefers a special charge against
Job; and to give it the greater emphasis, and a strong negation, he turns it into a question.

"Verse 3. 'Doth God pervert judgment? or doth the Almighty pervert justice?'

"Far be it from him that he should, and from us that we should suspect him.

"The Lord God is most exact in judgment; he is righteous in all his ways, though his ways are past finding out. He proceeds by the evidence of the law as well as by the fact, and is as ready to acquit the innocent as to condemn the guilty."

"Verse 4. 'If thy children have sinned against him, and he hath cast them away for their transgression.'

"Job would acknowledge that God could not pervert judgment, but he would not admit that therefore his children were cast away and perished, on account of some great transgression. As both parents and children are transgressors, they should justify God under every affliction.

"For although every sin cries for vengeance till either God put the sinner into the hands of sin, that he may at once receive pay for and from his own folly, or he receives forgiveness through the blood of Christ; yet extraordinary suffering is not always on account of hei-

* Men sometimes pervert justice for fear of the power of others, but God stands in awe of none. It is often through man's weakness and impotency that he is unjust. It is God's omnipotency that he cannot be so.
nous transgressions, but for the discovery and trial of grace.

"Having, in an indirect way, advised Job to take warning by the fate of his children, he now admonishes him to apply to God by prayer.

"Verse 5. 'If thou woulest seek unto God betimes, and make thy supplication to the Almighty.'

"This is as if Bildad had said, Plead not thine own integrity, but cast thyself at the feet of mercy, not only as a beggar but as a rebel who has exposed thyself to the just displeasure of God. Seek unto him diligently, and without delay. Though he is found of some who sought him out, yet we never read of any finding him who sought him negligently.

"As the judgments of God on children are a correction to the parents, so they should humble themselves under each other's afflictions.

"As our sinfulness cannot prevent, so our obedience cannot procure, the mercy of God; In all our duties we should lie in the dust, and lay our best services in the dust. A thought of our own worth is inconsistent with a supplication.

"Verse 6. 'If thou wert pure and upright.' Purity refers to holiness of life, and uprightness to inward sincerity. None but holy persons can perform holy duties; so the effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much. But fervency effects nothing unless the person praying be righteous.
"It is no way contrary to the doctrine of free grace to say, we must be holy if we desire and expect to be heard. To make supplication to God with a reserve to go on in sin is awful impudence.

"Bildad seems to mean, If thou wert pure in thy ways, and sincere in thy ends, surely now he would awake for thee. It signifies both to awake and arise. God's providential sleeping and waking are the steps and visible motions of his power, mercy, and justice in the world. This teaches us that prayer is the best mean to awaken, and that it shall certainly be heard. And O how quietly and confidently may they sleep, for whom God wakes. They are secure and happy; for he will make the habitation of thy righteousness prosperous. Prosperity is in the hand of God, and a righteous habitation shall be prosperous. When kingdoms are holy habitations, they will soon be quiet ones. Nations may be said to be habitations of righteousness when right is done without delay, and with impartiality. No notice must be taken of the persons but of the cause; and unnecessary and designed delays are great injustice.

"Righteousness cannot act without a rule, and the best of rules, without good magistrates to execute them, can never make a habitation of righteousness. Bildad next encourages Job.

"Verse 7. 'Though thy beginning was small, yet thy latter end should greatly increase.'
This is the third gradation. God will not only awake for thee, and give prosperity, but will greatly increase thee.

Observe, That though the Lord is able to deliver at once, yet he usually raises his people by degrees. When God makes some little repairs of outward comforts, do not despise them, but receive them as beginnings of greater things to follow. Remember Elijah's little cloud; and when the day breaks we know that high noon will come in due time, and so wait patiently for it.

Bildad proceeds to a second general argument, by an appeal to the ancients.

Verse 8. 'For inquire, I pray thee, of the former age, and prepare thyself to the search of their fathers.'

The former age may include all time past. The fathers were dead, but they lived in their traditions and monuments. These he must search.

It is in vain to expect to find truth but by careful and persevering investigation. And, 1st, In the exercise of humility a lowly mind is prepared to know the mind of God. 2d, By a holy submission to the truth, and yielding obedience to it, so far as we know, is a good means of preparing for the further reception of it. And, 3d, We must search for truth with a genuine love to it, and we ought, 4th, To add to all these earnest and believing prayer, Jas. i. 5, 'Let him ask of God that giveth to all men liberally.'
Verse 9. 'For we are but of yesterday, and know nothing; our days upon earth are a shadow.'

It well becomes us to have humble thoughts of our own knowledge.

The frailty as well as the shortness of our lives, but especially our misimprovement of our time, is the great cause of our ignorance of divine things.

Our life here is but a fleeting shadow, and O how foolish is it to spend our few days of uncertain duration in the pursuit of the vanities of this world, to the neglect of the study of that knowledge and enjoyments that will last for ever.

Verse 10. 'Shall not they teach thee, and tell thee, and utter words out of their heart?'

This is as if he had said, thou shalt not lose thy labour; they will not speak rashly and indiscreetly as thou hast done. But from their heart they speak things of weight. And while we seriously consider what they have said and done, it is as if they now spake. Heb. xi. 4, 'Being dead, he yet speaketh.'

It is said, they have Moses and the prophets, let them hear them. But much more may we say, we have Christ and his apostles, whom we ought to consult and obey in all things.

Truth is not only a revelation from but of God, and, therefore, we should manifest our high estimation of, and desire after more acquaintance with it, by laying it up in our hearts, and living under its influence.
Verse 11. 'Can the rush grow up without mire? Can the flag grow up without water?'

They cannot. The rush can no more grow without mire, nor the flag without water, than a man can live without food. They must quickly wither, as Bildad says plainly.

Verse 12. 'While it is yet in his greeness,' which implies its beauty and strength, and not cut down. That is, before it is cropt or is fully ripe, it withereth before any other herb. That is, more speedily than any herb of less show, but better rooted. Bildad applies his similitude.

Verse 13. 'So are the paths of all that forget God.'

Our actions are compared to a path because of their frequency, and they lead to a certain end; some to life, and others to death.

God is not in all the thoughts of a wicked man to obey or honour him, neither is he in the thoughts of God, to bless or pardon him.

To forget God is to neglect to think of him. To despise and disobey his commands, and depart from him. It is to live on earth as if there were no God, either in regard of mercy to be received, or of duty to be performed.

Observe, 1st, That to forget God is a heinous sin, and the cause of all other sins.

Whether is it the greatest wonder, that God should mind us at all, or that we should be unmindful of God?

Observe, 2d, That all that forget God, however flourishing they appear as to profession or talk about religion, shall quickly wither;
for neither grace nor comforts can exist but in fellowship with Christ, the fountain of life.

"' And the hypocrite's hope shall perish.'

"' The word hypocrite comes from a root that signifies close and covered, and, by a metaphor, polluted, &c. So, in a large sense, all are hypocrites who try to hide their sins. But properly a hypocrite is one who has God and heaven in his mouth, while he loves the world in his heart, and in secret can commit any species of wickedness.

"' Observe, That though hypocrites may deceive themselves with false hopes till death, they will then be awfully disappointed.

"Verse 14. 'Whose hope shall be cut off, and whose trust shall be a spider's web.'

"Hope and trust are often taken promiscuously. There is a gradual but not an essential difference between them. The word signifies a very quiet secure trust; and, where it is genuine, it has a double effect.

1st, It confirms and strengthens the heart against all opposition; and,

"2dly, It encourages and supports against all dangers, and the want of these discovers the falseness of the hypocrite's hope and trust.

"Trust brings God and the soul together; but the hypocrite never comes near God; and no marvel that he is afraid to come near danger."

* The expectation of the hypocrite shall come to an end. His hope is woven out of his own bowels. It is the creature of his own fancy, and arises purely from a conceit of his own merit. He flatters himself in his own eyes; is secure of heaven; and imposes upon the
"Why is the trust of the hypocrite compared to a spider's web or house? Because the profession and all the labours of an hypocrite are weak and unstable, and shall perish like the spider's web. Besides, it is a snare to catch flies, and so is his profession; for he would count godliness a poor thing if he did not make a gain of it; and having put on the cloak of a profession, he thinks himself safe in it, like the spider in his web.

"Verse 15. 'He shall lean upon his house.' The wealth of the world, and the favour of the men of the world, may be a hypocrite's support, yet I think Bildad rather means, that a hypocrite leans upon his spiritual gifts, duties, and supposed graces. Upon all these, and out of these he builds, and thinks he hath made an house that will stand for ever.

"These three bear witness to the hypocrite, and they agree in one to deceive. He having a witness within himself, a certificate under the hand of Satan, and commendatory letters from the world, all which give hope that his house shall stand for ever.

"But behold the issue. It shall not stand. All the objects of hope and trust shall deceive and disappoint the hypocrite at last.

"When we depend upon any duty, we give the honour to ordinances that is due to God

world by his vain confidence. But it will easily and certainly be swept away, as the cobweb with the besom, when God shall come to purge his house.—Henry.
alone. We can derive no more benefit from such trust to ordinances than by the neglect of them.

"Nothing is of sufficient strength for us to stay upon but the free grace of God in Christ Jesus. The next clause is of the same import. "He shall take hold of it, but it shall not endure.

"It is our glory to hold fast integrity, yea, and duties, in point of practice and obedience; but it is our sin, and very dangerous to hold them fast in reliance and confidence.

"His worldly and spiritual house that he thinks is established, shall pass away as a shadow, and disappoint his hopes. It shall not endure.

"In verses 16 to 19, Bildad farther illustrates the condition of an hypocrite by a third similitude. It is as if he had said, If I have debased the hypocrite by comparing him to a rush or flag, and his estate to a spider's web, then let us compare him to a flourishing tree fastening his roots and spreading his branches. Yet at last he shall be cut down and wither.

"Verse 16. 'He is green before the sun, and his branch shooteth forth in his garden.'

"The ordinary heat of the sun signifies prosperity, the extreme heat of the sun persecution. So the meaning may be, that before persecution and trouble arise he is green and flourishing, and appears very beautiful and gay.

"He lives as in a paradise, so the word is translated, Gen. xxviii. While hypocrites flourish outwardly, they continue to rebel against
the light which would keep them from sin. But they love the light which shows any good they do; whereas the upright are more desiring of being good, and doing good, than of making it appear that they are so. Not only does the hypocrite shoot forth his branches, but,

"Verse 17. 'His roots are wrapped about the heap, and seeth the place of stones.'

"He lives, converses, or dwells even where there seems to be the least probability of his stay; for he abides in the place or house of stones. Another sense is, he looks into the house of stones; he annoys his master's house at the foundation, and hinders the light of the windows.

"The state of the hypocrite, thus settled and made firm, is but tottering. It will not be able to stand.

"Verse 18. 'If he destroy him from his place,' which Broughton translates, 'If the sun root him up from his place.' The sun, which for a time makes a tree to flourish, may at last so search it that it dies. So when God comes to remove an hypocrite, there is an end of him quickly.

"'It shall deny him, saying, I have not seen him.' The meaning may be given thus, That a tree highly grown, &c. may be so cut up that it shall not be known where it stood. So, though a hypocrite may flourish for a while, yet at last he shall be swept so clean away, that his name and memory shall be forgotten.
"Whence, observe, that the memory of wicked men shall perish for ever, and that destruction often comes upon them in the very height of their prosperity."

"Bildad having laid the hypocrite so low that no man will own him, concludes,

"Verse 19. 'Behold, this is the joy of his way, and out of the earth shall others grow.'

"Those joys that arise from outward things, or from a man's good opinion of himself, is but for a moment. When you cast up all the comfort and happiness of the flourishing tree of the hypocrite, it only comes to this, that he is to be rooted up, and by such as he neither feared nor suspected, and those that knew him before will not so much as own him.

"Whereas the sincere and upright, who have been trodden down as the mire of the streets by the wicked in this world, shall grow up.

"It is truly awful to live expecting joy from a hope that shall perish, and that others should still grow up indulging the same hope, notwithstanding that so many have been disappointed by it. Happy they who have a well-grounded hope of which they shall never be ashamed.

"Bildad now concludes in a vindication of the justice of God.

"Verse 20. 'Behold, God will not cast away a perfect man;' that is, the Lord doth highly esteem and prize a righteous man.

"God calls after many who flee from him, but he casts off none that come to him. As
none come till he draws them, it is certain he will not drive any away who come to him in his Son; who have the spirit, and are joined to him in a perpetual covenant; and they cleave to and follow hard after God, and his truths, &c. Let them beware of casting away their confidence, or being indifferent to the concerns of God's glory.

"Neither will he help the evil doers." Some read, he will not put forth his hand to evil doers; that is, he will have no fellowship nor familiarity with them. He will not receive a gift or offering from them.

"God is not a patron or aider of evil doers. As man's duty ought not to stop in negatives, neither doth the mercy of God. He bestows positive blessings.

"Verse 21. 'Till he fill thy mouth with laughing, and thy lips with rejoicing.'

"But is it not said, Wo to them that laugh? It is true that laughter that arises from worldly riches, honours, and carnal pleasures, as such hath a wo annexed to it. But to express ourselves joyfully when God works any deliverance, or bestows any favours upon us, is not only comely but holy.

"In the second Psalm God is said to laugh at the proud opposers of his truth and people. And though they may not insult any in misery, yet his people laugh at the disappointments of those who have derided God's truths, and scorned his people, when they see the vengeance of God poured out on them."
"This is no ordinary joy; it is a triumphant joy, which is the peculiar portion of a godly man. *My servants shall rejoice, and ye shall be ashamed.*

"Verse 22. 'They that hate thee shall be clothed with shame.' *

"Natural men are such haters of holiness, that they not only hate God and the saints, but even hypocrites; for they cannot endure a man so far as he appears religious.

"Shame is the fruit of sin. To be clothed with it is a great punishment, and most proper for such as are proud of their clothing. Shame is opposite to laughing.

"And the dwelling place of the wicked shall come to nought. Dwelling place is tabernacle in Hebrew, and means his whole estate shall be brought to nought. Some say tabernacle notes their religious duties. Wicked men will serve God outwardly; they have their tabernacles as well as the saints; they pray and hear, &c.; but whether it is a civil or religious tabernacle down it must come; both their riches and religion shall come to nought.

"Thus Bildad advises Job to think aright of the justice and judgment of God; to humble himself and seek unto God; and to forbear

*It is true that the enemies of the saints will be clothed with shame when they see them crowned with honour; but it doth not therefore follow, that if Job were not perfectly restored to his former prosperity, he would forfeit the character of a perfect man.—Henry.*
complaining of his troubles, or desiring the end of them by death.

"In answer to his reproof or advice, Job replies in chap. ix. and x.

CHAPTER IX.

"Verses 1, 2. 'Then Job answered and said, I know it is so of a truth: but how should man be just with God?'

"Bildad had said, Doth God pervert judgment? No, saith Job. He hath not a word to say against the truth of God. We should cheerfully acquiesce in any truth even when spoken by those whose errors are such that we must zealously oppose them, and this is very becoming in a champion for truth.

"God is just not only when he punishes the guilty, but even when he afflicts the innocent. It is no way inconsistent to admit the justice of God, and maintain our own innocency, when we smart under his rod.

"The argument of Job's friends is, God is righteous; for he deals with men according to their deserts. But Job asserts that however he deals with men he is righteous.

"All must acknowledge that there is no sin at all in God, and that we have no goodness at all in us. Though the saints are said to be partakers of the divine nature, yet they cannot bear a comparison with the perfections of God.
"Verse 3. 'If he will contend with him, he cannot answer him one of a thousand.'

"In this Job asserts that no man can be just before God by inherent righteousness.

"No man can be justified by his works. He that mixeth but one sin with a thousand good actions cannot be justified by his works. How then shall he be justified by works who hath not one perfectly good action amongst a thousand sins?

"Should man contend with his own heart, that will condemn him; man cannot stand before the tribunal of conscience. How much less can he answer God. Yet man is naturally prone to contend with God, not only in quarrelling with the dispensations of his providence, but at his sovereignty in his method of saving sinners, and in the rule of their obedience.

"Verse 4. 'He is wise in heart, and mighty in strength: who hath hardened himself against him, and hath prospered?'

"Having asserted the wisdom and power of God, he challengeth all the world, as if he had said, Do ye think I have any thoughts to contend with God? No; I know not one who hath accepted this challenge, or hardened himself against God and prospered. He both knows how to do right, and has power to do it; and, therefore, needs not pervert judgment for fear of man; and there is no turning him out of the paths of justice.

"A hard heart is the worst of all judgments, and it brings all judgments upon us. Prov.
xxix. 1. 'He that hardeneth his neck shall suddenly be destroyed.' It is certain ruin to contend with God.

"Observe, That God is infinitely wise and powerful. The power of God being as large as his will; he doth whatsoever pleaseth him in heaven and earth.

"If the power of men were equal to their wills, what work would they quickly make in this world?

"Verse 5. 'Which moveth the mountains, and they know not; and overthroweth them in his anger.'

"This is one proof of Job's assertion, and shows that the greatest things are done by God's almighty power, whether it is taken literally or figuratively; and he does them with the greatest speed and secrecy. How often are the rich and mighty cast down before they see any hand touching them.

"Let us beware of security and stupidity. If the moving and shaking of our mountains do not awaken us, it forbodes destruction; for he overturneth them in his anger. God is not angry as man, but is said to be angry when he doth like man in his anger. He lets out the effect of his anger, but without any of the feelings of anger.

