

committed unto him against the people of God, against any particular member, or against the Church in generall: As soon as ever he hath but his Commission to afflict he is gone about it instantly: As the good Angels in Heaven are described to have wings, because as soon as ever they have received a command from God, they are upon the wing, they fly, as it were, to fulfil the will of God; and in that sense go out of his presence: So Satan and the wicked Angels are upon the wing too in that sense, as soon as ever they have received power, they presently put it in execution.

And we may in this make Satan himself our pattern. As we pray that the will of God may be done on earth as it is in heaven, in heaven by the good Angels: So in this sense (I say) we may desire that we may do the wil of God with as much speed as the evil Angels. It is not unwarrantable to learn from Satan speedily to be doing about the will of God.

#### JOB I. 13, 14.

*And there was a day when his sonnes and his daughters were eating and drinking wine in their eldest brothers house.*

*And there came a messenger unto Job and said, The Oxen were plowing, and the Asses feeding besides them.*

*And the Sabeans fell upon them, &c.*

**I**N the former context we shewed you the affliction of Job, moved by Satan and permitted by God, *Touch all that he hath*, is Satans motion, *All that he hath is in thine hand* is Gods permission. From this 13. verse to the end of the 19. the afflictions of Job are particularly described; and we may observe 6 particulars in the Context concerning his afflictions.

1. The time or season of his afflictions, *And there was a day when his sonnes and daughters were eating, and drinking wine in their eldest brothers house*, ver. 13.

2. The instruments or the means of his afflictions. Satan who undertook the afflicting of Job, stands as it were behind the door, he doth not appear in it, but sets on others. His instruments were first cruel and bloody minded men, the *Sabeans* verse 15. The

*Chaldeans*

*Chaldeans* verse 17. Secondly, those active creatures, devouring fire and stormy winds, the fire, verse 16. the mind, verse 19.

3. The matter of his affliction, or in what he was afflicted, it was in his outward estate.

4. The variety of his afflictions, he was not smitten in some one thing, in some one part of his outward estate, but he was afflicted in all, his Oxen, his Asses, and his Camels violently taken away, his Sheep burnt up by the fire; his sons & his daughters over-whelmed and crushed by the fall of an house, all his servants attending upon these, slain, consumed, destroyed, excepting only one from every stroke, to be the sad relator or messenger of these calamities.

5. The suddenness of his afflictions, they came all upon him in one day.

6. The incessantness of the report of these afflictions, the sound of them all was in his ears at once: as they were all brought upon him in one day, so they are all told him in one hour, yea by the story it doth appear, there were but very few moments between the first and the last. For the Text saith that no sooner had one messenger ended his doleful newes, but another begins, nay they did not stay so long as to let one another make an end; but the Text saith, *While the former was yet speaking, there came another and said, and so while the next was yet speaking, there came another and said, and while he was yet speaking, another, &c.* So that Satan did not give Job so much as the least minute of intermission to breath a while, or recollect himselfe. His troubles both in the acting and in the reporting, were close linked together, like a chain, one with another, and he within them all fast bound, and yet free.

These are observable through the whole Context concerning this great affliction of Job. Now we will consider the afflictions themselves, their several parts, and open the words in which they are presented to us.

Verse 13. *And there was a day when his sonnes and daughters were eating, and drinking wine in their eldest brothers house.*

*And there was a day. ] To every thing there is a season (saith Solomon) and a time for every purpose under the Sun. God hath Eccles. 3. 1. a time for his purposes; God hath his day: Man hath a time for his purposes, and so hath Satan: any day will not serve his*  
turn,

*An Exposition upon the 2 first*  
 turn, he picks and chooseth. There was a day, it intimates a day extraordinary, and there is an expresse addition in the Original, which puts an emphasis upon it, and makes it more then a day, there was *that day*, or *speciall day*: So it is used 2 King. 4. 8. *And it fell on a day that Elisha passed to Shunem*, or upon that day, a notable day wherein so many great things were done.

But what day was this? It is explained in the words, in the latter part of the verse. It was a notable day, for it was a day, or that day, *When his sonnes and his daughters were eating and drinking wine in their eldest brothers house.*

There are three things in those words, which prove that this was an extraordinary day.

