

unquestionable. There was no mercy in such a sparing.

And we may observe out of it, that which Solomon speaks of the mercies of the wicked is most true of Satans; *The very tender mercies of Satan are cruel*, the best of his mercies, his sparing is wounding; he never spareth but with an intent to do further hurt. *Jobs afflictions had not gone so deep, if this man had not been left to bring the message.*

It followeth,

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.*

In this verse we have the second charge which this great enemy gives Job, *While he was yet speaking there came also another. Afflictions seldom goe alone;* And therefore when one affliction is ended, look another should begin, and labour to prepare for it. Job having received this message of the losse of his cattell and death of his servants, while the messenger was yet speaking, a second comes with a sadder story then that. Satan would not give him the least breathing or intermission, *while he was yet speaking, one evil treads upon the heel of another;* as wave overtakes wave in the sea; so it was here, here was wave after wave, to overwhelm his spirit. And as it is said in the Revelation, concerning him that sate on the white horse, that he rid out conquering and to conquer; there was no intermission of his victories; so Satan goeth forth afflicting and to afflict, vexing and to vex, tempting and to tempt, he will never give over. *While he was yet speaking, there came also another, and said, the fire of God is fallen upon thy sheep.*

The fire of God.

Why is it here called the *fire of God*? Some conceive it is called the *fire of God*, because sent from God: that is ascribed to God, which comes from God, as that Gen. 19:24. where it is said, that the Lord did rain fire and brimstone upon Sodom out of Heaven from the Lord; or Jehovah did rain from Jehovah fire upon Sodom to consume it: And Levit. 10:2. it is said, *That a fire went out from the Lord and consumed Nabad and Abihu. Elijah procures*

cures fire from Heaven to consume the *Captaines* that came from the King to take him, 2 *King*. 1. 10, 12. The *Psalmist* speaking of the plagues of *Egypt* (*Psal*. 105. 32.) saith that the Lord sent flames of fire in the Land; So some expound that place, *Psal*. 104. 3. He maketh his Angels spirits, and his ministers a flame of fire, that is, he useth flames of fire for his ministers, for his messengers; God sometimes sends a fire on his errands, though we know that place is applied to the Angels by the Apostle, *Heb*. 1. 7.

But here rather it is called the fire of God in another regard; for howsoever this fire was sent of God, as all afflictions are; yet because the immediate kindler of it was Satan, he had the power put into his hand; therefore this was not a fire (in that sense as those other fires are said to be) sent from God. But it may be called (as usually in Scripture) the fire of God, because of the strangeness of the fire, it was a wonderful, an extraordinary fire; and so it is very ordinary in the Hebrew to use the name of God, *El*, *Elohim* or *Iehovah*, as an Epithite, as an additional word to heighten the excellence or rareness of things. We finde that phrase often, *A man of God*, the Hebrewes say to call one a man of God, is as much as to say, he is an extraordinary man, a man of an excellent spirit, a prophet, a Holy man: In that *Psalme* where the Church is shadowed under the similitude of a Vine, it is said, She did send forth her branches like the goodly Cedars: So we translate it, the Originall word is, She sent forth her branches as the Cedars of God; that is, excellent Cedars, tall and extraordinary Cedars. In *Psalme* 36. 6. comparing the love of God to great Mountaines; Thy loving kindnesse is as the great mountaines, the word is, like the mountaines of God: *Psalme* 65. 9. Thou refreshest it with the River of God, that is, with an excellent River: *Cant*. 8. 6. speaking of love and of jealousie, Love is strong as death, jealousie is cruell as the grave, the coales thereof are coales of fire, which hath a most vehement flame, the word in the Originall is, a flame of God, the coales thereof are coales of fire, the flame of God, that is, as we translate it, a vehement flame. So here the fire of God, that is, a strange fire, an unheard of, an unusual fire, a vehement fire, such a fire as had not been seen nor observed before. Therefore the Hebrewes call extraordinary things the things of God; because indeed all the wonders and excellencies, all the glory and goodness that is in creatures, is but a foot-step, a print or drop of that excellency and glory and power that is in
 Y God;

Psal. 8. 10.

God, therefore every thing that is most excellent, is ascribed unto God. It is most equall that his name should be stamp't upon all excellent things in the creature, who is the cause of all creature excellence. This fire being a strange and extraordinary fire is said to be the fire of God.

Fulgur maximum, Jun.