"Hence observe, That the troubles and confusions among creatures are tokens and effects of the anger of God. It is no wonder if kingdoms shake when the Lord comes to testify against and root out superstition, idolatry, and profaneness. Yea, he shakes kingdoms
that he may establish Jerusalem. Isa. xxxiii. 20. 'Thine eyes shall see Jerusalem a quiet habitation.'

"Verse 6. 'Which shakes the earth out of her place, and the pillars thereof tremble.'

"The Lord doth not only shake mountains, but he can take up the whole earth and shake and overthrow it. If kingdoms totter who can stand fast? But when the pillars of church and state are trembling and shaking, the saints who have received a kingdom that cannot be shaken, may stand without dismay.

"Verse 7. 'Which commandeth the sun, and it riseth not, and sealeth up the stars.'

"At the command of God the sun riseth. But to stay the sun from rising is still a greater display of his power.

"As he can seal up the spiritual treasures, so he seals up the natural influences of the heavens, that the earth and the fruits of it shall receive no quickening, no refreshing from them.

"Job produces a proof of the omnipotency of God. He is great in power. Why? Because he can stop the sun. He that can stay the sun what can he not do?

"Verse 8. 'Which alone spreadeth out the heavens, and treadeth upon the waves of the sea.'

"This spreading is either an exposition of the nature of the heavens, Gen. i. 8. or refers to the foregoing words, and shows that God can command the sun, and seal up the stars, for as he made so he can dispose of them.
For he created all things by the Word, and the Word was God, &c. He needs not the help of any creature to do any work.

"To sail or swim in the waters is ordinary. But to tread upon the waters is wonderful. He walks upon them as on a pavement.

"Though winds and waves are the most disobedient creatures in the world, yet a word from God calms them; when Christ rebuked the sea, by saying peace be still, as if one should hush a child, it is said the men marvelled, Mark iv. 38.

"The power of Christ is as eminent in stilling the rage of mystical as of literal waters, and we find them mentioned together, Psalm lxxv.

"Verse 9. 'Which maketh Arcturus, Orion, and Pleiades, and the chambers of the south.'

"Having heard of the power of God in stretching out the heavens, we have here his skill displayed in adorning and beautifying these heavens. Or this verse may be connected with the last clause of the former, and is an answer to those that might say the motion of the seas is regulated by the rising and setting of the moon, and other planets and constellations. True, saith Job, yet the Lord treadeth upon the waves of the sea; it is he who orders them, and not the stars. He teaches us that though the heavens influence the seas, yet God works upon the heavens. He makes Arcturus, &c.

"The power and wisdom of God appears in the magnitude, and multitude, and regular
moving of the stars. It may be very profitable to consider them. Only beware of confining the providence of God to secondary causes; avoid that, and the heart may be elevated to God by meditating on his works, Psalm xix.

"The sun, moon, and stars are universal preachers, the world is their charge. Job gathers all these into a general conclusion.

"Verse 10. 'Which doeth great things past finding out, yea, and wonders without number.'

"Mark in what a condition Job was when he spake thus honourably of the name and power of God. This shows the admirable frame of his spirit, in all his distempers his heart stood right, and he would speak good of God whatsoever evil befell him from the hand of God. He sees God as wise in troubling as he is in delivering. A carnal man would be above God if at any time he putts forth his power against him. But an holy heart saith, Let God improve his power and wisdom which way he pleaseth, even to afflict and chasten me, yet still I'll say his be the power forever. I extol his power.

"When we can honour God frowning as well as when he smiles upon us, then we have learned to honour God indeed.

"Job having exalted the power and wisdom of God in many instances, and concluded all with an admiring sentence in this verse, he in verses 11—13 seems to give a proof of these attributes of God's works, that they are innumerable and unsearchable, &c.

"Verse 11. 'For he goeth by me, and I
see him not: he passeth on also, but I perceive him not.'

"As if he had said, I am not able to reckon how often he works, for I cannot always perceive him. I am not able to search out all his great and wonderful doings, for I cannot see him in many of them. His motion is not local but providential. He destroys, he builds, he plants, he roots up; but I am not able to apprehend him, or unriddle the meaning of his wonderful works. He is a spirit, bodily eyes cannot behold him; therefore man is not able to contend with, much less to overcome him. God sees all, himself being unseen, and fills all places. His presence being unperceived, nothing is hid from him; yet he is hid to every thing but to the faith of his own people. God works round about and in us, yet we know little of him. Our blindness should abase us in our own eyes. This is a proof of man's ignorance and blindness; and the 12th and 13th verses is a proof of his weakness.

"Verse 12. "Behold he taketh away, who can hinder him? who will say unto him, What dost thou?"

"This shows how impossible it is for man to deal with God. He who cannot so much as ask God what he doth, cannot prevent any of his proceedings.

"Man is not only not able to stop the Lord from what he would do, but he has no right to put in a plea against what he hath done. No; not to ask what he has been doing, or why he did it. We may ask in a humble way
for information, not in a bold way of contradiction. We may, in zeal to his glory, not in discontent with our own condition, expostulate with him about what he has done. Josh. viii. 7—9. He is the sovereign Lord, there is no appeal from him. All our comforts are in his hand, and when he either by himself or by instruments takes them away, we must quietly submit.

"Verse 13. 'If God will not withdraw his anger, the proud helpers do stoop under him.'

"Suppose any should come to help those whom God hath a mind to take away, shall they prosper? No; not only they but their assistants shall fall before him.

"Pride is one of the greatest weaknesses of man; but it is always grounded upon supposed strength. If a man have a little strength of body or mind, of memory or understanding, &c. he is under a strong temptation to pride. Whoever these proud helpers are, the meaning is, that except the Lord himself restrain his anger, no power in heaven or earth, how proud or strong soever, and however confident of success, is able to change him. Helpers shall not help themselves, much less those to whose help they come, against the mind and purpose of God. Prayer is said to appease the wrath of God, and stay his anger; yet it is an act of God's will which turns away his anger. He is infinitely free even when he acknowledges that we lay the most powerful restraint upon him. It is the command of God that prayer should be made to him, and he promises to
turn to us when we pray. When he stirs up his people to pray for the doing of any thing, it is an evidence that he is about to do it, and that he will withdraw his anger. Job having lifted up the glory and majesty of God in his power and justice, and showed the utter insufficiency of creatures to implead his justice or to rescue themselves out of the hand of his power, he now comes nearer home.

"Verse 14. 'How much less shall I answer him, and choose out my words to reason with him!'

"If these mighty and powerful creatures, and the mightiest of the children of men, are not able to contend with God, how much less shall I answer, &c.? I am so far from being able to answer him, that I know not how to choose out words to reason with him. A godly man's thoughts are lowest of himself. Are we then not to reason with God at all? We must not reason on the footing of our own worth, and we ought not to attempt it in our own strength: but we may reason from such arguments as these, The riches of his grace, the freeness of his promises, the greatness of our need, or the troubles of the church, and the concerns of his own glory, &c. Thus we may reason with God for the blessing we ask according to his will, and in these the life and strength of prayer consists. Jacob's prayer contains seven arguments; and in the issue, got not only a new blessing but also a new name.
"We may declare our cause, and confess our sins without fear, but we must not presume to declare our righteousness, that we may justify ourselves. This Job declines. If the Lord object against me, I am not the man who dares, or is able to answer him; and if I take upon me to object against the Lord, he can easily answer me.

"Verse 15. ‘Whom, though I were righteous, yet would I not answer, but I would make supplication to my Judge.’

"Job would not only not answer God objecting or reasoning, but that he would not answer him accusing or judging him. I must acknowledge myself to be what God judgeth me to be, and that I am worthy to suffer whatever he appoints me. All the failings and infirmities in man are the issue and effects of sin. Job’s supposition hath a negation in it. I am not righteous. He did not deny the work of the Spirit, or the grace of God in him, but he would not own them in his pleadings with God. He could stand upon his terms with men, but before God he had nothing to mention but Christ. In reference to justification we must forget all our sanctification, and in sanctification we must forget all that is past and press to that which is before. Christ draws the picture of an hypocrite to the life, in the parable of the Pharisee and the publican. Never did any good man tell God such a story of his own life as the Pharisee told.

"Hezekiah and Nehemiah seems to put God in mind of their good deeds. But it is one
thing to put the Lord in mind of what we have done historically, and another thing to plead what we have done legally. It is one thing to show the Lord the work of his grace in us, and another to mind the Lord of our works to obtain his grace. Job resolves to crave pity and pardon at the hands of God, and thus obey the counsel of Bildad.

"Prayer overcomes when nothing else can. Christ conquered by dying, and we conquer by submitting; and yet it is not supplication as an act of ours, but as it is an ordinance of God's, that it prevails with him.

"He looks on prayer as having the stamp of his own institution, otherwise our greatest humblings could prevail no more than our proudest contentings.

"This holy man having abased himself before the Lord, and disclaimed the least intention of contending with him, now confirms it.

"Verse 16. 'If I had called, and he had answered me, yet would I not believe that he had hearkened to my voice.'

"When I find God so gracious as to grant what I pray for, yet I will not believe that he hath done it for any worthiness in me, or in my prayers; or on account of any value which my person hath with God. Job speaks very highly of the goodness of God, and very humbly of himself. When man prays, God answers; but he does not answer because man prays.

"He speaks very highly of the providence
of God, though the dispensations of providence be dark towards him.

"Verse 17. 'For he breaketh me with a tempest, and multiplieth my wounds without cause.'

"A tempest, or whirlwind, which implies a sudden and unexpected affliction, and also its fierceness and violence. It is irresistible, who can stand before it? The Lord lays very sore afflictions upon those that are very dear to him. Therefore, we cannot distinguish men by either the matter or measure of their afflictions; that which is a judgment to one is but a chastening to another; with the same weapon he wounds a friend and destroys an enemy.

"Though he hath wounded me already, yet he may wound me still, without giving me a reason. Or though I have given him no cause, that is, not the cause that you have alleged against me, namely, that I am an hypocrite.

"God is the only Judge who may give sentence without hearing parties. He hath the reason of all things in himself. He not only breaks me with a tempest, and multiplies my wounds, but

"Verse 18. 'He will not suffer me to take my breath.' These words are of the same import with Chap. vii. 19, and implies not only that he had many and great afflictions, but that he had no respite.

"'But filleth me with bitterness.' Which notes abundance of afflictions. Though Christ drank the cup of his Father's wrath to the
very bottom, yet when he tasted the vinegar he would not drink. If it be grievous to taste but a little of a bitter cup, then judge how grievous Job's sufferings were when bitterness was both his meat and drink. Since afflictions sometimes come incessantly, therefore when thou art assaulted, prepare for fresh attacks. The Lord often mixes a very bitter cup for his own people; but everlasting love is always an ingredient in the very bitterest of them.

"Notice here a climax or gradation of four steps, Job says, that he was unable to answer the Lord, verse 14: That if he could he would not, verse 15: That if God should answer his prayers in mercy, he would not ascribe it to them: That God might go on to afflict him, for some read, He will multiply my wounds.

"Job humbles himself yet farther before God.

"Verse 19. 'If I speak of strength, lo, he is strong; and if of judgment, who shall set me a time to plead?'

"God is of infinite and insuperable strength. No creature is able to grapple with him. As I cannot oppose God by force, neither can I at the bar or at the judgment-seat. Neither men nor angels can stand before God.

"Verse 20. 'If I justify myself, mine own mouth shall condemn me.' But of what would it condemn me? Surely of folly. Paul says, 2 Cor. xii. 21. 'I am become a fool,' &c. That is, ye ought to have given a testimony of me, and I had been condemned in justify-
ing myself, as it would have been unnecessary. But it is a duty to witness for ourselves when those neglect it who ought to do it.

"Job speaks to his friends of his integrity; but before God he humbles himself under a sense of his own vileness.

"If I say I am perfect, it shall also prove me perverse. But was Job perverse? No. Yet a boast of his perfection would have been a proof of his perverseness. Nothing discovers an evil heart more than a profession of its own goodness. Though Job had a free and full certificate of his innocency, (neither bought nor got with flattery,) yet he forbears to bring it forth to his friends. Let God report him perfect to men, he will not report himself perfect before God. They who have most real worth are least in their own eyes.

"Verse 21. 'Though I were perfect, yet would I not know my soul; I would despise my life.'

"It is the greatest perfection to know our own imperfection. If a man see no motes in his life, (though some see not the beams that are there,) it is because he walks in darkness, he doth not know his own soul.

"Not to know how frail and sinful we are, to what corruptions and temptations we are most subject, is a sinful and dangerous ignorance; and not to know our graces, and the work of the Spirit within us, is no less so. The new creature is light, and carries light for its own discovery.
A good man would have God know the worst of him; but he is not anxious to know the best of himself. He would not have his sin hid from God; but he would hide all his good deeds from himself.

Verse 22. 'This is one thing, therefore I said it.' As if he had said, you have said many things about the power of God, &c. in all which I agree with you; but I must disagree with you in this one thing, that *he destroyeth both the righteous and the wicked,* destroy signifies to blot out—Noting, that the outward dispensation of God may be severe to the perfect as well as to the wicked. The perfect man is the man in the highest form of holiness, &c. And the wicked, or unquiet, and tumultuous man, or mighty and rich man. Riches are so often got by wickedness, and is the occasion of making so many wicked, that rich and wicked may change names, and signify the same person.

Bildad said, God will not cast away a righteous man. This Job denies; and affirms, that a godly man may be afflicted through life, and die under it; which, in Bildad's sense, is to be cast away.

I have said it, and I will abide by the position while I live, not because it is my opinion, but because it is a truth.

Job brings forward another argument to confirm his opinion.

Verse 23. 'If the scourge slay suddenly, he will laugh at the trial of the innocent.'

That is, so far as man can judge, there is
no difference in the dispensations of God toward the innocent in their trials, and unto the wicked under the greatest judgments; which words are at once a confirmation and aggravation of what he had said before.

"The scourge means any affliction; every scourge doth not slay, and many which slay do not take effect suddenly; slaying suddenly is a judgment coming unexpectedly. Those that sleep in security seldom dream of scourges. God can send affliction and death in a moment. 1. Thes. v. 3. 'Then sudden destruction cometh upon them.' Security springs from infidelity, and both from slighting the word of God. No marvel then if the Lord hasten his wrath to justify his truth, and slay suddenly those that despise his admonitions. Let us then watch and be ready for every event, that death may not overtake us unawares.

"Verse 24. 'The earth is given into the hand of the wicked: he covereth the faces of the judges thereof; if not, where, and who is he?'

"Having shown how the innocent are afflicted, Job now shows how the wicked are exalted, and from both he infers, that it cannot be known by a prosperous or afflicted state whether a man be godly or wicked. The innocent may be under the scourge while the wicked are upon the throne; and who appoints this but God himself? No man hath any thing but by the gift of God. There is a gift by Providence whereby he gives the earth into the hand of the wicked; and there
is a special gift of promise peculiar to believers; they enjoy earthly things by a heavenly title.

"When Nebuchadnezzar invaded the land and took it by violence, he had no thought of doing the will of God, but of serving his ambition and covetousness. Yet the Lord saith of this cruel oppressor, I have given him all the lands, &c. So, then, to receive by donation from God denotes any kind or way of possession.

"He covereth the faces of the judges thereof." A wicked prince covereth the faces of the judges by gifts, threats, or oppressing and putting them to death; and sometimes by overlooking men of ability, courage, honesty, and uprightness, and preferring only such as are base and corrupt, and who will serve a turn and comply with the times.

"Some say, it is God that covereth the face of the judges. It is said of judges, Ps. lxxii. 5. That they know not, neither will they understand, they walk on in darkness, (these three expressions explain the text.) And what follows?

"Then all the foundations of the earth are out of course. When judges are corrupt and law is perverted it is impossible to obtain justice.

"Hence observe: That ignorant and tyrannical magistrates are sent by God for a scourge to mankind. I gave them a king in mine anger.

"Ignorant, cruel, and partial judges have their faces covered, and God is just in giving
men over to such a scourge; and the next words challenge all to make another answer.

"If not, where, and who is he?"

"If it be not the Lord who doth this, then show me who it is. No creature can do good without the directing and enabling hand of God. It is matter of comfort to consider that the ways and issues of good and evil are in his hand who is good, and doth good, and can do no evil.

"Job having shown, in general, that the wicked are exalted and the innocent afflicted, proceeds to prove the latter from his own example.

"Verse 25. 'Now my days are swifter than a post; they flee away, they see no good.'

"The ancients represented time with wings, to show that it was not only running but flying. For the most part we live as if time were chained to a standing post rather than like a running post. One said, when a creature comfort was taken from him, methinks if I had it again I would enjoy it. We seldom enjoy what we have, it is passing from us while in possession. Hence, Job concludes, They see no good. The good things of this life are so transient, that, so far from feeling or tasting them, I have not time enough to see them. To see is to enjoy good. The things of heaven shall not perish in the using, happiness there is real and abiding, and therefore perfect.

"Verse 26. 'They are passed away as the swift ships, and as the eagle hasteth to the prey.'
FROM CARYL ON JOB. 173

"My days, and all the comforts I had in them, are passed away as ships upon the streams of swift rivers that go down with speed.

"Job's days passed not as an eagle in her ordinary flight, but as one whom hunger adds swiftness to her wings.

"Job does not speak thus, as if he under-valued the favours God had bestowed on him, but with a view to answer the objections of his friends, and maintain his argument, that no distinction can be made of men by outward dispensations, for the situation of a godly man is as transitory as that of a wicked man.

"Having illustrated by three similitudes, that a righteous man may quickly lose all his outward comforts, in verse 27-29, he proves that he may be entangled with afflictions beyond hope of escape, which he amplifies, verse 30, 31. In the highest strains of rhetoric, he shows that his sorrows were remediless.