1. It was a feasting day, and feasting dayes are extraordinary days.

2. It was an extraordinary, not an ordinary feasting day; For it is said, *they were eating, and drinking wine.* In the beginning of the Chapter (where the feasts of *Jobs* children are described) it is said only, *That his sonnes went every one their day, to eate, and to drink*: But here it is said, that they did *eate, and drink wine*: which notes an extraordinary feast. For still in Scripture, when we read of a banquet of wine, or a feast of wine, an extraordinary feast is meant: *Queen Esther* invited the King and *Haman* to a banquet of wine, not that there was nothing but wine at the banquet, but that addition did imply, that it was a plentiful banquet, a solemn banquet. It is more to make a banquet of wine, then to make a banquet, though scarce any banquet is made without wine. So when there wanted wine, the solemnity and glory of the feast was thought to be blemished, *They have no wine*, saith the mother of *Christ* unto him at the marriage feast in *Cana*. And when the Spouse would set forth the wonderful fulness of spiritual delights, which she had from *Christ*, she expresseth it thus, *He brought me into the banqueting house*, the Hebrew word is, *he brought me into the house of wine*; the house of wine notes extraordinary spirituall refreshing. What a banquet had the Spouse for her soul there? *Christ* called her to eat and drink abundantly, to be filled with his love. See the like *Isa.* 25.6. So *Jobs* children were eating, and drinking wine, *sc*: they were at a plentiful and solemn feast that day.

3. It was a day of feasting in their eldest brothers house, that is another thing which proves it was an extraordinary feast day.

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It was a feast, and a feast of wine, and a feast of wine in their eldest brothers house, who had a larger estate, a fuller portion, and to answer the dignity of his primogeniture, ought to make a more solemn feast than the rest did: This was the day that Satan picks out and chooses to bring all these sad afflictions upon Job, an ordinary day would not serve his turn; without doubt this was not the immediate day or time, after which he got that Commission from God, *All that he hath is in thine hand.* Satan went away, he would have been at it as soon as he could, but yet he waiteth for a special time, wherein he might do it with greatest advantage; and that is the point I shall observe from this.

*That Satan observeth and watcheth his time to fasten his temptations most strongly upon the soul,* He watcheth a day, there was a day, and there was not a day in the whole year, upon which he could have done it with greater advantage than upon that day. As the mercies of God are exceedingly endeared to us by the season in which they come to us: When they come to us in our special deed, how sweet is a mercy then! And as our obedience is exceedingly commended to the acceptation of God, when it is upon a fit day, when it is on the day, wherein he calls for and expects it: And as our sins are exceedingly aggravated, by the season and time wherein they are committed: what sin upon this day? A day of trouble, a day of humiliation? As *Elsha* rebuked *Ge-<sup>2</sup> King. 5. 25:* *bazi,* *Is this a time to receive money, and to receive garments?* &c. Is this a time for thy heart to run out sinfully after the world? So likewise the temptations of Satan and the afflictions which he brings upon the servants of God, are exceedingly imbittered by the season, and he knows well enough, what seasons will make them most bitter; and what can more imbitter a cup of sorrow, than to have it brought us upon a day of rejoicing? *Solomon* tells us, that *as he that taketh away a garment in cold weather, and as vinegar upon nitre, so is he that sings a song to an heavy heart;* If joy be troublesome in our sorrows, how troublesome is sorrow in the midst of our joys? *Prov. 25. 20.* Then, Satan could never have found out such a time as this: Must he needs be afflicting the Father, when the children were a feasting? Could he find out no other time but this? Must his teares be mingled with their wine? Must the childrens rejoicing day be the Fathers mourning day? Must Satan needs shew his malice against the Father, when the children were shewing their love one to another? It was

Mat. 4. 2.

a love-feast. Thus he did with Christ; it is observed that when Christ had fasted 40. days and 40. nights and afterwards was an hungry, then the Tempter came, he lays hold of this advantage, he would not come till he was hungry, to perswade him to turn stones into bread. What a strength had this temptation from the season? Who would not make bread for himself if he can, when he is hungry? Had Christ been full, there had not been such an edge upon, such a waight in the temptation. How many doth Satan provoke to turn stones into bread, when he comes to them in their hunger? Thou art in a strait, like to starve and perish, turn stones into bread, that is, procure thy self meat and provision by unlawfull and sinful ways; this is in deed to turn stones into bread. So here at this time when Job was rejoicing (as doubtlesse he did) to see the love and unity of his children; now at this time Satan attempts to turn their bread into a stone, to bruise and break the heart of their tender Father, *Afflictions press most when they are least expected.*

Psal. 126. 1.

Let us observe then this mixture of malice and cunning in Satan, in choosing his time. To carry a man from one extremity to another, puts him upon the greatest extremity: To make the day of a mans greatest rejoicing to be the day of his deepest sorrows; this is cutting, if not killing sorrow. To be brought from extream sorrow to extream joy suddenly, doth rather amaze then comfort the spirit of man: It is said that *when the Lord turned again the captivity of Zion, the people were like them that dream*; the change was so great, so sudden, that they were rather astonished and amazed then comforted with it, for a while. So, much more to be hurried from extream joy to extream sorrow, from the borders of comfort to the brink of death on a sudden, is not so much to afflict a man, as to confound and distract him. This course Satan takes with Job.