This fire of God is conceived to have been some terrible flash of lightning, which in a moment destroyed and consumed the sheep and shepheards. And this is more probable because it is said; to fall down from heaven, that is out of the aire; for so often in Scripture, heaven is put for the aire, the middle region of the aire, where Satan hath great power, therefore he is called, *the Prince of the aire*; He can do mighty things, command much in that Magazin of Heaven, where that dreadfull Artillery, which makes men tremble, those fiery Meteors, thunder and lightning, are lodged and stored up. *Satan let loose by God can do wonders in the aire*; He can raise stormes, he can discharge the great Ordnance of Heaven, thunder & lightning, and by his art he can make them more terrible and dreadfull then they are in nature. If the skill and art of man can heighten naturall things, then much more the skill of Satan. I doubt not but many fearfull impressions are made in the aire by devils, carrying nature (by Gods permission) farre above its owne course, and these are properly *marvels* or *wonders*, (such as the magicians wrought in Egypt by the help of Satan) for miracles are quite out of the devils sphere. But he can do wonders, and such was this fire falling from Heaven, &c. *A marvel or wonder is nature mightily improved, a miracle is nature totally crossed, if not contradicted.* Observe this for the nature of that fire; the effect of it followes in the next words.

It hath burnt up the sheep and the servants, and consumed them.

The word in the Originall is, *It did burne them and eat them up.* Fire is a devouring element. Devouring fire, as before a devouring Sword, these were devouring judgements upon *Iob*. Yet it doth not necessarily inferre that the sheep were all burnt to ashes; but that the sheep were all killed by that flame of lightning that came from heaven; for it is said of *Nadab* and *Abihu* (of which wee spake before) that a fire went out from God, and did consume them. it is the same originall word that is here in the Text, *A fire went out from God, and did eat them up, yet wee know*

know their bodies were not consumed, for they were carried out to their buriall and their garments were upon them. So that this consuming doth not note the burning of things to ashes, but a striking of them to death; it is a devouring fire, because it is a destroying fire, it takes away life: and thus lightnings kill rather by piercing and penetrating than by consuming and devouring.

But now here it will be questioned for the further opening of this, why Satan chooseth thus to consume the sheep with fire? why doth he not rather use spoylers to take them away? He could doubtlesse have got the *Sabeans* to have fetched away the flocks of sheep, as well as the droves of greater cattell; he could have procured them easily: why then doth he cause fire from Heaven to come down, the fire of God to consume them?

I answer, his reason for this was to put the greater sting into the affliction. He would not have the sheep taken away after the same manner that the Oxen and Camels were, that he might aggravate *Jobs* trouble, and provoke him if he could to be passionate against God, yea, and (for that was his great designe) to blaspheme God; therefore he procures fire from heaven to fall upon the sheep, thereby to beget an opinion in *Iob* that God was now become his enemy as well as man. When we suffer from man, then the afflicted soule flies to God, makes his complaint and moane to him; as doubtlesse *Iob* did when he heard of those cruell *Sabeans*, and what they had done; but lest *Iob* should resort in his thoughts to Heaven, and comfort himself in God again, the next messenger telleth him that God is his enemy too, that the fire of God is fallen upon the sheep, an extraordinary fire; as if he should say, God fighteth against thee as well as the *Sabeans*; Alas, now to whom should *Iob* make his moane! That speech of *Eli* concerning sinne may well be appled to suffering *If one man sinne against another the Iudge shall iudge him, but if a man sin against the Lord, who shall intreat for him?* 1 Sam. 2. 25. So if a man suffer from men, he may goe unto God, but if God himselfe do appear to be an enemy and to fight against us, to whom shall we goe? Indeed *Iob* knew how to goe to God, though he did appear as an enemy; but that is the greatest straight, and to doe thus notes the greatest spirituall both skill and strength.

Hence observe,

That Satans great designe against the people of God or any servant of God is to provoke them to ill thoughts of God, to perswade them

them that God is their enemy, to bring the love and good will of God into suspicion; therefore he causeth this great fire, and (it is like) formed the servants language in that cutting phrase, *The fire of God is fallen upon the sheep.* Thou canst not put this off, as thou mightest do the other, and say, this is but the malice or the covetousness of the *Sabeans*, that rob'd me of my goods, and slew my servants; No, thou shalt see now that God himself is angry, Heaven frownes upon thee, the fire of God from Heaven consumes thee. Turne over the records of all antiquity, and see whether God ever dealt thus with any, but those cursed *Sodomites* upon whom God rained fire from Heaven; Thou who comest so near them in the punishment, hast reason to judge thy selfe not farre behinde them in sinne.

Secondly observe,

Those afflictions are most grievous wherein God 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 is angry? If God doth but withdraw his comforts, the soul sinks under smallest trials, how then can it stand if God should reveal his wrath against us, when we are in great trials?

It may here be questiond, why the sheep were consumed with fire, rather than any other of his cattell, rather than any other of his substance?