"Verse 27. 'If I say I will forget my complaint, I will leave off my heaviness and comfort myself.'

"If I should set myself to lay aside the thoughts of my troubles, and try to leave off my heaviness and complain no more, yet it will not do, I find no ease. It is sometimes as hard to forget, as at any time to remember. Sorrow is not easily shaken off, and joy and comfort is beyond the power of the creature; all means will prove ineffectual until the Lord give a blessing with them.

"Verse 28. 'I am afraid of all my sorrows.'

"Christ himself was afraid of all his sor-
rows, Matt. xxvi. 38. Now, if he was afraid of his sorrows, though he knew he should overcome, how much more may the fear of sorrows overcome us.

"I fear that, by striving to unloose and overcome my sorrows, I straiten the cords of my affliction faster upon me. The next clause seems to hint at the reason why his sorrows hung so close upon him.

"I know that thou wilt not hold me innocent." Some refer the thou to God, and so Job expresses a fear that God will not be reconciled to him, and blot out his transgressions; or rather, that he will not relieve him from punishment; for the fear of trouble will not remove till guilt is taken away.

"Or it may be as if Job had said to Bildad, how shall I gain credit of integrity in thy opinion, so long as outward trouble renders me a hypocrite in thy sight?

"It is easier to do good than to be good, and those who are really good, are seldom free from suffering.

The following words may be connected with either of the interpretations of the former verse; I know thou O God, or thou O Bildad, wilt not hold me innocent; now then,

"Verse 29. 'If I be wicked, why then labour I in vain?'

"You assert that I am wicked, and that the providence of God gives you reason to think so.

"Why do I labour for apologies to excuse myself? or to defend my cause by arguments. Your counsel is, that I should seek unto God;
but surely your opinion and counsel cannot agree, for if I am wicked I labour in vain.

"The original is absolute. I am wicked, not only in the opinion of men, but before God. I acknowledge that I am wicked indeed; Lord if thou judge me according to my sin, then in vain do I seek to comfort myself, for in thy sight I cannot be justified. Bildad said, Ch. viii. 6, If thou wert pure; alas, saith Job, I can never be pure before God, I am as pure as ever I shall be, and that is, I am impure and shall be so at my best, which sense agrees with the following verses.

"Verse 30. 'If I wash myself with snow water, and make my hands never so clean.'

"That is, though I wash myself till I become white and pure as snow. The saints who came out of great tribulation, are said to have washed their robes, &c.

"Sanctification, which is cleaning from the filth, and justification, from the guilt of sin, are set forth by washing, 1 Cor. vi. 11; but ye are washed.

"The hands signifies our outward works, as the former expression refers to internal holiness. Though my heart were as clean as washing can make my hands.

"Yet verse 31. 'Thou shalt plunge me in the ditch.'

"As if he had said, thou mightest have greater cause to plunge me in the ditch, when I am so fine and clean in mine own eyes than before.

"Thoughts of our own purity only discovers
our impurity. We are never more deformed and defiled in the sight of God, than when we are pure in our own eyes. The Pharisee is represented as washing himself in snow water, and the poor publican as plunging himself into the ditch; yet he went down to his house justified rather than the other.

"'And mine own clothes shall abhor me.' This notes extreme pollution, or it may refer to the continuance of his afflictions.

"It is by no means certain that a man shall be immediately brought out of his affliction, because he has been cleansed and purified in the furnace. That God who has blessed his afflictions, may see meet to continue him under his chastenings, for his further purification and humiliation; and for the display of his own glory.

"Verse 32. 'For he is not a man as I am, that I should answer him, and we should come together in judgment.'

"God exceeds man in his actings, as much as he doth in his nature.

"He may proceed to judgment without an accusation, and he may give judgment and execute it, without taking any proof of a crime. Job was smitten without any cause alleged. God afflicts that grace may be proved. Though saints may know no particular reason why they suffer, yet they believe it is not without reason.

"The consideration that God is supreme, is enough to humble and silence us.

"Till we believe that God is holy as well as our superior, we do not fear to sin.
"Our treating with indifference and neglect, the intimations of pardon of our sins through the atonement of Christ, is more dishonouring to God, than all our other sins. All men may say they sin, but sin appears sin to very few.

"The pride and ignorance of man cavils at the decrees of God. Rom. ix. 'Why doth he yet find fault,' &c.; but stay says the apostle, 'O man who art thou that repliest against God?' He hath only exercised his just prerogative. Besides, if ye will argue from reason, then see how it confutes the blasphemy; hath not the potter power, &c. What if God hath done thus, and what if he will do thus? what hast thou to do with it?

"No man is a match for God, nor able to contend with him in judgment.

"Job having thus confessed his inability to contend with God in judgment, proceeds to show that there is none to whom his case might be referred.

"Verse 33. 'Neither is there any days-man betwixt us, that can lay his hand upon us both.'

"There is none to arbitrate the matter between God and me.

"The laying on of the hand, signifies the composing or compounding a difference.

"Job speaks highly of God, and humbly of himself. He was not able to dispute with God, and there was none capable of being an umpire between them. The will of God is the supreme law; whatever he is pleased to do
with us, we should cheerfully acquiesce in, believing it to be best for us.

"The secrets of his providence are beyond our search, and his judgments above our reach. 

"In the two last verses, Job desires that God would not contend with him; as if he had said, Lord I will not plead or dispute with thee; and I know thou mayest do what thou pleasest with me; yet, O that thou wouldst abate the severity of thy procedure, that I might have liberty to spread my case before thee; I have no friend to take up the matter for me, but if I might obtain a cessation, I would open my case in a few words myself.

"Verse 34. 'Let him take his rod away from me, and let not his fear terrify me.'

"Afflictions may be called a rod, because of the hand that useth it, and the end for which it is sent, as well as on account of the smart of it. A rod is in the hand of a father, not for destruction but for correction. The rod is an evil in itself and will do us no good, but evil, unless the Lord make it a blessing to us.

"Now as it is our duty to pray for deliverance from every rod of affliction, so it is one end why God casts us into trouble, to stir us up to pray for support under, mitigation of, and deliverance from them. So the rod may be said to be taken away from us, either by an abatement of it, or giving strength to bear it, as well as when it is completely removed.

"There is nothing so grievous, either in active or passive obedience, as that which is either against our will or above our power. Now, it
is all one to have a burden taken off, or to have strength to bear, and patience to endure it.

"Whether it was the majesty of God that overawed Job, or the pain that he felt, or whatever it was; he was oppressed with fear and terror from the Lord, which he earnestly seeks to be relieved from.

"Verse 35. 'Then would I speak and not fear him; but it is not so with me.'

"This is as if Job had said, if the Lord would grant my petition, I would speak unto him without fear or doubt of being heard, for I am not the man you take me to be; for if I were, though the Lord should withdraw his terrors, I should be afraid to pray to him, lest I should draw down judgments on myself; which, if I were the wicked hypocrite you assert, would certainly be the consequence.

"Or, Job may mean, I have earnestly intreated the Lord to abate my afflictions, and remove his terrors from me; but he hath not been pleased to grant my request; it is not so with me, the rod smarts, and terrors amaze me still. The prayers of God's dearest children are not always answered immediately, perhaps to learn them to pray more earnestly.

"There is an opinion which gives this verse a connection with the first of the next chapter; had the Lord condescended to take away his rod, and remove his terror as I requested, then I had somewhat to say; but seeing I have not liberty to speak to the Lord, I will pour my complaint into mine own bosom and commune
with my heart. He pursues this resolution in chapter x.

CHAPTER X.

"Verse 1. 'My soul is weary of my life, I will leave my complaint upon myself, I will speak in the bitterness of my soul.'

'My pain is so perpetual, and my distress so grievous, that it wearies my very soul.

'As David speaks of being weary of dwelling among wicked men, Psa. cxx.; so Job, in reference to his polluted body, 'Wo is me, that I sojourn in such a diseased body, and dwell in such a dying carcase.' The noble tenant is weary of staying in such a filthy habitation; and I see the great landlord will neither repair, nor as yet let it fall. This was no doubt Job's infirmity.

'The assaults of Satan, and the troubles, temptations, and wickedness of a present world, together with their inward corruption, makes godly men weary of their lives; and others, because they have got such assurance and evidence of a better life, as well as on account of the afflictions and troubles of this life, are desiring to depart.

'We leave our complaint upon ourselves when we make no excuses or evasions, but plainly charge the fault upon ourselves. God is righteous, but I am a transgressor. This is the sum of Job's resolution, I will leave my
complaint upon myself. They who strive to comply with the will of God, complain most of themselves for resisting it.

"I will speak in the bitterness of my soul. A bitter soul brings forth bitter words; it shall appear by what I say, what I feel, or it may be taken as an apology for what he spake. Speaking in the bitterness of the soul, signifies either the excess or greatness of a complaint, or the cause and spring of it. Job's complaint came not from the ordinary temper of his spirit, but from his troubles distempering his spirit.

"Having expressed his resolution to complain, he turns his speech to God.

"Verse 2. 'I will say unto God, do not condemn me.' As if he had said, seeing thou art the God and father of all that fear thy name, and call upon thee in truth; therefore, in the exercise of faith and filial reverence, I beseech thee not to deal with me as if I were condemned for my sin, but make it again appear that thou art my God, either by removing these afflictions, (which represent me to the world as thine enemy, rather than thy son,) or by removing the dread and terror of them, by which they may appear as exercises of my grace, not as punishments of my sin; that while I am pained with thy rod, my soul may rejoice in thy love, and that while I am under this cross, I may triumph over it: or if thou see meet to continue me in this state of suffering, then I have another request, namely,

"'Show me wherefore thou contendest with me.'
"Job having in the former clause intreated that the Lord would not condemn him as a judge, desires now that he would show him why he contends with him as a party. Cause me to know, and let it appear, why I am thus afflicted: that if it be for sin, thou mayest give me such a sight of it as will humble me, and cause me to turn from it unto thee; and if it is only for trial, I shall bear it more patiently, and my friends would be more charitable to me under it. Let these considerations prevail with thee, to open this secret to me, and expound the mystery of my afflictions. Hence observe, that an afflicted soul is very solicitous to find out the reason of his affliction, and a godly man may be long in the dark about the cause of God's dealings with him. In the next verse Job gives a reason why he makes this request: my condition excuses me for thus crying to God.

"Far be it from me to think so dishonourably of God, as that he could delight in oppression, and in breaking the work of his own hands, or in favouring the works of wicked men; and therefore I am thus importunate to know the reason of his procedure with me.

"Verse 3. 'Is it good unto thee that thou shouldest oppress, that thou shouldest despise the work of thine hands, and shine upon the counsel of the wicked?'

"These interrogatories flatly deny what they seem to inquire doubtingly. Now, seeing oppression can be no advantage unto thee, thou hast no gain by it, nor delight in it, and no
glory or honour from it; show me why thou contendest with me.

"The vulgar has it, is it good for thee that thou shouldst slander me? that is, to give others occasion to speak evil of me. Slander and censure wound deep; hard words bruise the credit and break the heart, but here it may be taken for outward violence, cunning, cheating. Hos. xii. 7, 'He is a merchant, &c. who by light weights oppress, by withholding what is due, as well as by forcibly taking away from any.'

"As if Job said, I know thou dost not love to oppress; whence is it then that thou actest so unlike thyself to a poor creature, the work of thy hands?

"The hand of God implies his power and wisdom. Job means himself or any other man when he says, That thou shouldst despise the work of thine hands, which in general is of the same sense with the former clause.

"That we are the work of God's hands, is an argument to move his compassion towards us, and should prevent us from proudly disputing with him; at the same time, we may humbly plead with him not to despise the work of his hands. It seems to intimate that the plea hath a kind of command upon God, as Isa. xlvi. 11, 'concerning the works of my hands command ye me.'

"Verse 4. 'Hast thou eyes of flesh? or seest thou as man seeth?'

"To have an eye of flesh, is to judge according to the flesh; and to see as man, is to see no more than man sees.
"By this question, Job seems to say, Lord I have been long afflicted with sore distress, why hast thou brought me to such a trial? It is not with thee as with men, who can see no farther than the outside of things: and, therefore, mortal judges must fetch out what lies in the heart of man by examination, or by torture. But there is no need that thou shouldst take this course with me, for though I should not speak a word, yet thou hearest the voice and understandest the language of my spirit; wherefore is it then that thou inquierest by these afflictions into what is naked before thine omniscient eye?

"By this Job seems to vindicate God from another dishonourable insinuation, and justifies him either in reference to the truth or manner, the clearness or speediness, the certainty or impartiality, the infallibility or charity of his judgment.

"Upon all which his former request is again to be inferred. Show me wherefore thou contendest with me?

"Job seems to comfort himself; that the Lord judged him by the settled temper of his inward man, and not by the casual distemper of his outward man.

"He proceeds to a fifth dishonourable thought, which he also by way of interrogation removes from God, and so virtually says again, Show me, &c.

"Verse 5. 'Are thy days as the days of man? are thy years as man's days?'

"I know they are not, and therefore I won—
der why thou dealest so severely with me, as if thou shouldest have no other season for it.

"God who inhabiteth eternity, need not hasten his work; and therefore he doth not precipitate, but does his work deliberately, because he may take what time he pleases.

"Wicked men, do not ye hope? godly men, do not ye fear? that God will never do what he hath said, because he hath not already done it.

"He hath not lost his time, although he hath passed over the time or season that you expected.

"The next words will show why Job made so many negative queries.

"Verse 6. 'That thou inquierest after mine iniquity, and searchest after my sin.'

"Surely thou needest not search and examine me in this manner, seeing thou art Omniscient.

"Observe, that God knows us before he search us, and he searches us that we may know ourselves. Observe 2d, that there are not many who know God at all, and none know him enough. God searches us that we may seek after him; and this is the design of every affliction, to acquaint us with God and ourselves. It is said, that then Manasseh knew the Lord when he was in the briers.

"The next verse contains one of the chief questions of that grand controversy, whether Job was a wicked man or not; Satan represented him to God as such, and upon that challenge, the Lord gave him up to grievous trials
Job now appeals to the Lord's own knowledge, and is content to stand or fall according to his determination, being still satisfied that he stood right in the sight of God.

"Verse 7. 'Thou knowest that I am not wicked, and there is none that can deliver out of thine hand.'

"Wicked and just are judiciary terms equivalent to justified and condemned, as Psalm cix. 7. Hebrew, 'Let him go out wicked,' that is, 'Let him go out from the bar of his judges a condemned man.'

"It is matter of consolation to the saints that God knows them. David seems as glad that God knows him as that God would save him, Psalm cxxxix. To be wicked is inconsistent with the possession of saving grace. Sin reigns in all wicked men, in a hypocritical professor as well as in the openly profane, he drives a trade of, and purposes to sin, &c.

Peter did not deny Christ because he was resolved to do it; but because he resolved not to do it without a due dependence upon Christ for power to withstand the temptation to do it.

There is none that can deliver out of thine hand. No, neither power, policy, nor riches can avail in the day of wrath, and even prayer cannot prevail in some seasons of wrath. Let us, therefore, take heed how we fall into the hands of God's justice, for till God discharge us there is no escaping.

"At verse third Job questions—'Is it good for thee that thou shouldest oppress, &c.' From verse 8 to 13, he insists upon and illustrates
that argument by fitting it to his own condition.
"Seeing thou wilt not despise the work of thy hands, why shouldst thou despise me?" Am not I the work of thy hands?" This point is proven, first, in his formation in general, verse 8. 2dly, The matter of which he was made, verse 9. His conception, verse 10. The conjunction of his parts, verse 11. The quickening of his parts and preservation of life, verse 12. And then Job's assertion concerning all this at verse 13, which is as if he had said, "Lord thou knowest all is truth that I have spoken."

"Verse 8. 'Thine hands have made me, and fashioned me together round about, yet thou dost destroy me.'

"Man receives not only his nature, but his figure from God. The structure and frame of nature is the work of God. He ascribes his own formation to God as well as the making of Adam. Second causes work purely at the will of God, though means are used by man, yet it is God that gives effect.

"Now, as in the work of redemption we are of God by grace, so we are his by creation, and the same reason holds in both, viz. 'Glorify God with your bodies which are not your own, but God's. Let them be holiness unto the Lord.' It is but reasonable that creatures formed and fashioned by God should be at his disposal, and it is their wisdom to obey and submit to him in all things cheerfully.

"To destroy signifies to swallow up. Job had a great army of afflictions encompassing
him about, ready to devour him, and he cries to the Lord (who alone has the command of these as well as of every other army,) 'I am the work of thy hands, why dost thou swallow me up?' Hence observe, That it is a good argument to use with God for protection and deliverance, that we are the works of his hands. His lothness to give up Ephraim is emphatically described, Hosea xi. 8. 'My heart is turned within me,' &c.

"Job enforces his argument from the consideration that he is made of clay.

"Verse 9. 'Remember, I beseech thee, that thou hast made me of the clay.'

"That is, frail, brittle, and weak, which shows our utter inability to contend with God, and also how easily we are overcome by temptation to sin. A body of earth hath a suitableness to all earthly allurements. In Psalm lxxviii. the Lord seems to be moved with pity to man, verse 39. 'He many a time turned his anger away,' &c. Why? for he remembered that they were but flesh, that is, weak and easily led into sin; but we must not plead this as an excuse or expect impunity on this account.