Gal. 6. 10.

It were well if we could be wise in this respect to imitate Satan, to choose out our day to do good when there is greatest probability of success, as he chose out his day to do mischief: It is the Apostles rule, *as you have opportunity to do good*; if we could be wise to lay hold upon opportunities, it would be a wonderfull advantage to us; *as a word fitly spoken is a word upon the wheel*, so a work fitly done, is a work upon the wheel, it goeth on, takes upon the heart both of God and man: Let us consider whether now we have not a season, whether this be not a day that holds

holds forth to us a glorious opportunity. Surely we may present this day unto you, as a day to be doing in. Let us therefore be as quick in this our day to do good, as Satan was in that day to do hurt. This is a day wherein great things are a doing, and grievous things are a suffering by many of our brethren, therefore you should be working this day, make a day on't. This is a day in which sonnes of Belial, men that will not bear Christs yoke, are combining to break it, and to cast his cords from them. Then joyn this day, to help Christ; else, as Mordecai said to Esther; *If thou altogether holdest thy peace at this time* (this was a day for Esther to work in.) *then shall their enlargement and deliverance arise to the Jews from another place, but thou and thy fathers house shall be destroyed:* So I may say to you in reference to the present opportunity; if you altogether hold your peace, hold your purses, and hold your hands at this time, at such a day as this, enlargement will come to the Church some other way, but you may be destroyed, who think to hold and keep your peace either by saying or doing nothing: if ever you will appear, this is a day to appear in to do good. Let us be wise to manage and improve our day; that it may never be said of us, as our Lord Christ did of Jerusalem: *If ye had known, even ye, in this your day, the things which belong unto your peace,* Luk. 19. 42. It is a sadder thing to have had a season and not to know it, (i. e. not to use it,) then not to have had it. Solomon tells us, Eccles. 8. 6. That, *Because to every purpose there is a time and judgement; therefore the misery of man is great upon him.* Misery cannot be great to a man, because there is a time for every purpose, but because men are either so blind that they cannot see, or so sluggish that they will not make use of the proper time for every purpose. Thus the preacher himself expounds it, Chap. 9. 12. *For man also knoweth not his time, as the fishes that are taken in an evill net, and as the birds are taken in a snare, so are the sonnes of men snared in an evill time, when it falleth suddenly upon them.* Consider what Solomons experience taught him: Let not your inadvertencie of these times, make you a new experiment of that ancient truth, And leave men that would be wise, especially that pretend to wisdom, to be numbered among, and compared with a silly bird, a silent fish.

Then again, Forasmuch as it was the day of their great feast; of their feast with wine, upon which this great affliction assaulted Job, Observe,

That the fairest and clearest day of our outward comfort may be clouded and overcast before the evening. It was as fair a day as ever began in *Jobs* family, a feast, and a feast with wine, and that in the eldest Brothers house, and yet all was darknesse before night.

This is true in reference to ungodly men, great and terrible judgements fall suddenly upon them; their light is turned into darknesse in a moment, as *Christ* compares it to the dayes of *Noah* and the dayes of *Lot*; As it was (saith he) in the dayes of *Noah*, they did eat, they drank, they married wives, they were given in marriage untill the day that *Noah* entred into the *Arke*, and the flood came and destroyed them all; and as it was in the dayes of *Lot*, &c. both which are in two words set out by the Apostle; when they shall say, peace and safety, then sudden destruction commeth. Thus it is with ungodly men, their Sun often sets at noon, when they say, yea when they conclude all's well, then judgement mixt with wrath is at the door. This is a truth also in reference unto godly men, and the Churches of God, all their outward comforts may be clouded in a day, while they are eating and drinking, not sinfully; but in a holy manner: suppose, as the Apostle adviseth, to the glory of God, yet even at that time all may presently be taken away. And therefore, as the Apostle saith, rejoyce as if you rejoyced not in the creature, and eat as if you did not eat, and buy as if you possessed not. Why? For the fashion of this world, the Scheme of this world passeth away. You see it did with *Job*; in what a goodly fashion was his worldly estate in the morning, how was it drest and adorned in perfect beauty, in all its excellencies (as we heard it before described,) yet before night all the fashion of it past away, and the beauty of it was quite blasted: Therefore you that have great estates, and good estates, estates well gotten, and well govern'd, be not high minded, trust not in uncertain riches; If riches increase, and if they increase in a right way, yet set not your hearts upon them, for the fashion of worldly things quickly passeth away; Riches make themselves wings to fly away, when thou art making doors and locks, bolts and barrs to keep them in. That for the time in the 13. verse.