There are two things in that. First, the Sheep were used in Sacrifice. *When the dayes of their feasting were ended, Job offered sacrifice,* and the sheep chiefly were offered in Sacrifice. Now Satan by consuming the sheep hoped to fasten this upon Job, if possibly he could, that God was angry with his very Sacrifices, God was angry with his services. As if he should say, *Doest thou thinke that the offering up of thy sheep in sacrifice hath beene pleasing to God? Certainly if the fire of those Sacrifices had delighted God, if he had smelt a savour of rest in them* (as he is said to have done, when Noah offered Sacrifice after the flood, *Gen. 8. 21.*) *Hee would never have sent a fire from Heaven to consume them* That is conceived by Expositours to be an especiall reason why the sheep were consumed, namely to cast Job upon this apprehension, that his very Sacrifices were rejected of God: that he might conclude of himselfe (as Solomon saith of the wicked) that *his sacrifices were an abomination to the Lord,* and to shew that God would now have no more of his Sacrifices, God himselfe made

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one Sacrifice of them all. But *Origen* brings in *Job* excellently retorting this suggestion upon Satan. I sacrificed now one and then another of my Sheep to God, but now blessed be God, who hath accepted all my flock as one burnt-offering.

Again, the Sheep were consumed by fire, as to make *Job* conceive that his former services were rejected, so to take him off and discourage him from offering any more such services; to make him despair of ever thriving in the way of those duties: and conclude, surely God is so angry now, that all my services, all my sacrifices will never appease him nor profit me: therefore I were as good lay by these duties as performe them, when I get no good. This is a dangerous temptation; if Satan by such prejudices against holy duties, can cause us to lay them by, the day is won: for then the soul is left naked & unarmed. We have not then then so much as a bull-rush in our hands to smite him, or a paper breast-plate to secure ourselves. If we give over praying and seeking, we have no ground to expect Christ either assisting or protecting us. That for the second affliction.

While he was yet speaking, there came also another & said, The Caldeans made out three brands, and fell upon the camels, and have carried them away, &c.

This is the third affliction, the taking away of the Camels, the destroying of the servants that waited upon them. There is not much to stay upon in this, having before opened most of the passages of it in the 15. verse.

While he was yet speaking, there came also another, and said, The Caldeans made out three Bands. Caldeans sometime note a condition or a ranke of men, such as were Diviners, Soothsayers and Astrologers, these are in Scripture called *Caldeans*. As the *Indians* called such skillfull persons *Gymnosophistes*, and the *Persians* called them their *Magi*, and the *Romans* called them *Augures*, so the *Assyrians* called them *Caldeans*. When *Nebuchadnezzar* dreamed a dream, it is said, that he sent for the *Diviners and the Astrologers, and the Caldeans*; and afterward the *Caldeans* take up all, he said to the *Caldeans*, and the *Caldeans* said to the King: The *Caldeans* were put for all those that undertooke the art of Divining and interpreting dreams. But here by the *Caldeans*, are to be understood, not a condition of men, but a Nation of men, or the people inhabiting *Caldea*: frequently spoken of by

Hab, 1, 6, 7.

by the Prophets, and described to the life by the prophet *Habakkuk*, chap. 1. where the Lord threatened to send the *Caldeans* against his people, and then describes them, *That hastie and bitter Nation, their Horses are swifter then the Leopard, and more ravening then the evening Wolves*: such a kind of people they were who were stirred up by Satan to take away the Camels of *Iob*.

These are said to make out three Bands to spoile; They were a people like the *Sabeans*, delighting in warre and robbery; so much the Etymologie of their Name *Chasdim*, (which is the word in the Originall) implieth, being derived from *Sadad*, which signifieth to rob and spoile. These were a wicked generation, yet these prevail over the estate of *Iob*; victory doth not alwayes attend a just cause. The way of the wicked often prospers, and the way of these wicked *Caldeans* prospered so often, that the Prophet *Habakkuk* complains to God as one scandalized at it: *Thou art of purer eyes then to behold evil, and canst not look on iniquity, wherefore lookest thou upon them that deal treacherously and holdest thy tongue when the wicked devoureth the man that is more righteous then he?* If ever we should be brought upon a like case, to argue it thus with God, or (as *Jeremie* did, chap. 12. 1.) to plead with God about his judgements, let us remember to establish our hearts (before we open our mouthes) with the Prophet *Jeremies* conclusion in that place, *Righteous art thou O Lord*, though the wicked devour the man that is more righteous then he. It is very rare that God makes one good man his rod to scourge another: he usually makes the worst of men his rod, his staffe, his sword, to inflict either trials or judgements upon his people. The dirty Skullion scowres the silver vessell, and makes it both clean and bright for his masters use,

Verse 18. *While he was yet speaking, there came also another and said, Thy Sonnes and thy daughters were eating and drinking wine in their eldest Brothers house.*

Verse 19. *And behold there came a great winde from the wildernesse, 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 as the fourth and last, so the greatest of all Satans assaults, the most fierce and terrible charge that *Iob* had all the day, and Satan reserves this untill the evening, till *Iob* was spent
and