"As it is the duty of saints to remember God by obeying his command, so it is their privilege to put him in remembrance, craving a speedy supply of their wants, or actual deliverance from all their tribulations, and thus Job beseeches God to remember that he hath made him as the clay, and

"Wilt thou bring me into dust again?
"Job found himself brought into the dust of a low condition of poverty and distress, which if continued but a short time longer would bring him to the dust of death.

In Zech. iii. 2. it is said, 'Is not this a brand plucked out of the fire.' As if the Lord had said to Satan, 'Art thou moving me to throw this people into the fire of affliction, out of which they were so lately snatched?' Job seems to plead for a respite that he might enjoy some quiet comfortable days before the end of life.

Verse 10, 11. 'Hast thou not poured me out as milk and craddled me like cheese? Thou hast clothed me with skin and flesh, and hast fenced me with bones and sinews.'

Man is born naked, yet clothed and unarmed, yet fenced; the more noble and tender parts, the heart, brain, &c. are inclosed with skin and flesh to prevent the cold, and they are fenced with bones and sinews, lest they should take hurt, hence death is called an un-clothing, it strips us not only to, but of the skin. We have a natural clothing before we have an artificial one. We are dressed with garments from the wardrobe of God before we have a rag put on us.

Bones are for strength, and sinews for motion. Bones give form, straightness, and stability to the body. The Lord hath framed man so well that it is impossible for man to conjecture how he could be made better. The noble structure and symmetry
of our bodies invites our souls not only to gratitude but to admiration.

"Let us then make it appear in our thoughts, and by our words and deeds, that we have hearts, hands, and tongues, not only from, but for him, and also strength and life, and all for him, seeing we receive all that we are, and enjoy all from him as appears

"Verse 12. 'Thou hast granted me life and favour, and thy visitation hath preserved my spirit.'

"The bounty of God appears in granting life, still more in favour, and most of all in his grant of gracious visitations.

"The Hebrew is lives, which may be taken for vegetation and growth, as in trees, &c. of sense and motion as in beasts, and of reason as in angels, whereby they understand and discourse. These three lives which are shared among all other living creatures, are brought together and compacted into the life of man. Hence observe, that life is a special gift and favour from God.

"When Christ parted with his precious life for sinners, he thereby showed the greatest favour for them.

"By favour, in conjunction with life, we may understand these good things which make life agreeable, and so Job must refer to his former enjoyments, for in verse first he speaks of life as a burden.

"'Thou not only gave me life and favour, but didst protect me for many years in the enjoyment of them.'
"But how did the visitation of God preserve the spirit of Job? The spirit may be taken first, for life, and then he preserves our spirit by keeping us from death. The spirit may be taken for the soul, and then God preserves our spirit while he keeps us from sin, or from falling into temptation. 3dly, The spirit is taken for courage; while God keeps us from needless fears and perplexities, he preserves our spirits.

"It is a large patent that is granted, Psalm cxxi. No time shall be hurtful, neither day nor night, and neither sun, moon, heat, nor cold, shall hurt; these include all annoyances. Thy soul, and thy outgoings, and incomings shall be preserved, so that nothing shall be hurt, for these include the whole man and all his lawful affairs. As none can keep but Him, so He has promised to keep for evermore all who can say, the Lord is our keeper.

"Christ says, 'take no thought for your life,' to excite a more deep concern for the soul; but alas! how often does our outward man cost us more thought and care for one day than our soul does for a year, yea for a life time. As God in his providence visits us, so we should visit Him by prayer, not only in trouble, as they did, Isaiah xxvi. but also in peace and prosperity. Let us visit God by earnest prayer, for a blessing, who is always at hand to visit us in mercy.

"Verse 13. 'And these things hast thou hid in thine heart;' some read, 'And hast thou hid these things in thine heart?' That is
in the will, purpose, or decree of God, wherein all things are laid up; as if Job had said. 'This bill of blessings now read were hidden in thine heart, thou hast had gracious intentions towards me, even while thou hast been smiting me.'

"'I know that this is with thee,' that is thou rememberest all this, and keepest a record of it by thee. By these hidden things we are to understand the mercies that Job had enumerated, and so the words are either an argument to move the Lord not to destroy him, or to assure himself that he would not, as if he had said, 'I know that thou hast not forgotten what thou hast done for me in making and preserving me hitherto, and that thou hast a good will to me still;' and so he expresses an assurance of the love of God under his chastisements.

"Hence observe, that in the exercise of a strong faith saints can discern the favour of God through the clouds of the darkest dispensations.

"Job having thus revised and read over the particulars of his former mercies, renews his complaint and desire of deliverance from present sorrows in the words that follow; the connection of which is difficult. Some connect it with verse 13. 'I know that this is with thee, namely, that if I sin thou markest me,' &c. Others with verse 12. 'Thou hast granted me life and favour,' &c. 'Yet if I sin thou markest me,' &c. Another goes to verse 3d, where Job puts three queries, the last of which
is, 'Is it good unto thee that thou shouldest shine upon the counsel of the wicked? I know it is not, my own experience proves that thou dost not, for if I sin, thou markest me,' &c. It is not easy to determine which is the proper connection.

"Verse 14. 'If I sin, then thou markest me.' Sin stands here in opposition to wickedness. Sin is any transgression against, or deviation from the rule, however little. To observe and mark signifies a critical observation, to mark exactly, Psalm cxxx. God takes notice of the failings of his own people, chapter 14. 'Thou numberest my steps; dost thou not watch over my sin?' That is, how my conversation is ordered; for

God does not need to judge by information, but by observation. We cannot secret ourselves nor our least failings from his all-seeing eye; 'and thou wilt not acquit me from mine iniquity.' That is, thou wilt not remove these afflictions which are the fruits of mine iniquity, putting the cause for the effect. All men are in a debt of duty to God, as creatures, and when they fail, they contract a debt of penalty as sinners, from which they cannot be acquitted but by a pardon.

"The word acquit signifies also to cleanse and purge. 'As sin desiles the soul, so pardon cleanseth it,' Psalm li. 7. 'If I sin knowingly, and wickedly, as they charge me, then thou wilt not acquit me from mine iniquity.'

"Verse 15. 'If I be wicked, wo unto me.' What it is to be wicked is explained at verse
seventh. **Wo** is derived from a root that signifies to howl. Wicked men howl rather than pray unto God in their distress, Hosea vii. 14. Though wicked men flatter themselves, yea, though ministers may flatter them, yet God does not, and at last conscience will not flatter them. **Wo** is, and will be their portion. From holy Job saying, 'If I be wicked, learn that a good man may put the worst cases to himself.'

"'If I be righteous, yet will I not lift up my head.' This does not imply a doubt whether he was righteous or not. A godly man walks trembling, lest he should offend, and saith, 'If I am wicked, wo unto me;' and even when he does not offend, he walks humbly, saying, 'though I am righteous, yet I will not hold up my head.'

"There is a lifting up the head with joy and consolation, Luke xxi. 28; and also a lifting up the head with pride and ostentation, Psalm lxxxiii. 2. But Job seems to say, 'I will abase myself before God.'

"'I am full of confusion.' Job's spirit had received as much sorrow as it could hold, and more than he could well digest.

"Confusion signifies shame, and also intimates a disorder of spirit. When a man knows not what to do, or whose counsel to follow, and cannot make up his thoughts and bring them to an issue, then he is in confusion.

"Trouble upon the sensitive part disturbs the understanding. Every affliction makes some outward confusion, and it is very rare if
they do not make much confusion within us. Great sorrows distract the mind, and brings a man to his wit's end.

"See thou mine affliction." The word rendered affliction imports weakness and casting down, which oppress like a great weight upon us. Pity me in my affliction; have compassion, and give deliverance.

"When saints are in a right frame of spirit they are joyful in all their tribulations; for Christ is able to make consolation abound as tribulation doth abound. Yet where there is abundance of tribulation, consolation is usually very scarce.

"The therefore seems to say, Lord take notice of my sad condition. It is vain for me to show my distress to creatures; but I know that I am not past thy cure, therefore I bring them unto thee. O see my affliction.

"Hence, note, that when we are beyond the help and cure of man, we are the fittest objects for God. When dangers and distress increase, then let us pray earnestly to God that he would take our deliverance into his own hand.

"The two following verses are a pathetical description of Job's growing and prevailing sorrows.

"Verse 16. 'For it increaseth.' Instead of which some say, Can it be lifted up? Is it possible to lift me up when I am so full of sorrow and confusion?

"Afflictions will make the stoutest heart stoop, and the highest head to bow. But take the words declaratively. Job describes his con-
dition as growing worse and worse. But in another sense it is taken for pride or lifting up, and there is an elegancy in it. See my affliction, it waxeth proud. For as when the waves of the sea swell and increase, are called proud waves, so an increasing affliction may be called a proud affliction. The next clause illustrates this by a similitude.

"Thouhuntest me as a fierce lion. God is often represented under the notion of a lion, in the afflictions with which he visits his people. Hos. v. 14.

"And again thou showest thyself marvellous upon me. That is, thou dost not punish me in an ordinary way. Such an affliction as mine hath no parallel. Thou hast afflicted me till I am become a wonder unto many. So thou, O Lord, art become a wonder to me, for I cannot reconcile thy character as gracious and delighting in mercy, with the complicated and lengthened out afflictions upon me.

"That thou huntest like a lion those whom thou dearly loves is truly wonderful. He proceeds to give a farther amplification of what he said before, and shows the greatness and increase of his trials.

"Verse 17. 'Thou renewest thy witnesses against me, and increasest thine indignation upon me: changes and war are against me.'

"Afflictions sometimes discover the reality of grace, of faith, patience, &c. but they also give evidence against us in many different ways; as, 1st, That sin not only remains, but hath been indulged by us.
"It is true that afflictions are not always sent on account of indulged sins, yet they are a testimony against sin; for if we had no sin we would not suffer. 2dly, Afflictions testify against that great and universal sin, a proud heart; for one special end of affliction is to humble us and lay us low. 3dly, By bringing forgotten sins to remembrance, they testify against us. 4th, What an awful testimony does afflictions give against us when we are nothing bettered by them. It shows that we are nought.

"Afflictions testify God's displeasure with and care of his children.

"Indignation is still more grievous. The word signifies hot consuming displeasure, and increasing both in number and weight.

"Though Job had a variety and a multitude of afflictions in their strength, it was not a destroying war with him; yet it was so terrible that he cries out,

"Verse 18. 'Wherefore then hast thou brought me forth out of the womb? Oh that I had given up the ghost, and no eye had seen me.'

"Improper questions are usually followed with unreasonable wishes.

"Job seems to forget all former benefits when he complains of his birth.

"It is no less strange than true, that when we cannot obtain the mercies we would have, we grow angry with those we have enjoyed, and a good man thinks he lives to no purpose if he do not live to the praise of God."
"O that I had gone out of the world before I was observed to have been in it.

"Verse 19. 'I should have been as though I had not been; I should have been carried from the womb to the grave.'

"Such a quick passage out of this world would have prevented me from tasting the cup of sufferings of which I have drunk so deep: there would have been little trouble with me in this world.

"Thus Job is again renewing his desire of death; from which learn, that while the same stock of corruption remains in us, it will produce the same corrupt fruit as often as occasion and temptation offers.

"Verse 20. 'Are not my days few? Cease then and let me alone, that I may take comfort a little.'

"From the consideration of the shortness of life, and that much of his time was already gone, Job founds a petition for a mitigation or removal of his troubles. He seems to look upon himself as besieged or straitened with his afflictions, and he prays that God would grant a cessation, and give him some comfort the short time he had to remain.

"It is said, Ps. lxxxix. 47, 'Remember how short my time is: wherefore hast thou made all men in vain?' Lord I have but a few days, and shall they be nothing but clouds and darkness? While thine hand is upon me, the comfort and help of creatures is all in vain.

"Hence learn the necessity of performing every duty in its season; the folly of being
anxious to obtain the perishing things of this world; and that we should bear patiently our crosses as they pass along. But, above all, it points out the sin and danger of delaying to seek an interest in Christ, and so live ready for death and judgment.

"Happy they who are taught of God so to number their days as to apply their hearts unto wisdom. They who are low make low demands.

"Job only seeks comfort a little; but why is he in such haste? Besides that his days are few, he gives another reason in the next verse. "Verse 21. 'Before I go whence I shall not return, even to the land of darkness and the shadow of death.'

"A strange journey indeed, from which there is no hope of returning. Job believed a resurrection by the power of God, but he knew there was no returning to this world, and to the business and enjoyments of it; and that is the reason why men are so unwilling to depart.

"It is the hope of being ever with the Lord in a house not made with hands, that makes the saints so cheerfully leave every present enjoyment, and put off the clay tabernacle without a sigh, to go to the land of darkness, save for the friends they leave behind.

"Verse 22. 'A land of darkness, as darkness itself; and of the shadow of death, without any order, and where the light is as darkness.'

"This is the place where death dwells, and here is a description of it which exceeds the
fancy of poets, and the rhetoric of heathen orators. The spirit of God riseth to the height of eloquence in exhibiting that unpleasant region.

"The state of the dead is without any order, as it hath no changes. There is no difference in the grave between night and day, winter or summer, &c. and there is no rule in dying. Here a child, and there a man; here a rich man, and there a beggar; and as there is no order in going thither, so there is no distinction there: all mingle with the dust. How terrible is death and the grave to those who live and die in sin, and how should the hearts of believers be filled with gratitude to Christ, who, by his death, hath taken away the sting of death, and perfumed the grave for his people.

"Thus Job concludes his reply to Bildad, and complains to God that his afflictions are continued.

"In his replies to the following speakers his grace is often very conspicuous, yet his corruption sometimes appears.

CHAPTER XI.

"Verse 1. 'Then answered Zophar the Naamathite, and said.'

"His name imports a watchman, and his designation signifies pleasant.
"Like Eliphaz and Bildad, he first reproves Job, and then counsels him.

"Verse 2. 'Should not the multitude of words be answered? and should a man full of talk be justified?'

"Eloquence is a gift of God, but verbosity is the vanity of man; sometimes it is a sin in the speaker, and a burden to the hearers; but, in some cases, many words may be spoken and all few enough. We have no reason to think that Paul spake one word too many, though he continued his speech until midnight. To teach us to be more ready to hear than to speak, God has given us two ears and but one tongue.

"When we speak much we are in danger of offending much; and he who has nothing but words to support him must needs fall.

"Verse 3. 'Should thy lies make men hold their peace?' It is noble to show ourselves friends to truth, though we lose friends by it; and we must oppose error, though we get enemies by it. At sometimes it is prudent to be silent; but we must never forbear to testify against a lie, whether verbal, doctrinal, or practical.

"'And when thou mockest, shall no man make thee ashamed?'

"Multitude of words is ill enough, and lies are far worse, but to mock is worst of all. Some say, Shall no man confute thee, and so put thee to shame?

"Mockers shall be put to shame. Though they escape the censure they merit from men, they shall not escape the judgments of God."
"When truth is honoured it is easy to own it; but it is our duty and greatest honour to avow our attachment to Christ and his truths when they are despised and derided. It is no new thing for him that speaks truth to be counted a liar, or such as speak seriously to be reproached as mockers. Zophar gives the reason of this charge.

"Verse 4. 'For thou hast said my doctrine is pure, and I am clean in thine eyes.'

"Zophar manages his discourse more like an accuser than a comforter. He uses Job's words in a sense that he never intended. We are apt to put unsound glosses upon the words both of God and man.

"Thus Zophar interpreted these words as a reflection upon the justice of God by Job.

"Verse 5. 'But O that God would speak, and open his lips against thee.'

"As if Zophar had said, it is now my turn to speak unto thee, but I should rejoice if God would grant the petition thou hast presented to him, chap. ix. 15, and x. 2, even vouchsafe to speak unto thee himself; and I am certain, that as soon as he manifests himself to thee, and shows thee what thou art, thy courage will fail; for thou canst not stand a day of trial.

"He is a wise man that keeps a lock and key at his lips: the lock of silence, and the key of discretion, to shut and open the lock upon every proper occasion of speech and silence.

"The word of God in the hand of the spirit is invincible. O that God would speak."
"Verse 6. ' And that he would show thee the secrets of wisdom, that they are double to that which is! know, therefore, that God exacth of thee less than thine iniquity deserveth.'

"Zophar does not try so much to convince Job of his own sinfulness, as of the mysterious nature of divine wisdom.

"Thou judgest upon the outside of the dispensations, God alone can expound them. For we neither know what God does, nor what we ought to do. He may be said to know all things who knows whatever it concerns him to know. But except so far as the anointing teaches us, we know nothing either of the word or providence of God as we ought to know, and, therefore, as the secrets of wisdom are hid from and above our reason, I desire that God himself would teach thee.

"As all the sins of man that appears is nothing in comparison of the depths of sin secreted in the heart, so God hath store of wisdom which man can neither discern nor comprehend double that which is visible.

"The greatest afflictions are less than our sins deserve. Notwithstanding the terrible judgments inflicted on Israel, yet Ezra confesses, 'Thou hast punished us less than our iniquities deserve. The evil of the least sin is greater than all the evils of punishment.'

"Zophar proceeds to illustrate what he had said verse 6; and, to show the mysteriousness of the wisdom of God, he puts a question,

"Verse 7. ' Canst thou by searching find out God? canst thou find out the Almighty
unto perfection? It is impossible. Some of God’s works are so eminent and evident, that if we were not wilfully blind we must needs see them. Isa. xxvi. 11. But there are many of his workings so hidden, both in their nature and manner, that we cannot discern them.

"Zophar concludes concerning the wisdom of God, that God cannot be found out; all his attributes are unsearchable. The wisdom of God is God, as well as his power and holiness, &c.