But what did Satan upon this day?

That is set forth in the 14. verse, and so on: And there came a messenger unto *Job* and said, The Oxen were plowing, and the Asses feeding beside them.

There

*There came a messenger.* ] The Jewish Rabbins and some of the Fathers, tell us that these messengers were Devils, evil spirits in the likeness of men. But surely the opinion hath little likeness with the truth, therefore with *Beza*, I lay it by and reject it amongst the tales of the Rabbins. These messengers were really the escaped servants of *Job*, as we shall see afterward.

Now the messenger bespeaks *J. b* thus, *The Oxen were plowing, they were hard at their work, and the Asses were feeding besides them.* The word in the Hebrew is this, *the Asses were feeding at their hand*, or at hand; to be at hand, doth note nearness; in our language we say, such a thing is at hand, or such a man is at hand, the day of our fear is at hand, when we mean they are near; *The Lord is at hand*, *Phis. 4. 5. se.* nigh unto us for our help. So *2 Thes. 2. 2.* It is applied also to nearness of place as well as of time, *Neh. 3. 2.* where the building of the wall of *Jerusalem* is described, it is said, *Next unto him built the men of Jericho*, the Hebrew is, *at the hand of him built the men of Jericho*, that is, next to him in place.

Now the messenger describeth all in such a posture, *The Oxen were plowing, and the Asses feeding*: by this to assure *Job* of the care and diligence of his servants about his business, for the securing of his Cattel, and improving of his ground: as if he should have said, this sad affliction which is come upon thee, did not come through our negligence or improvidence, we were about our business according to our several places; *The Oxen were plowing, and the Asses were feeding by them*; they were not carelessly left to danger, but our eye was upon them, yet notwithstanding they were all surprised and taken away.

From this relation of the posture of *Job*'s servants and Cattel at the time when this affliction fell upon them, we may observe thus much.

*That all our care and diligence cannot secure outward things unto us.* Afflictions may take us in the midst of our best and most honest endeavours. A man may be looking to, and ordering his estate, and yet at the very time, while his eye is upon it, he may see it take its flight like an Eagle towards Heaven; while he is ordering of it, he may see disorder and confusion coming upon it, while he is setting of it by honest care, he may quickly see it unsettled, removed, and all broken to peeces, as it was here with *Job*; he was in a very good way, his servants were honestly employed, but suddenly



denly all is gone, The Oxen were taken away, and the Affes that fed by them. But who made this attempt? The messenger informs that in the next words:

*And the Sabæans fell upon them.*

לָבָן from *The Sabæans.*] The Hebrew is, *Saba fell upon them*, the Country put for the people, *Saba* for the *Sabæans*. As we use to say, *Spain made war*, and *France made war*, that is, the *Spaniards* made war, or the *French* made war; so it is such an expression, *Saba* fell upon them, that is, the people inhabiting *Saba*.

*Fell upon them.*] The word noteth a mighty violence, they came upon them as from above, they came powing down upon them like a storm. There is such a phrase in war, when they go violently upon a place, they are said to storm the place; to storm the gates of a Castle, or of a City; so here, they fell upon them, that is, they came violently upon them like a storm. In *Prov.* 1. 27: destruction is described to come upon wicked men like a whirlwind.

*Sabæos autem Arabas intellege, qui latrociniis dediti erant: unde posterior atas eos Saracenos appellavit, non a Sara ut quidam somniant, sed a Saras verbo Arabico, quod furari & latrocinari significat. Unde Saric, Fur, Latro, Druf. in loc.*

The *Sabæans* were a people (as it is concluded by most interpreters) inhabiting *Arabia felix*; neere the Country where *Job* dwelt: And for the manners of these people, it is observed by Historians, that they were a people famous only for robberies, a people that lived by pillage and by plundering of their neighbors, such a people they were; These *Sabæans* fell upon them, they took away thy Cattel, and have slain thy servants with the edge of the Sword.

Here it may be questioned, How or why these *Sabæans* at such a time should fall upon the estate of *Job*? What hurt had *Job* done them? *Job* lived in a faire way with all his neighbors, and kept good quarter and correspondence with them; he was not a man of war or contention, how then commeth it to passe that these fell upon *Jobs* estate and took it away, and upon that day too, in this nick of time?

As when the Widow of *Tekob* had told a fair tale to *David* about the bringing back of *Abfolom*, the King asked her, *Is not the hand of Joab with thee in all this?* So when you see such men, *Sabæans* and *Chaldeans* falling upon the estate of *Job*, you may demand, *Is not the hand of Satan in all this?* Yes no doubt. These *Sabæans* fall upon *Jobs* estate, but *Satan* first fell upon the

*Sabæans*