"But though we cannot know all of God, yet we must carefully learn all that may be known of him. To know God here is eternal life; and yet when the beautiful face of truth shall be unveiled to the understanding in heaven, none shall ever be able to know all of God. They shall there know and enjoy as much of God as shall make them perfectly happy. But to know God unto perfection is impossible.

"Zophar’s question contains this position, that man cannot find out God unto perfection, which he exemplifies.

"Verse 8. ‘It is as high as heaven, what canst thou do? deeper than hell, what canst thou know?’

"Wisdom is not only as high as heaven, but high above the heavens. Some translate, what wilt thou do in the height of the heavens? Seeing thou canst not manage the sun, moon, stars, &c. and can give but little account of the height of the heavens, how wilt thou be able to
give account of him who is higher than, and rules in the armies of heaven?

"Heaven and hell are the great opposites or remotest extremes. Matt. xii. 25. And as the height of heaven, so the depths of hell is ascribed to wisdom, to show the unsearchableness of it. Rom. xi. 33; 1 Cor. ii. 10.

"Verse 9. 'The measure thereof is longer than the earth, and broader than the sea.'

"Here are four very different dimensions met together, and they all speak the same thing, that the wisdom of God is infinite, and exceeds all natural dimensions.

"The apostle ascribes to the love of Christ these four dimensions with which Zophar here adorns the wisdom of God. It is common to give but three dimensions, but here a fourth is added, to show the immensity both of the love and wisdom of God. Now, since thou canst not take the perfect length of the earth, nor the breadth of the sea, &c. how much less art thou able to take the dimensions of God, or of his wisdom? He is above and beyond all, and therefore unsearchable, and cannot be found out unto perfection.

"From the infinite wisdom of God he proceeds to argue the sovereignty of God, and his irresistible power.

"Verse 10. 'If he cut off, and shut up, and gather together, then who can hinder him?' As if he had said, wherever the Lord acts he is in his own kingdom; for all the world is his, therefore none can hinder him.
"If the Lord cut off by sword, shut up in prison, gather together and bundle men up as fuel to feed the flame of his fiery indignation, though he doth all or any of these things, who can hinder him? He speaks as if there were no hand of the creature moving in any of these things, but that God himself had done all. Ps. xlvi. 8, 'Behold the works of the Lord, what desolations he hath made in the earth.'

"Our eyes are so much upon second causes, and so little upon the first cause, that we are angry and impatient.

"If we would view God in all, and man only as an instrument, we might possess our souls in patience whatever is done.

"Job complained that God had cut him off and shut him up, and that he had gathered together armies of Chaldeans and Sabeans to destroy him. But though all this be the case, saith Zophar, why dost thou speak as if God had done the wrong, when he has a right to do what he will, and he can will nothing but what is right?

"Verse 11. 'He knoweth vain men.' This is brought forward as a reason why a man cannot reach the wisdom of God. He is vain man. The Lord knows the baseness and deceit, as well as the folly and rashness that is in vain man. Some render, the Lord knoweth that men are liars.

"When we see or hear of wars, famines, contentions, and strifes, &c. between man and man, we are apt to think that these things are
inexplicable, and so they are to us. But God knoweth vain man. He discerns in man that which justifies him in all that he does among the children of men.

"'He seeth wickedness also.' He not only knows the vanity that is in the heart, but the transgressions of the life. Beware of imagining that you can sin unseen, or of attempting to hide yourself from God. You must make known your wickedness unto God by confessing it; for you cannot hide it from him by denying or excusing it.

"'Will he not then consider it?" Yes he will. Though many a careless man sees and knows both his own and others' wickedness, yet lays neither of them to heart. But God not only takes notice of, but hates every sin, and will certainly punish it. Ps. xxxiv. 16, 'The face of the Lord is against them that do evil, to cut off the remembrance of them from the earth.' Man is apt to think most of himself when he is stark naught; and that he is wise enough, though he be a very fool, as appears,

"Verse 12. For vain man would be wise, though man is born like a wild ass's colt.'

"To desire to be wise is a great point of wisdom. But Zophar seems to find fault with vain man because he doth not so much care to be wise as to be thought wise. Or man is vain when he would be wise in things above him. 'He is as high as heaven;' &c. Though such knowledge of God be too high for any man, yet vain man thinks he knoweth nothing if he
know not something which he ought not to know.

"Man would be thought wise as God; at least he would search out the wisdom of God; and yet Zophar compares him to a wild ass, because the ass among beasts, and the wild ass among asses, is most destitute of wisdom. In regard of ignorance, stubbornness, &c. man is like a wild ass, and how beast-like are they who will not return from their folly when they are smitten and broken with judgments. Hence the repeated expostulation, Amos iv. 'I have smitten you, &c. yet have ye not returned unto me, saith the Lord.' God himself seems to wonder at their stupidity and obstinacy, when they had been so long under the burden, and had received so many blows.

"O that the fruit of all our afflictions may be, that we who have been like wild asses may now live like new creatures. This would make our losses gain, our judgments mercies, and turn all our sorrows into joy.

"Zophar having finished his reproof, proceeds to counsel Job.

"Verse 13. 'If thou prepare thine heart, and stretch out thine hands towards him.'

"By the heart we are to understand the whole inward man. The conscience, which hath in it the light of the understanding, the motions of the will, and the recognitions of the memory, comes under the notion of the heart. Ps. li. 12. 1 John iii. 20. Job xxvii. 6.

"The sum of all safe and wholesome coun-
sel is contracted into this one sentence, 'Prepare thy heart.'

"If it were possible to cast out sin, and to put off the old man, it would not be enough, unless we also put on the new man.

"As God bestows the first grace upon us, so the exercise of grace fits or prepares us for further favours. While our hearts are not right with God, no marvel if things go wrong with us. Grace is as much magnified in working in us, as in saving us without works.

"When a child is in danger of falling, while he cries for help he stretches out his hands; so our stretching out our hands to God implies our telling him that we depend wholly upon him for help, pardon, &c. and that we are undone unless he deliver us.

"Preparation of heart is necessary in every duty, and especially in prayer.

"Verse 14. 'If iniquity be in thine hand, put it far away.'

"Having exhorted Job to prepare his heart and stretch out his hand, Zophar now desires him to prepare his hand before he stretch it out. The hand must be cleansed as well as the heart. The heart may retain its filthiness, while the hands are washed; but when the heart is washed the hands will not remain filthy. It is true a man whose heart is cleansed may defile his fingers, but he will not allow them to continue so; for purity of spirit cannot consist with impurity of life.

"Sin must be thrust away and removed to the utmost distance. As we should go far from
sin by an holy care, lest we fall into it, so we must go far from it by a speedy repentance when we have fallen into it. Hence observe, That it is only in the way of putting sin far from us that we can draw near to God in prayer with an expectation of acceptance.

"Taking iniquity for fraud and oppression. Then that which is ill gotten must be restored. It is indeed very sinful to get any thing by unjust means, but it is still worse to retain it. Many are willing to give alms that are very unwilling to restore that which they have got in a sinful way. But no man may give till he hath made restoration, nor be charitable until he is just. How can we expect that God will remit our just debts if we do not restore our unjust gains?"

"Let not wickedness dwell in thy tabernacle." That is, let it not continue; hasten it away; take care to purge the worship of God from every species of idolatry and superstition; or, let not wickedness dwell in those who dwell in thy tabernacle. A man who has got his heart and hands purified will be desirous that all under his inspection enjoy the same blessing.

"Zophar having given Job counsel, now gives him encouragement.

"Verse 15. 'Then shalt thou lift up thy face without spot; thou shalt be steadfast, and shalt not fear.'

"There are four things chiefly seen in the face, pride, Ps. x. 4; fear, Dan. v. 6; envy and discontent, Gen. xxxi. 2—5; and guilt and
shame often appears in the face. Strong confidence is implied in lifting up the face, and to be without spot is when the children of God are kept from such spots as are unsuitable and inconsistent with their sonship. Phil. ii. 15. 'That ye may be blameless, the sons of God without rebuke.' Holiness of life and purity of conscience give boldness in approaching to God, to all who are accepted in the beloved.

"Grace establishes the heart. Put away sin and thou shalt be steadfast. This promise may refer to outward things, but especially to the steadfastness of faith, &c. that he should no longer continue in suspense between hope and fear.

"An upright man may be unsteady even in the right way, but a carnal man is unsettled between a right and a wrong way. A wicked man is often secure, but he is never settled concerning his end. It is a false peace that is the daughter of ignorance; but true peace is the daughter of saving knowledge.

"A holy fear of God will prevent anxious and distracting fears.

"As by fear we are kept from iniquity, so by departing from iniquity we are preserved from fear. To be delivered from the fear of evil is preferable to freedom from evil. For he that is not afraid of evil before it comes may be happy when it does come. To be delivered from fear is the privilege and portion of the saints; and the next verse shows it and gives a reason.
Verse 16. 'Because thou shalt forget thy misery, and remember it as waters that pass away.'

As we do not feel, so we cannot fear what we have forgotten. Thus, to forget thy misery implies that he should be long free from such evils as had oppressed him, and not a vestige of them remain.

When a man forgives an injury, he may be said to forget it, because he passes over it, and desires no revenge; yet he cannot but recollect the wrong that was done him. So it is as if Zophar had said, When thou thinkest of thy afflictions it shall not afflict thee. Or he connects the forgetting of his misery with the putting away of his iniquity. So long as a man continues in sin, his past sufferings, as well as his present, will continue to torment him till he is delivered from guilt, and sin is subdued. Then it shall be as if it had not been. It is the peculiar privilege of the saints to have the power of sin broken in them, so that it shall never recover so as to condemn them.

The latter part of this chapter consists of motives and encouragements.

Verse 17. 'Thine age shall be clearer than the noon day; thou shalt shine forth; thou shalt be as the morning.'

That is, thine old age shall be full of comfort, and thou shalt rejoice in the serenity of thy condition. God can easily make the worst part of our lives the best. 'Thou shalt be as
the noon in regard of the clearness of thy light, and as the morning as to the increase and continuance of it. So these two includes the highest expressions of a prosperous condition. God can quickly turn all our sorrows into joys. The sum of this mercy is laid down in five particulars, in verses 18, 19.

"Verse 18. 1st, 'Thou shalt be secure because there is hope.'

"This security arises from the exercise of a vigorous faith in God, as revealed in his word. It is a sure foundation, on which to cast the anchor of thy hope, which rests firm on the promise of good things to come. Saints walk by faith and not by sight, and this leads them into the treasury of God for all their supplies. But worldly men walk by sight not by faith, and this leaves them seeking happiness among the treasures of men.

"The consideration of what God hath done, and the relation in which he stands to his people, is ground of encouragement for them to hope in him. For he is a father who always speaks what he means, and is able to do what he speaks.

"2dly, 'Yea thou shalt dig about thee.' Digging is either strictly to till and manure the earth, or for the labour of any calling. So it means that thou shalt prosper in all thy lawful undertakings, and carry them on without fear or danger, and nothing shall prevent thy success.

"3dly, 'And thou shalt take thy rest in safety.'"
"As thou shalt dig and thrive at thy work, so thy repose in the day, and thy sleep in the night, shall be sweet unto thee. When the Lord undertakes our protection, we may sleep securely and comfortably. When he watches over us we need not fear, though thousands seek our hurt.

"Verse 19. 'Thou shalt lie down, and none shall make thee afraid.'

"The word here used signifies the lying down of cattle in the fields or folds, and, understood thus, it is a distinct mercy. That our estates are quiet as well as our persons, that our beasts may lie down safely as well as our children, ought to be numbered among our mercies, for which we are to be thankful.

"Though neither all nor our chief happiness consists in these outward things, yet they are described in the inventory of the happy man. Ps. cxliv.

"The fifth privilege is greater than any of the former.

"'Yea many shall make suit unto thee.' Heb. They shall entreat thy face. The word entreat signifies also to weary, and, when joined with the word face, it signifies to weary one with prayer and entreaty. As many are weary of prayer, so some are wearied with prayers, and grant the petitions of the poor, not so much to relieve them as to ease themselves. Luke xviii. 5. I will avenge her, lest by her continual coming she weary me. So the meaning is this, they shall make many suits to thee,
even as many as are made to him that is wea-
ried with suitors. We give honour unto God
when we sincerely seek unto him and obey him.
" Zophar having mentioned these privileges
to encourage Job, now points out the contrary
condition of wicked men.
" Verse 20. 'The eyes of the wicked shall
fail.'
" The failing of our eyes is the disappoint-
ment of our hopes. The eyes of the wicked
shall indeed fail with waiting upon their idols,
vanities, lusts, and lies; upon their relations
and friends, their policies and plots.
" It should make the saints lift up their
heads and eyes with confidence that God will
cause the eyes of wicked men to fail.
" 'And they shall not escape.'
" As they shall not receive the good which
they expect, so they shall not be able to deli-
ver themselves from the evil which they fear.
Seeing that God rejects the confidence which
wicked men pretend to have in him, and blasts
every outward thing in which they place their
confidence; how is it possible for them to es-
cape?
" 'Their hope shall be as the giving up of
the ghost.'
" When hope dies all dies. Hope is the
last commodity which a man parts with. As
all the hopes of wicked men perish when they
die, so, while they live, their hopes are dying.
A godly man hath not only a living but a live-
ly hope.
CHAPTER XII.

"This and the two following chapters contains Job's reply to Zophar, and the two former speakers, and he

"1st, Sharply rebukes the pride of spirit; and confidence in their own opinions.

"2dly, He refutes their assertion, that good or evil things distinguish good and evil men. From verse 5. to the end of the chapter, he shows that outward evils are often the lot of good men, &c.

"Verse 1. 'And Job answered and said.' He seems to assert his own positions more fully than he answers or disputes with his friends.

"Verse 2. 'No doubt but ye are the people, and wisdom shall die with you.' Wisdom is peculiar to none, and an opinion of our own wisdom savours of great folly. Some take this as a plain assertion; others as an irony, which is a speech filled with derision, while the letter of it makes no doubt the spirit of it is an absolute denial. Without breach of charity we may check pride with derision.

"Verse 3. 'But I have understanding as well as you; I am not inferior even to you.' The Hebrew is, I have a heart, &c.—I have courage to maintain what I have asserted. It is not a good proof of preferable understanding to boast of it. But in some cases self-commendation is not uncomely. Job had derided their ignorance, and now he compares himself.
with them both in the matter and degree of his understanding; and then he triumphantly asks, *Yea, who knows not such things as these?* There are some common principles that it is a shame not to know; and about common truths to affect mystery is vanity. Job next takes notice of the scorn of his friends.

“Verse 4. ‘I am as one mocked of his neighbour.’ Instead of comforting, you have mocked me in my adversity. The unkindness of a friend hath much of the enemy in it.

“‘Who calleth upon God and he answereth him.’ The vulgar read, *He who is derided of his neighbour as I am, will call upon God, and God will hear him.* It is the privilege of the saints to make God their refuge when men despise them. He is the helper of the friendless. God is the best friend at all times, and the only friend at sometimes. Perhaps God gives up his people to reproach, to stir up a spirit of prayer in them. Or it may be a reproof to them for having loved the world and the praise of men too much. When we are reviled and mocked, let us call upon God, who will not mock but answer us. He will not give stones for bread, &c. for he loves to be giving, and delights to give good gifts to all who ask him. Job next gives an answer to the question, *How is a just upright man entertained in this world? Do not all respect and reverence him?* No, he is laughed to scorn.

“‘The just upright man is laughed to scorn.’ Holiness is in disgrace among ungodly men. Those men of whom the world was not worthy.
'had trial of cruel mockings;' and Jeremiah says, 'I was a derision to all my people, and their song all the day.' It is enough that holiness is in repute with God, for it never had, nor never will have credit in this world.

"He now enters upon the argument, and in verses 5 and 6, lays down two positions in direct opposition to what Zophar asserts, verses 17, 20.

"Verse 5. 'He that is ready to slip with his feet, is as a lamp despised in the thoughts of him that is at ease.'

"As a burning lamp is an emblem of a happy condition, so a dying lamp represents a miserable one. They that slide should be supported. But he who falls under the weight of affliction has often the burden of contempt laid above it.

"The afflicted are usually neglected; for the very best of men at ease are apt to be inattentive to others in affliction, and, in a certain degree, to despise them, which we do not only by reproaching them with our tongues, but by not sympathizing with, and assisting them with a brotherly fellow-feeling.

"Though David was despised when he was eating ashes and drinking tears, Psal. xlii. yet he acted very differently. Psal. xxxv. 'When they were sick, my clothing was sackcloth.' Happy they who are enabled to follow this example.

"Upon the whole, it is as if Job had said to Zophar, Thou hast affirmed that the righteous man is as the shining light; but I say, he is a
despised lamp. Again, you have said that the eyes of the wicked shall fail, &c. whereas I say,
"Verse 6. 'The tabernacles of robbers prosper, and they that provoke God are secure; into whose hand God bringeth abundantly.'
"God sometimes gives them the greatest worldly prosperity, who offer him the highest provocations. These treasures of good things which he bestows upon them gives them an opportunity to bring out those evils which were treasured up in their hearts; hence, observe, That to have wealth, without grace to use it to the glory of God, is a curse to the possessor, and often hurtful to all around him.
"Job having checked the pride of his friends, and opposed Zophar's assertions, proceeds to give proof.
"Verse 7. 'But ask now the beasts and they shall teach thee, and the fowls of the air, and they shall tell thee.'
"All creatures have a teaching voice. The knowledge of natural things should be made subservient to spiritual improvement; this world is a glass, wherein we may discern and converse with the invisible world.
"It is usual to direct us to the irrational creatures, when we depart from or act below reason. Go to the ant thou sluggard, &c. Though they do not answer the questions put to them explicitly to the ear, yet they do it convincingly to the conscience. To meditate in a serious manner, on the peculiar properties of the beasts, is to be taught of them, as every true conclusion is the voice and answer of the creature.
"Verse 8. 'Speak to the earth, and it shall teach thee, and the fishes of the sea shall declare unto thee. Zophar had said, canst thou by searching find out God? Yea, saith Job, I can find him, without much searching; every thing I see, shows me God, and every object is a teacher to the ear. The earth, and the creatures, are mostly given to oppressors and robbers, and in this sense, the tabernacles of robbers prosper.

"But what is chiefly intended by Job, is expressed in the two verses following.

"Verse 9. 'Who knoweth not in all these, that the hand of the Lord hath wrought this?'

"Verse 10. 'In whose hand is the soul of every living thing, and the breath of all mankind.'

"Though there is much to be learned from beasts, and fowls, &c. yet Job calls on them, in a special manner, to observe that the hand of the Lord hath done this, and that all these things are in his hand. Providence is as extensive as creation. Now, if providence, (wherein man usually acts with God,) act so much above man, that the whole is ascribed to God, how much more does creation declare itself to be the sole work of God? Some parts of creation excel others, but there is enough in any one of them to speak out who made it. Let us therefore glorify God, in whose hand our breath is, and all our ways, by carefully observing the operation of his hand, in all that happens, submitting cheerfully to his will in all things, and by depending upon him for all we need, either in this or the world to come.
“This is Job’s first argument from the creatures, all of which acknowledge God their Maker, disposer, and preserver, they have their being and their well being with the changes and continuance of both from him.

“Verse 11. ‘Doth not the ear try words? and the mouth taste his meat?’

“The words seem to convey a reproof of the rash and inconsiderate judgment of Job’s friends about what had been spoken. You have not pondered my speech, nor the arguments and reasons which I have produced in support of my opinion; or suppose it to refer to what Job’s friends had offered. You have declared many things to me, and you think that I have taken no notice of them; but my ear hath tried your words as exactly as the palate of a mouth does in tasting meat.

“Our Saviour cautions us to take heed how we hear. The ear must be taught to hear by the spirit, or else we never can hear what the spirit saith. The senses are a door to the understanding, and, acting jointly, they lay up treasures of knowledge; therefore

“Verse 12. ‘With the ancient is wisdom; and in length of days understanding.’

“Experience is a great teacher, and by attentive observation much knowledge may be attained. Therefore, old men should show forth wisdom by their conduct and instructions, and then they are to be honoured and their counsel respected. But it is to be lamented that many have learned nothing of holy knowledge, even when their time is far spent, and
so have nothing worthy of communicating to
the succeeding race. To whom the Apostle
gives a severe reproof, Heb. v. 12. 'When for
the time ye ought to be teachers, ye have need
that one teach you,' &c. Though we may
attain knowledge by conversing with creatures,
yet there is no creature hath wisdom at his
disposal. It is the prerogative and privilege
of God only.

"Verse 13. 'With him is wisdom and
strength, he hath counsel and understanding.'

"Thus Job shows that all these perfections
meet in God, and thereby demonstrates the
absolute completeness of all his administra-
tions. Would you have understanding? It is
in him; he can search out deep things. Would
you have counsel? He can direct to the most
proper means. Would you have wisdom? He
can manage and order means to the best ad-
vantage. Do you need strength? His power
is over all, and there is nothing too hard for
him. God is complete in every perfection.
Of this he gives an instance.

"Verse 14. 'Behold he breaketh down, and
it cannot be built again: he shutteth up a man,
and there can be no opening.'

"What God will do, he can do, and it shall
be done. There is no prevailing against God.
No withstanding any of his operations; or re-
pealing any of his decrees. Balaam confesses
God hath blessed, and I cannot reverse it.

"Verse 15. 'Behold he withholdeth the
waters, and they dry up: also he sendeth them
out, and they overturn the earth.'
"This is an instance in natural things that man cannot resist God.

"The waters are at God's command; and he withholds them, as with a bridle, at his pleasure, till the earth is parched and dried up.

"And he overturneth the earth by sending immoderate rains, for when the fruits of the earth are destroyed, the earth may be said to be overturned for that season. From the same creature being made either a mercy or a scourge to us, we see the difference between the things of nature and grace. Spiritual things, in the least degree, are a blessing, and the greater the degree, the blessing is the more increased.

"Verse 16. 'With him is strength and wisdom: the deceived and the deceiver are his.'

"This shows the providence and power of God acting mightily in civil things. Strength and wisdom here signifies not only the quintessence of wisdom, but being and existence. God is the measure, the reason of all things.

"He knows the deceiver and the deceived, and will bring both to an account.

"He will bring about his counsels, and promote his own glory by them both. It proves an infinite sovereignty in God when he doth his work by that which seems to work against him. To try his people, and prove their zeal for the truth, he sends out some to oppose it. It is just in God to blind their eyes against his truth who harden their hearts against his fear; and because they received not the love of the truth he leaves them under
the power of strong delusion, that they should believe a lie.

"We may well conclude that wisdom and strength are his, whom the craft of men to deceive cannot circumvent; and whom the silliness and folly of men in being deceived cannot disappoint.

"Job now specifies several degrees of men whom the Lord, by the wonderful administration of his power and wisdom, sets up or casts down.

"Verse 17. 'He leadeth counsellors away spoiled, and maketh the judges fools.'

"It is a special gift of God to be able to give good counsel, or to be willing to take it. Many can give good counsel who will not receive it. He in mercy gives good counsellors to establish and preserve kingdoms. But when they abuse their wisdom, or when people abuse the blessings that God gives, they thereby prepare the way for their removal. The ruin of kingdoms is not from chance, but by a divine power. As wisdom is the gift of God, so is the continuance of it. We need daily wisdom for our daily work, as much as we do daily bread for our daily wants. God, for the punishment of a nation, may give up judges and rulers to folly and tyranny.

"Verse 18. 'He looseth the bonds of kings, and girdeth their loins with a girdle.'

"God by his mighty power breaks, or by his wisdom dissolves, those bonds of oppression with which kings attempt to enslave their people.
"When the Lord punishes the pride and sin of kings, he looseth the bonds of their authority, of their riches and revenues, of their people's love and affection, and also the bonds of leagues and alliances with foreign powers. All those bonds that the kings of the earth make, either to support themselves or oppress their people, are snapped asunder by the power of God at the appointed season.

"A girdle and girding with it signifies a servile or captivated condition; the royal belt is laid aside, and a girding of sackcloth taken up by the mightiest earthly god, when the God of heaven manifests his displeasure.

"Let the great men of the earth hear and fear, and do no more presumptuously. Let them show their regard to Christ's authority by taking his counsel, as stated in the second Psalm.

"Verse 19. 'He leadeth princes away spoiled, and overthroweth the mighty.'

"Princes are called the shields of the earth; but they cannot defend themselves against the assaults of heaven. Faithful nobles are the bars of a kingdom. It is their duty to bolt out impiety and unrighteousness, and thereby keep out evils. When princes bar up the liberty of the people of God, their power and arrogancy will be no bar against their own misery.

"Those who trust God need not fear their most powerful and crafty enemies, for he overwhelmeth the mighty.

"Verse 20. 'He removeth away the speech
of the trusty, and taketh away the understanding of the aged.

"The word trusty is derived from a root that signifies fidelity, truth, stability in word or deed. Men so qualified, and they only, are worthy to be trusted.

"God changes or removes the speech of the trusty, not by making them inconstant and unfaithful, but by leaving them to the inconstancy and unfaithfulness of their own hearts. Changes in the providence of God make the changeableness of men's minds visible in their actions, and audible in their speeches, which arise sometimes from fear or from hopes and gifts. Deut. xvi. 19. There is no depending upon the most faithful man, we must judge of what is spoken by a standing rule, not by the person speaking; there is neither wisdom nor safety in taking any thing upon trust.

"When the Lord will destroy a people, he takes away the understanding of the ancients. No wonder then if God put this among his marvellous judgments. Isa. xxix. 14. 'Behold I will proceed to do a marvellous work, &c. for the wisdom of their wise men shall perish, and the understanding of their prudent shall be hid.'

"Verse 21. 'He poureth contempt upon princes, and weakeneth the strength of the mighty.'

"This is a continuation of the former argument, as understanding is most proper for the aged, so is honour for princes, and strength
for the mighty. God punishes them in that which is peculiar to them. He poureth contempt upon princes; that is, he makes them very contemptible.

"Liberality or munificence is the virtue and honour of princes. God expects from the meanest of his people a free princely spirit in his service, Exod. xxxv. 5.

"The same word is used, Psalm li. 'Uphold me with thy free spirit.' The Lord gives the spirit freely and liberally, and it makes his people free. They who have received the spirit serve the Lord freely, and esteem his service freedom.

"Worldly princes have in their name that which the saints have in their nature; and because they have so little of a free spirit to do good, and to defend those who are good, therefore God pours contempt upon them, and weakeneth the strength or girdle of the mighty.

"There is a girdle of strength, or an alliance of one king with another, by leagues of amity and mutual aid. But the Lord will weaken this strength also, and make them, instead of helps, hurtful to each other, as Isa. viii. 9. 'Associate yourselves, O ye people, and ye shall be broken in pieces,' &c.

"Verse 22. 'He discovereth deep things out of darkness, and bringeth out to light the shadow of death.'

"The infinite knowledge of God makes a darkness to hide his ways and counsels, and so does the knowledge of man; they keep their projects and purposes under vails of
specious pretences and studied secreries; out of all their darkness God discovers deep things, &c.

"The shadow of death is extreme danger and darkness. The Lord discovers deep things out of darkness; by wonderful providences he makes a key to unlock the secrets of men; therefore the people of God have no reason to fear the combinations and plots of evil men; for while their ways please the Lord, what can harm them?

"The Lord comforts his disciples against calumnies and persecutions. Matt. x. 'Fear them not,' &c. and he seems to caution them not to conceal the word of God for fear of men. And fear not them which kill the body, &c.

"Verse 23. 'He increaseth the nation in number, wealth, reputation, and honour; and destroyeth them secretly as by a moth, or openly by disease, famine, and sword.'

"He enlargeth the nations, and straiteneth them again. As he spreadeth them out by prosperity, so by affliction he straitens them. Divine providence acts upon every stage of worldly affairs; God's wheel moves in all the wheels of the creatures. He rules the governors, as well as those who are governed. He leads into ways of peace and prosperity, and gives up to wars, troubles, and desolation.

"When a people increase in sin as much as in sovereignty, and are straitened in their obedience and thankfulness to God, it forebodes a sudden and unexpected downfall,
God never wants means either to increase or destroy whole nations.

"Verse 24. 'He taketh away the heart of the chief of the people of the earth, and causeth them to wander in a wilderness where there is no way.'

"When God leaves the leaders of a people to err through ignorance and obstinacy, or when those who have been valiant for the truth becomes indifferent and faint hearted, then it may be said that he taketh away the heart of the chiefest of the people.

"That is of such as will not give up their hearts to obey and submit to him. But we never have our understanding, will, or courage, &c. so much in our own custody, as when we commit them to God, for his honour and service, in obedience to his call, 'My son give me thine heart.'

"God causeth no man to wander by leading him into false ways, or by preventing him from going in right ways, and yet it is said, 'He causeth them to wander.' His providence is always fulfilling his own counsels to a certain issue, and by a sure way, how much or how long so ever. 'He causeth men to wander.' Isaiah lxiii. 'O Lord why hast thou made us to err from thy ways, and hardened our heart from thy fear?' It may be said that God made them to err when he did not effectually show them the truth, and that he hardened their hearts when he did not soften them. God left them a while to the conduct
of their own lusts, because they refused the
guidance of his spirit.

"When God deserts a man as he did King
Saul, he entangles himself at every step; it
may well be said that he is in a wilderness,
and the longer he is in it he goes the farther
out of the way. For,

"Verse 25. 'They grope in the dark with-
out light.' They are in trouble, and they are
so ignorant that they know not which way to
get out. It is mournful to be without light,
but it is far worse to have light and not to use
it.

"Let us take heed of sinning against light,
lest we be brought into the darkness of error
and delusion.

"'He maketh them to stagger like a drunk-
en man.' When men are drunken with wine,
they sin grievously against God, and he pun-
nishes men severely when he makes them
drunk without wine. When God takes away
the heart of the chief of the people of the
earth, whether in reference to civil or spiritual
things, they produce the same effects of wan-
dering, groping, staggering, &c.

"And when God in justice doth this, then
he declares, 'that with him is wisdom and
strength, and that he also hath counsel and un-
derstanding,' which is the scope and design of
Job in this whole discourse.
CHAPTER XIII.

"Verse 1. 'Lo mine eye hath seen all this, mine ear hath heard and understood it.'

"That is, I have fully apprehended all that I have declared in the former chapter, and having been an eye and ear witness, you ought to receive it as truth.

"Note, That we ought to be well acquainted with, and firmly persuaded of the truth and importance of that which we teach others.

"Verse 2. 'What ye know, the same do I know also; I am not inferior to you.'

"Though all ambitious contendings with others is odious, yet no man ought to betray the truth or his own integrity, lest he should be counted contentious. That man buys the character of an humble and peaceable man too dear who pays either the faith of God or his own credit for it, which every man does who denies or conceals his belief of any truth, or neglects to vindicate himself for fear of the reproach of men.

"Verse 3. 'Surely I would speak to the Almighty, and I desire to reason with God.'

"As if Job had said, 'I would rather speak with God himself than with you, and I expect a more favourable hearing from him than you have yet given me.' We must not reason with God in a way of contending with him, yet we may, as learners, to receive instruction.

"Note, That an upright person is not afraid to reason with God himself. For the justice
and majesty of God, which make rotten hearts to tremble, causes the righteous to rejoice; they are glad that he is just and holy as well as gracious and merciful.

"Verse 4. 'But ye are forgers of lies; ye are all physicians of no value.'

"They did not discern the true cause of Job's trouble; they thought it was for the discovery of his hypocrisy, and by asserting that God gives outward good things to such as are good, they wounded, instead of comforting him, which made him say they were physicians of no value; for it is impossible to apply a suitable remedy when ignorant of the causes of the disease.

"To defend the justice of God they found Job guilty, which was their error; and therefore Job charges them with erroneous doctrine, as well as with the improper application of it to him. They not only repeated a falsehood, but they framed the lie, which is still worse.

"Verse 5. 'O that you would altogether hold your peace, and it should be your wisdom.'

"There is a time to keep silence and a time to speak. When we have an opportunity to vindicate the honour and truth of God, or the credit of a brother that is wronged, or to reprove those that do evil, or to direct and instruct the ignorant, then it is our sin to be silent. Let us learn to speak the truth in love, with a view to the glory of God, and the good of mankind; and unless we do so, we had far better be silent, as we should thereby discover
more wisdom than by talking at such a rate of indiscretion as Job asserts his friends had done. 'Let your speech be always with grace.'

"Verse 6. 'Hear now my reasoning, and hearken to the pleadings of my lips.'

"He now requests a patient and an attentive audience to what he had to say in his own defence. If it is our duty to defend others who are injured, how much more are we bound to endeavour to convince those of their error who have reproached us, and to vindicate ourselves from every false aspersion? Some greedily drink in an evil report of their brethren, but will not have patience to hear their defence with candour, which is both cruel and unjust.

"Verse 7. 'Will you speak wickedly for God, and talk deceitfully for him?'

"Will ye reproach me under a pretence of honouring God? He needs no such advocate, neither will he thank you for condemning me, even with a view to justify his dealings with me. I do affirm that God is righteous in afflicted me, and at the same time that I am not wicked, because I am afflicted.

"Verse 8. 'Will ye accept his person? will ye contend for God?'

"When under pretence of obeying God, we wrong man, we may be said to accept his person. So some say God is honoured by their opinions, and therefore they must needs be right. As Papists who pretend zeal for God in maintaining free will, lest he should seem to mock in his commands, and the Arminians as-
sert, that Christ died equally for all men, lest God should seem to mock in his promises. Thus out of a professed respect for the person of God they oppose his truths. While we are zealous in maintaining one truth, we should be cautious lest we obscure another.

"We cannot suppose that Job means to blame his friends for contending for God; he surely means only that their manner of doing it was wrong.

"Verse 9. 'Is it good that he should search you out? or, as one man mocketh another, do ye so mock him?'

"An earthly judge may be mocked and deceived by false witnesses, so as to condemn the innocent. Man may be, and often is mocked by man, but God cannot be mocked; and you will find at last, that by all your insinuations of my deceit and hypocrisy you have not imposed upon God but deceived yourselves.

"A good end will not excuse us for any unlawful deed; and we may be justly charged with doing what may be fairly inferred from our actions, though we never had such an intention; and when God searches,

"Verse 10. 'He will surely reprove you if ye do secretly accept persons.'

"In this Job seems to prophesy, for the event fulfilled what he said, chap. xlii. Some are afraid, many are unable, and others are unwilling to be at the pains and trouble of reproving; but God will thoroughly reprove you, for the Hebrew is, in reproving he will re-
prove you, which intimates not only the cert-
tainty but the severity of it.

"Some read the latter part of the verse, 'although ye do accept persons secretly,' which shows that however close and concealed our sins may be, that God observes and will bring us to shame by reproving us for our most secret sins.

"Now if God will not endure that any creature should be wronged, even under a pretence of doing him right, how shall those judges who favour the great ones of the world, to the prejudice and hurt of their inferiors, be able to answer for their sinful partiality?

"Job shows his friends their errors by two more arguments in verses 11, 12.

"Verse 11. 'Shall not his excellency make you afraid? and his dread fall upon you?'

"There is an excellency in the being of God which appears in all his attributes, and in all his works. He is excellent in working, because excellent in being, Exodus, xv. 7. Deut. xxxiii. 26.

"His excellency should strongly affect and overawe our hearts into a holy composure of spirit, with a due care of pleasing him, and a fear of offending him.

"The word for make you afraid signifies extreme fear, such as doth swallow up and amaze, Isaiah xxii. 4. The night of my pleasure hath he turned into fear unto me; that is, such a fear seized upon me, as turned all my pleasure into dread and terror.
"God is to be dreaded in the justice of his law, his awful threatenings, and in the certainty and greatness of his judgments.

"Verse 12. 'Your remembrances are like unto ashes, your bodies to bodies of clay.'

"As if Job had said, your bodies, which in regard of their figure and frame, are lifted up as if they did scorn the earth, are still but clods of clay; and however beautiful and strong they appear, they must shortly be reduced to first principles, and the remains and remembrance thereof swept away like ashes.

"Verse 13. 'Hold your peace, let me alone, that I may speak, and let come on me what will.'

"Will you who are ashes and clay, stand it out before the excellency of God; of whom you ought to stand in awe, and be abased on account of your frailty?

"Those who have high thoughts of themselves are apt to despise what is said by others. Were men low enough in their own eyes, they would be ready to embrace every advice that appeared to promote holiness.

"But why does Job say, let come on me what will? That is, censure me as much as you please, or however you may take it, I will speak; or it may be, as if he had said, you seem very tender of me, and afraid lest I expose myself to farther judgments from God for maintaining my integrity, but I will speak and bear all the blame myself, and abide his determination and submit to him.
"An upright heart is very resolute; there is nothing that can make a man afraid while he is not afraid of himself. Every good man ought to say, I will do my duty, come of it what will; and what can come of it but good? for though the Lord leave him to the cruel dealings of men he will overrule it for good.

"Verse 14. 'Wherefore do I take my flesh in my teeth, and put my life in mine hand?'

"Some say this is an inquiry after the cause why he endured such grievous afflictions. Others take the words as a denial of impatience.

"But it rather appears to be a self reproof. A godly man usually casts the first stone at his sin, and blames himself more than any other man can do for his own secret distempers or outward miscarriages. A carnal heart doth what it can to excuse or extenuate its sin. But a holy person doth both aggravate and rebuke himself for his own sin. Wherefore am I so vain, so earthly, so proud, so impatient, &c. Is this the way to submit to the rod of a father?

"No man needs expect to be his own carver, either in comforts or sorrows.

"Job having intimated that he did not carry his life in his hand, as a thing that he made no reckoning of, proceeds to make a high profession of confidence in God.

"Verse 15. 'Though he slay me, yet will I trust in him.'

"But how can a man trust in God when he is slain? Slaying sometimes notes only a civil death, or depriving a person of former favour,
or present comforts. So to trust is to depend on God for support and deliverance.

"A true believer, living or dying, may say I will trust in the Lord for the salvation of my soul, the resurrection of my body, and the eternal rest and enjoyment of God in heaven. I believe he will save my soul when he shall destroy my body.

"This is not only a profession of Job's faith, but a vindication of his character from the accusation of his friends. That man who confides in, depends upon, and makes his boast in God alone, cannot be an hypocrite. God is always trusted as much as he is known; and the more we know of him the more firmly will we trust him.

"He that takes hold of God in reality, lets go his hold of all other things; we may use the help of creatures, but we must trust none but God; and we must trust him for all things, and at all times. In this Job manifests the highest confidence in God, but in the last clause he discovers too much conceit and confidence in himself.

"'But I will maintain mine own ways before him.' Not that he thought he had no sin, but he was willing to be tried by God. Try me, prove me, saith the upright soul, I doubt not but I shall be found right. He that doth truth is not afraid of the light. The good deeds of the saints are wrought in the strength and power of God, as well as at the command and by the authority of God; and so his deeds are made manifest that they are wrought in God,"
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"Our deeds have no value in them but as they are done in the name and strength of Christ: Nor can we maintain any of our ways before God, but in so far as we walk in the spirit.

"You must not imagine that God will disclaim me because I maintain mine own ways before him; or that he will condemn me because he slays me. No, though he does, I will trust in him; and though I maintain mine own ways before him, yet

"Verse 16. 'He also shall be my salvation; for an hypocrite shall not come before him;' some render, This shall turn to my salvation. I am persuaded, that when God hath heard my plea, he will give sentence on my side notwithstanding your accusations.

"There is a self justification consistent with salvation by grace. 'Tis not pride but duty (when we are called to it) to say we are what we are; and when our ways are right; to maintain and defend them. Thus we may and ought to defend our ways before men. Yea, even while we put our mouths in the dust, and are deeply humbled before God for the imperfection of our ways, we may thus maintain the uprightness of our ways before God, and be assured that he also will be our salvation. It is comfortable, in every distress, and also in the view of death, to reflect upon our interest in the salvation of God. Faith can fix on nothing less than God himself: He shall be my salvation; but a hypocrite shall not come before him. An hypocrite is a wick-
ed man in a godly man's clothes; but that will never give him a right to come before God, nor procure the acceptance of any duty, since he cannot address God as his Father in Christ Jesus, for there is no coming before God but in Him; and it is only through Christ, and in his name, that believers have access with boldness to draw near to a holy God. But all that confidence which presumption inspires will give way and disappoint and destroy its possessors.

"Verse 17. 'Hear diligently my speech and my declaration with your ears.'

"The Hebrew is, Hearing hear. The doubling of the word imports, either that his friends were inattentive, and unwilling to hear; or that what he had to say was of very great importance. A declaration signifies grave and weighty speech, as a plaintiff makes when he puts in a state of his grievance. Thus Job renewed his request for being heard,

"Verse 18. 'Behold, now I have ordered my cause: I know that I shall be justified.'

"This commences his reason why he desires to be heard. I am not come unprepared to this bar. Though, through ignorance or prejudice, you mistake my condition; yet, having carefully examined the whole cause, I find that, upon good grounds, notwithstanding all my afflictions, I am warranted to say, 'I know I shall be justified.' The justification here intended seems to be the determination of the question between him and his friends on his side. Or it may be a contrast with these
words, 'An hypocrite shall not come before thee;' that is, he shall not be justified but condemned. He says, in a bold manner,

"Verse 19. 'Who is he that will plead with me? for now if I hold my tongue, I shall give up the ghost.'

"We do not suppose that Job speaks proudly, confiding in his own wisdom, but trusting to the justness of his cause, and the power and support of God, in maintaining his defence against his opposers, he speaks as certain of victory.

"Our reputation should be dearer to us than our lives; and it seems Job would rather have given up the ghost than have yielded to their charges by keeping silent; and therefore he calls upon his friends to appear and support their charges against him, and thereby give him an opportunity to vindicate himself.'

"Verse 20. 'Only do not two things unto me; then will I not hide myself from thee.'

"Job seems here to say, I will not be afraid to speak unto thee, provided thou wilt grant my request contained in the following words, I will then cheerfully appear before thee.

"Verse 21. 'Withhold thine hand far from me.' That is, mitigate my sufferings; abate my pains; release me from my sorrows, and let not thy dread make me afraid.

"When God manifests his love to his people it makes the bitterest cup pleasant. But when afflictions are mixed with tokens of his anger, and a sense of his displeasure, it is af-
ftiction indeed; hence, Ps. vi. 'O Lord rebuke me not in thine anger,' &c.

"To pray for the pardon of sin, yet willing to continue in sin, is truly absurd. But to pray for the removal of afflictions, yet willing to continue under them if God so pleases, is truly a good frame of spirit.

"Or it might be a discovery of the majesty and greatness of God that he was afraid of, and petitions to be preserved from it.

"Job having deprecated the terror of the Lord, resolves what to do.

"Verse 22. 'Then call thou, and I will answer; or let me speak, and answer thou me.'

"The particle then, implies, that he could not do either without permission. Take away thy dread, and then I am ready for a hearing. But I cannot endure thy majesty by reason of weakness; and yet I know my own uprightness is such, that I have no fear of thy censure.

"Zophar had said, 'O that God would speak,' &c. Job answers, you said it would then appear that my sins were double to my afflictions. Now I desire that God would speak out what my sins are. For I am suspected by my friends of great crimes, which certainly ought to be brought forward and substantiated before I am censured or condemned.

"Verse 23. 'How many are mine iniquities and sins? make me to know my transgression and my sin.'

"It is worthy of notice, that Job having asked the question, 'How many are mine ini-
quities?' immediately adds, 'Make me to know,' &c. By which, he seems to say, I may see how many my sins are; or that they are very many. Yet I cannot know them in their evil nature and demerit, or as abominable in thy sight, without thy special teaching.

"The words express a strong desire to know the cause of his afflictions. That if it was on account of unknown sins, he might be led to repent of, and turn from them unto God, and thereby be enabled to watch carefully against them in future. None can be truly willing that God should show them their sins but such as he has enabled to embrace the Saviour, for the sight of one sin is sufficient to render us miserable. But a believing view of forgiveness through the blood of Christ swallows up all our sins. For Job had said, 'He shall be my salvation' before he said, 'Show me my transgressions.'

"Even those who are best acquainted with the plagues of their own heart, have need to continue instant in prayer, that God would make them know their transgressions.

"The scope of this discourse to the end of chapter xiv. is to maintain his integrity, and aggravate his present misery, and is very like chapters vii. and x.

"Verse 24. 'Wherefore hidest thou thy face, and holdest me for thine enemy?'

"These words are not so much a question as an expostulation, which is a very affecting way of expressing the grief of the heart.

"We must suppose that Job believed that
God had a reason why he hid his face from him; and also that Job was resolved to honour God, by submitting to him, though he should continue to hide his face from him.

"When the Lord withdraws the light of his countenance, and his promised assistance in duty, or his wonted support under suffering; then he is said to hide his face from the house of Jacob, or from the saints.

"We may expound the latter clause by the former, thus, surely thou holdest me for thine enemy, else why dost thou hide thy face from me?

"Note, That as some persuade themselves falsely that God is their friend, so others have false suspicions that God is their enemy.

"Job next uses an argument with God why he should not contend with him, viz. that he was so weak and inconsiderable.

"Verse 25. 'Wilt thou break a leaf driven to and fro? and wilt thou pursue the dry stubble?'

"We do not suppose that Job intends to charge God with severity, but to move him to pity him in his weak and helpless condition; and as it were to put him in mind, that if he was to continue to afflict him, he could as easily crush him as a leaf could be broken, or as the dry stubble was driven before a strong wind.

"The most prevailing argument with God, is to make known our case, as poor, diseased, and unworthy helpless sinners.

"When a Pharisee comes and tells a long story of his righteousness, the Lord abhors
him; but if a poor publican confesses himself unworthy to look up to heaven, and prays for mercy, the Lord not only pities, but accepts him; he goes home justified, not the other.

"Verse 26. 'For thou writest bitter things against me, and makest me to possess the iniquities of my youth.'

"Writing may allude to recording the sentence of a judge. Sin is a bitter thing in its effects, as well as base in its nature; and as it provokes God to anger, it is very bitter, for all who do not repent shall be punished.

"Now repentance itself is bitter, it is no pleasant potion; and this shows, that however sweet sin is in the mouth, it must be bitter in the belly. Whatever renders the life of man grievous, may be said to be bitter.

"To possess the sins of youth, is to feel sorrow and pain, and also to be afflicted with the filthiness of them. The sins of youth often prove great sufferings in old age. Holy Job reflected upon, and chewed them over not as sweet morsels, but as gall and wormwood, to mourn over and repent afresh for them; when he looked back on his life, he saw such defects and failings, as justly exposed him to the rod. Hence observe, that it becomes saints to view their sins as the cause of their afflictions, whatever is God's aim in them; as 1 Kings xvii. 18, the woman said, 'Art thou come unto me to call my sins to remembrance, and to slay my son?' Her sorrows brought her sins to remembrance, and then she feared that God contended with her for her sins.
"Verse 27. 'For thou puttest my feet in the stocks, and lookest narrowly into all my paths; thou settest a print upon the heels of my feet.'

"Thus God made him possess the iniquities of his youth in old age, and is as if he had said, Thou proceedest with such severity against me as against a grand malefactor, thou layest me fast by the heels; and wherever I go, my troubles are like armed keepers watching me, and I am all over wounded, afflicted quite through, there is a wound in the very soles of my feet, Isa. i. 5.

"Note, That great afflictions are often the lot of God's choicest servants, which makes them complain bitterly; and even the most patient become impatient from the severity or continuance of the rod.

"Some say the following verse is a preface to the next chapter, and assert, that it is an explication of it throughout.

"Verse 28. 'And he, as a rotten thing, consumeth, as a garment that is moth eaten.

"He speaks in the third person, though he means himself. In chapter vi. 12, he asked, 'Is my strength the strength of stones?' &c. Here he tells us what he and his strength are; and surely he could not go lower for comparisons, than the effects of moths and rottenness.

"By this self-abasement, Job seems to argue with God for compassion and sparing mercies; as if he had said, could I bear these sorrows any longer, I would not so earnestly began end of them: but alas! if they do not end speedi-
ly, they will end me; for my strength is gone, and I am but rottenness; seeing thou not only tearest me as a lion by open and violent afflicts, but also doth eat me as a moth by secret and silent consumptions.

"In all the steps of gradation by which Job ascends to the highest pitch of his afflictions, from verse 24—27 inclusive; he eyes God in all, and acknowledges him as the author of all these evils; for he says, 'Thou hidest thy face, thou writest,' &c.

"Hence observe, that we should honour God by observing his hand in all that befalls us, and acknowledge his sovereignty in all his disposals, and look to him for support under, and deliverance from all our afflicts; as well as view him as the fountain whence cometh all the good things we enjoy.

CHAPTER XIV.

"Verse 1. 'Man that is born of a woman, is of few days and full of trouble.'

"To show that the same afflictions which had fallen upon him may fall upon any other who is born of a woman; Job speaks in the third person, or thereby to abase himself as scarce worthy to be named.

"As the woman is doomed to bring forth in sorrow, so she brings forth a sorrowful helpless child, which points out the frailty of man.
"Besides he is of few days: Hebrew, short of days or cut short. How vain to reckon upon many years to come, when our whole time can make but a few days altogether, and uncertain but each day may close the scene; since our days are few and hurries away imperceptibly.

"Let us therefore live, habitually laying hold on eternal life; for we live no more of our time, but what is spent properly, and these few days, it is added, is full of trouble. Trouble is hard fare, but there is plenty of it. Sin is the seed of trouble, and trouble is all the harvest we reap by sin.

"Some render trembling, as Hab. iii.'16. Holy men tremble at the holiness of God, and all have reason to tremble on account of their own sinfulness. Others render full of anger. Trouble and anger are well expressed by the same word, seeing most of our troubles proceed from the anger of God, and are all greatly increased by our own anger.

"There are troubles in getting, keeping, and losing the things of this life. We have troubles in doing our duties, and for doing them; and worst of all for not doing them, or for doing that which is not our duty. Besides, we are, or ought to be full of the troubles of sympathy and compassion at the troubles of others, so that we are always full of trouble.

"Verse 2. "He cometh forth like a flower, and is cut down; he fleeth also as a shadow, and continueth not."

"Man in his flourishing, is near to wither-
ing, for his standing is so short, that it is not so much as mentioned. The literal reading of Cant. ii. 11, is, the flowers appear, the time of cutting is come, which suits the point in hand; for it intimates that flowers are cut as soon as they appear. Such a flower is man, he cometh forth and is cut down; as if death did rise early and watch for the flourishing flower to crop it. Man even in his best estate is vain, and many who have stood beyond that, have proved far worse than vain, bad as it is.

"We read often of the shadow of death; and our life is but a shadow, because it continueth not. Death is a perfect shadow, and a shadow is the similitude of our imperfect life.

"The mind of man is more mutable than the wind; it is hard to say what any man's mind is; and there are very few that know their own minds, and even the body is changing every day; and as for honour, power, riches, &c. they are not abiding, and the spiritual estate does not always continue the same; so it may be well said he continueth not.

"Job having by these similitudes shown the frailty of man, says,

"Verse 3. 'And dost thou open thine eyes upon such an one, and bringest me into judgment with thee?

"Thus Job debases himself, *such an one!* a man, who besides the common condition of men, is brought so much lower by these afflictions. To open the eyes upon a man, signifies a diligent inspection of, and care over him; or
an accurate observation of his ways, so as to bring him to a strict account.

"He that will not bring a man to judgment for what he sees him do amiss, is said to connive or wink at him; and it is as if Job had said, does it become thy greatness and majesty to take such strict notice of all the motions of so poor a creature as I am? A due consideration of what we are, leads us to low thoughts of ourselves; so Job pleads, dost thou bring me into judgment with thee? that is, I am no match for thee, thou canst not raise thy name by casting me down; thou mayest honour thy mercy by pardoning, and thy grace by supporting me, but not thy power by overthrowing me. The worst and weakest of men, are the best foils to display the riches and beauty of grace and mercy.

"Verse 4. 'Who can bring a clean thing out of an unclean? not one.'

"The Chaldee paraphrase reads, who can make a man clean that is polluted with sin? cannot one? that is God.

"Some allege, that Job would extenuate his actual sins from his original depravity by this question.

"When David, Psa. li. confesses that he was shapen in iniquity, &c. was he thereby sewing a fig-leaf over his transgression? as if he would say, is it any wonder that I who was brought forth in iniquity should practise wickedness? no, he does not excuse, but humble himself, being convinced of his need of mercy, he prays for it, because he was conceived in sin and
brought forth in iniquity. Such, I think, was the frame of Job's spirit; and in pouring out this complaint upon his birth sin, he aggravates his own sinful state. But wo unto those that excuse or extenuate their actual sins from the depravity of nature.

"Job having pleaded for pity, from the consideration of the weakness of man, the brevity of life, and his impure original, proceeds to another argument.

"Verse 5. 'Seeing his days are determined, the number of his months are with thee, thou hast appointed his bounds that he cannot pass.'

"Seeing there are certain bounds beyond which the life of man cannot be protracted, and since after death there is no returning, therefore he desires that he may have some relief from his troubles while he passes along. And in Psa. lxxxix. 48, it is said, 'Remember Lord how short my time is,' &c. Thus the Psalmist urges the Lord to grant some ease and respite in this life, because death cannot be far off, from which there is neither rescue nor returning. Our days and months here are under thine eye, and established by thy counsel; we live not at our own pleasure. Natural causes are somewhat, but the true bounds are set by God himself; his will is the limit of man's life: friends cannot lengthen, enemies cannot shorten the life of man one moment. The Jews could not accomplish the death of Christ till his hour was come. May God who keeps reckoning for us, and knows how near the pe-
riod of our time is, prepare us for our departure.

"From this assertion Job forms an earnest petition in

"Verse 6. 'Turn from him that he may rest, till he shall accomplish as an hireling his day.'

"Job thus entreats the favour of God, or the forbearance of his anger.

"Turn away from me; let me have some peaceable days before I leave this world. He must accomplish his days as an hireling. He is a labourer, not a loiterer. Sin brought pain into our labour, but the duty of labour was before sin. The saints are not mercenaries; yet in the issue, they shall receive for the least work more than the best work can merit. As all that they do is in the sight of God, so it is kept in remembrance by him, Hebrews vi. 10. Both the labour of our callings, and of our sufferings shall have a full reward.

"From verse 7 and 10, by a dissimilitude, and verse 11 and 12, by a similitude, Job amplifies and illustrates the truth, that 'The days of man are determined,' &c.

"Verse 7. 'There is hope of a tree, if it be cut down, that it will sprout again, and that the tender branch thereof will not cease.'

"This may be viewed as an argument to move the Lord to spare Job; though he had beaten off his leaves, his substance being swept away by robbers, and he had lopt off his boughs and branches by cutting off his children by death, he seems to solicit that God would
not continue to press upon him by his afflic-
tions till he had cut him quite down. For he
was not like a tree, which, when cut down,
shoots forth at the root again.

"Some think, that by this comparison Job
expresses his hope of the resurrection, and then
the words are a similitude. As a tree cut
down sprouts again, so though man dies, he
shall revive and rise again.

"Verse 8. 'Though the root thereof wax
old in the earth, and the stock thereof die in
the ground.'

"This is a supposition of still greater im-
probability than the former.

"'Tis much that a tree cut down should
grow much more if the stock wax old, &c.

"The death of corn in the ground is not to-
tal, for if the seminal life were quite extin-
guished, it could not yield either blade or ear;
yet because the corruption or alteration of it is
a kind of death, therefore it is used as an il-
lustration of Christ's resurrection, and also of
ours from a total death; so the root of a tree
dying in this sense buds and brings forth, as,

"Verse 9. 'Yet through the scent of water
it will bud and bring forth boughs like a plant.'

"This is an elegant metaphor, as if a tree
smelled the water as soon as it came near; give
it water and you shall soon perceive a growth.

"How doth this shame man, who has not
only the scent of water, but has abundance of
holy doctrine; and yet how little does he grow,
yea, and some continues in a winter of igno-
rance and unbelief, and brings forth no fruit
meet for repentance, or for the hope of eternal life, even when they enjoy such privileges.

"Hence observe, that the grass and trees will condemn those who are often watered with the word of grace, but do not profit by it."

"Verse 10. 'But man dieth and wasteth away, yea man giveth up the ghost, and where is he?'

"The Hebrew is strong and powerful, man dieth; wasting and dying are but antecedents to giving up the ghost. Man decays and wastes, yea, dies every day; as Paul, speaking of his outward troubles saith, 'I die daily;' but he does not give up the ghost every day, that is the last act. The question, and where is he? seems to carry a negation in it, that is, Man is no where; he is a wasting, dying creature, while he lives, and when he gives up the ghost, himself and all his glory are gone, and that for ever out of this world. He and his riches, honour, and wisdom, are now separated. What is become of all his designs, devices, counsels, and thoughts? Trust not in princes nor any of the children of men, their breath is in their nostrils, they die, and then all their contrivances perish, the similitude follows.

"Verse 11. 'As the waters fail from the sea, and the flood decayeth and drieth up.'

"When natural moisture decays in man, he fails, and can no more revive himself than a river can recover its streams when it is cut off from these secret supplies and springs which it formerly received. Thus the similitude is
applied in the following verse. But Sir R. Blackmore makes this also to be a dissimilitude.

A flowing river or a standing lake
May their dry banks and naked shores forsake;
Their waters may exhale and upward move,
Their channel leave to roll in clouds above;
But the returning winter will restore
What in the summer they had lost before.
But if, O man! thy vital streams desert
Their purple channels and defraud the heart,
With fresh recruits they ne'er will be supplied,
Nor feel their leaping life's returning tide.

"Verse 12. ' So man lieth down, and riseth not till the heavens be no more, they shall not awake nor be raised out of their sleep.

"Death is here compared to sleep, and the resurrection to awaking. When man is laid in the grave, he shall not arise till the times of restitution of all things, when the heavens shall pass away, &c. And since they are to be so completely changed, it is no wonder that all things in this world are constantly changing. The peace and prosperity of kingdoms, and even the beauty and purity of churches, soon decay and pass away.

"When the heavens shall be no more, there shall be a resurrection both of the just and of the unjust. They who have done evil shall receive their wages, and they who have improved their talents shall enter into the joy of the Lord.

"Job was so full of this hope, that he seems in haste to go to bed, and petitions for a grave.
He is an earnest and humble suitor for that which nature least desires, yea, for that which it abhors. He petitions for the grave, as if there were some beauty in darkness, or loneliness in that king of terrors.

"Verse 13. 'O that thou wouldst hide me in the grave, that thou wouldst keep me secret until thy wrath be past, that thou wouldst appoint me a set time and remember me!"

"The original intimates, hide me as a treasure. The bodies of believers are treasures as well as their souls. A secret place may be said to be the grave of a living man.

"It is said, that Obadiah hid the Lord's prophets by fifty in a cave; this cave was like graves to these men though alive. Some think that Job did not so much desire death, but only to be hid alive, out of the reach of these troubles which annoyed him; and this view is favoured by these words, And keep me secret. How long? Until thy wrath be past. That is, the effects of wrath. The original is, thy nostril; because the breath of the Lord is nothing else but his wrath, which, like a stream of brimstone, kindles the fiery Tophet. Job desires the Lord to let this breath pass, and then he is willing to be kept no longer secret. We have much more need to be hid while the wrath of God passeth by, than Moses had to be put into the cleft of the rock, and covered with his hand while his glory passed by. As God hides his people from the wrath of men, Ps. xxvii. So also from his own wrath. Our only refuge from the wrath of God is God
himself, whose name is a strong tower where the righteous find safety.

"A good man is more sensible of Divine displeasure, and fears the appearance of wrath more than the feeling of bodily pain. Jeremiah says, 'Correct me, O Lord, but not in thine anger. Let me but see and know that thou lovest me, and then smite me if thou wilt.' But it is the rod of God, and not the wrath of God, that makes an unbeliever smart.

"It is not the breathing of grace but of sorrow that made him pray, That thou wilt appoint me a set time. A distressed soul often makes distracted prayers, and makes him desire more that his own will may be done than the will of God. It is the sole prerogative of God to set and appoint times. 'My times are in thy hand;' my time of joy and sorrow, of honour and reproach, when I shall fall into, or be delivered from affliction, how long I shall live, &c. Hence note, That we should not only be content, but rejoice that our times are in the hand of God; and we should esteem it a privilege, as well as a duty, to refer all the circumstances of our petitions to the will of God.

"As our remembrance of God is the sum of our duty to him; so God's remembrance of us is the sum of all his mercies to us. So there is nothing more desirable than to be remembered of God, and it is the accomplishment of all our lawful desires to be so remembered of him.

"The thief said, 'Lord remember me,' &c.
Such as have a place in the memory of Christ, shall not want a place in his kingdom.

"Job, having finished his petitions, proposes strange questions, intermixed with some noble resolutions.

"Verse 14. 'If a man die, shall he live again? all the days of my appointed time will I wait till my change come.'

"Some suppose that Job is here correcting and reprehending himself. Thus I indeed desired the Lord to appoint me a set time, when he would restore me; but why do I vex myself, and trouble the Lord with vain wishes? Why should I expect what was never granted to any man? When I die, I shall not live again in this world; yet I am willing to die when God pleases, and I believe I shall live again in the world to come, and therefore wait in faith till this change come.

"To wait, is an act of patience, and of hope expecting to receive; it is also an act of humility, and tone of perseverance. Even all the days of my appointed time will I wait," &c.

"As he who is willing to wait, as long as God sees meet, for deliverance; so he is ready cheerfully to obey God without delay or hesitation, like Abraham, who went with full intent to offer up his son Isaac.

"Note, That it is our duty to wait God's time fully, and obey God immediately; for this purpose we need the patience of labourers to do the will of God, and also the patience of waiters to tarry for our answer and reward.

"Some understand the change for which
Job waited, to be a change of his outward condition. Others think it is till death come. Death brings a change to all. The saints have a great and blessed change from sin and all its evil consequences, to the enjoyment of felicity, without the least fear of its termination. As one of our worthies said, When I die, I shall change my place but not my company; I shall have a new house, but my old society. This change is interpreted of the resurrection. One renders it, I will wait till my holy birth-day come. The resurrection will be a birth-day to the world.

"Hence observe, that the assured hope of a resurrection to eternal life, will support the soul under, and enable patiently to endure the ills of life.

"Verse 15. 'Thou shalt call, and I will answer thee: thou wilt have a desire to the work of thine hands.'

"Some think this is the very form of words in which Job intended to answer God—which may be well expressed thus, Thou wilt put forth thy hand to the work of thy hand, and help me up when thou bidest me rise. God had cast Job into the mire, yet he believes that he will take him by the hand and lift him up, not only out of the ditch of affliction, but out of the grave of death.

"When a true friend reaches out his hand to help, it is an expression of the feeling of his heart. Since God has a desire to the work of his hand, they should have a strong affection to and desire towards him.
"It is the art of genuine faith to look through and beyond the darkest seasons of distress, and of death itself, and discover the light of life.

"Faith is a true prophet, thou wilt have a desire at a future period. He speaks of the time to come.

"Verse 16. 'For now thou numberest my steps; dost thou not watch over my sin?'

"God knows all the motions of our hearts as well as the actions of our lives. The Septuagint translates, Thou numberest my meditations, or the workings of my heart, as the whole course of a man is called his way, so the several actings of that course are called his steps.

"The question 'Dost thou not watch over my sin?' seems an allusion to a severe creditor who gives no day, but presently exacts the penalty of his bond. Thus Job represents God as taking notice of all his sins with a view to punish by bringing him into judgment for them all.

"We should, therefore, watch and pray lest we fall into temptation and transgress the law of God, since he observes our conduct so strictly; and for this purpose, we ought to take heed to what he has said in his word, and what he is daily doing in the course of his providence, and in the prospect of the judgment we should carefully watch our thoughts, words, and actions. Have we not cause to watch lest we transgress when God watches to chasten for our transgressions?
"Verse 17. 'My transgression is sealed up in a bag, and thou sewest up mine iniquity.'

Sealing is used to keep things secret that they may not be seen, and to keep them distinct that they may not be confused, and also for safety that they may be forthcoming.

"By this Job seems to say, My transgressions are kept safe that it may be ready as matter of accusation against me. Some suppose it is a metaphor taken from Solicitors who have their papers sealed up and put into a bag. As impenitence seals our sins upon us, so it treasures up the wrath of God for our sins, Romans ii. 5. The iniquity of Ephraim is bound up, his sin is hid, Hos. xii. 3.; it is reserved to a day of reckoning, it is hid not with a covering of mercy, nor for protection, but for punishment.

"A godly man is apt to think that all his afflictions are the fruit of his own sins. But though the sins of good men appear to be sealed and sewed up in a bag, yet they shall shortly see them, bag and all, cast into the sea, and sinking to the bottom, like lead, in the mighty waters of free grace and undeserved mercies.

"Job having shown that when a man dies, he shall return no more to his former state, which he proceeds to represent and prove by mountains, rocks, trees, &c. which are changed and consumed as if they had never been.

"Verse 18. 'And surely the mountain falling cometh to nought, and the rock is removed out of his place.'
"In the first chapter of the prophecy of Nahum, we have a clear commentary upon this text. What can be said more, and nothing less deserves to be said, either of the instability of the strongest creatures, or of the omnipotency of the God of strength?

"Every mixt body hath the seed of corruption in it, and therefore must naturally corrupt, though God should not destroy it providentially.

"Faith is said to remove mountains; but it is only upon this account, because it engages the power of God who alone can do it.

"The power of God is invisible, and so is much of the weakness of man. The constitution of the creature makes the former visible, and the corruption of it makes the latter visible. Everything that man sees reminds him of what he is, and what he must shortly be.

"Verse 19. 'The waters wear the stones, thou washest away the things which grow out of the dust of the earth, and thou destroyest the hope of man.'

"Waters are soft, yet they make impressions upon that which is hard. This similitude intimates that Job's affliction by long continuance would wear him out at last.

"God once brought an universal deluge, which washed away not only all that grew out of the earth, but all that lived on the face of the earth. Our sin and the wrath of God turns our greatest worldly comforts into curses. 'He destroys the hope of man.'
"He destroys the hope of man, and disappoints the vain hopes, even of good men. Yet
the hope of the saints endure for ever, for they shall never be ashamed of Christ their hope.
But when they vainly hope for happiness in any worldly enjoyment, the Lord, in mercy,
blasts their hopes, and shows how weak and withering the creature is, that they may hope
in, and depend for happiness on God alone. If the matter upon which our hopes are fixed be
perishing, our hopes must perish, and if our hopes are overcome, we are undone for ever, as
Job concludes in the next verse.

"Verse 20. 'Thou prevalest for ever against him, and He passeth; thou changest his
countenance and sendest him away.

"When God breaks down, man cannot build up, and if he wound, no man can heal; both
breach and wound must remain for ever, unless the same hand that made them make them
up again.

"What is weakness to omnipotence? What is folly to wisdom? What is mortal and
changeable, to eternal and unchangeable? that man should hinder God to prevail.

"'And he passeth.' That is he dieth, so the word is used, chap. x. 21. Man must pass
away, whenever God gives him an order to depart.

"Death defaces the beauty, and blasts the comeliness of man.

"How absurd and foolish must it be for a mortal man to glory in that, which a fit of
sickness can so easily eclipse, and which death
will so soon, totally destroy. Man only waits a dispatch from God, and he dies. Ah! alas, how soon he dies. However many changes he may experience, as he passes through this world, he must soon change from life into the state of the dead. Happy, and only happy are those who are daily and duly preparing for that last change.

"Verse 21. 'His sons came to honour, and he knoweth it not, and they are brought low, but he perceiveth it not of them.'

"This is a description of a Father, ignorant, or insensible of the preferment of his sons; and as he knows not the good which they come to, so neither does he know the evil which comes on them, they are diminished in number, but few are left; or they are made low and poor. There is little left to them, yet he perceiveth it not. That is, he is not grieved at it. For a dead man hath no knowledge of what is doing amongst the living; and as they have no knowledge of, so neither have they any affection for this world. They neither rejoice with, nor mourn over their nearest relations, on account of what befalls them in this life.

"Let this admonish parents to commit their children to the Lord for support and protection, and beware of taking inordinate and immoderate care, by right or wrong means, to promote their children to wealth or honour. Some live miserably, that their children may live in affluence; yea, it is to be feared, that not a few have ruined their own souls, by the means they have taken to obtain wealth, to ag-
grandize their families. But, Oh! what a pitiful delusion is it!

“Who can tell how many children have reason to curse their parents, for thus putting it into their power to dishonour God, and ruin themselves?

“Men act like atheists, when they say, The living know they shall die; not from a certainty of knowledge, causing them to prepare for death, but from a careless indifference, causing them to slight death; as if they said, death befalls all, and therefore should not trouble any.

“This is the way that many amuse, and deceive themselves with their knowledge of the certainty of death; as if it were sufficient to say, they know they shall die, without making the least preparation for that important event.

“Oh! that our knowledge of the certainty of our own death, would lead us out to a habitual faith in, and love to our Lord Jesus Christ.

“Verse 22. ‘But his flesh upon him shall have pain, and his soul within him shall mourn.’

“It may be rendered, While his flesh, &c. while his soul is within him, he shall mourn. He shall be in pain and misery, as long as he lives, especially while he lives as a sick man doth, on the borders and confines of death. This is not mere speculation, but Job’s own experience. He felt and endured, what he spake to others.

Job’s three friends having severally attacked him, to which he has made a distinct
answer. And thus he finishes his reply to the first charge of all the three.

"He that is first in his own cause seemeth just, but his neighbour cometh and searcheth him."

FINIS.

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