

# CHAPTER 4

## INTRODUCTION TO JOB 4

Job's sore afflictions, and his behaviour under them, laid the foundation of a dispute between him and his three friends, which begins in this chapter, and is carried on to the end of the thirty first; when Elihu starts up as a moderator between them, and the controversy is at last decided by God himself. Eliphaz first enters the list with Job, (<sup><R001></sup>Job 4:1); introduces what he had to say in a preface, with some show of tenderness, friendship, and respect, (<sup><R002></sup>Job 4:2); observes his former conduct in his prosperity, by instructing many, strengthening weak hands and feeble knees, and supporting stumbling and falling ones, (<sup><R003></sup>Job 4:3,4); with what view all this is observed may be easily seen, since he immediately takes notice of his present behaviour, so different from the former, (<sup><R005></sup>Job 4:5); and insults his profession of faith and hope in God, and fear of him, (<sup><R006></sup>Job 4:6); and suggests that he was a bad man, and an hypocrite; and which he grounds upon this supposition, that no good man was ever destroyed by the Lord; for the truth of which he appeals to Job himself, (<sup><R007></sup>Job 4:7); and confirms it by his own experience and observation, (<sup><R008></sup>Job 4:8-11); and strengthens it by a vision he had in the night, in which the holiness and justice of God, and the mean and low condition of men, are declared, (<sup><R012></sup>Job 4:12-21); and therefore it was wrong in Job to insinuate any injustice in God or in his providence, and a piece of weakness and folly to contend with him.

**Ver. 1.** *Then Eliphaz the Temanite answered and said.*] When Job was done cursing his day, and had finished his doleful ditty on that subject, then Eliphaz took the opportunity of speaking, not being able to bear any longer with Job and his behaviour under his afflictions; Eliphaz was one of Job's three friends that came to visit him, (<sup><R011></sup>Job 2:11); very probably he might be the senior man, or a man of the greatest authority and power; a most respectable person, had in great esteem and reverence among men, and by these his friends, and therefore takes upon him to speak first; or it may be it was agreed among themselves that he should begin the dispute with Job; and we find, that in the close of this controversy the Lord speaks to him by name, and to him only, (<sup><R017></sup>Job 42:7); he "answered"; not that Job directed

his discourse to him, but he took occasion, from Job's afflictions and his passionate expressions, to say what he did; and he "said" not anything by way of condolence or consolation, not pitying Job's case, nor comforting him in his afflicted circumstances, as they required both; but reproaching him as a wicked and hypocritical man, not acting like himself formerly, or according to his profession and principles, but just the reverse: this was a new trial to Job, and some think the sorest of all; it was as a sword in his bones, which was very cutting to him; as oil cast into a fiery furnace in which he now was, which increased the force and fury of it; and as to vinegar an opened and bleeding wound, which makes it smart the more.

**Ver. 2.** [*If we assay to commune with thee, wilt thou be grieved?* etc.] Eliphaz speaks in the name of himself and his two friends, who had doubtless consulted together, and compared their sentiments of Job; which appearing to be the same, they formed a plan and scheme in which they should attack him, and the part which each should take, and the order in which they should proceed: these words are said, either as seemingly doubting whether they should speak or be silent; for they may be rendered, "shall we try", or attempt, to drop or speak a "word to thee"; to enter into a conversation with thee? or, "shall we take up a discourse", and carry it on with thee, "who art grieved" already? or art weary and heavy laden, and bore down with the burden of affliction, with sorrows and troubles; or art impatient<sup>f132</sup> under them; we fear, should we, that thou wilt be more grieved and burdened, and become more impatient; and therefore know not well what to do: or else, as supposing and taking it for granted that he would be grieved and burdened, and made more restless and uneasy, impatient and outrageous, yet they had determined to enter into a debate with him; for so the words are by some rendered, "should we speak a word unto thee"; or, "against thee"<sup>f133</sup>; even should the least word be spoken against thee, thou wilt be weary<sup>f134</sup>, or burdened, or grieved, or take it ill: we know thou wilt; yet, nevertheless, we must not, we cannot, we will not forbear speaking: or else interrogatively, as our version and others, "wilt thou be grieved?" we desire thou wouldest not, nor take it ill from us, but all in good part; we mean no hurt, we design no ill, but thy good, and beg thou wilt hear us patiently: this shows how great a man Job had been, and in what reverence and respect he was had, that his friends bespeak him after this manner in his low estate; however, this was artifice in them, to introduce the discourse, and bring on the debate after this sort:

*but who can withhold himself from speaking?* be it as it will; Eliphaz suggests, though Job was already and greatly burdened, and would be more so, and break out into greater impatience, yet there was a necessity of speaking, it could not be forborne; no man could refrain himself from speaking, nor ought in such a case, when the providence of God was reflected upon, and he was blasphemed and evil spoken of, and charged with injustice, as was supposed; in such circumstances, no good, no faithful man, could or ought to keep silence; indeed, when the glory of God, the honour of the Redeemer, and the good of souls require it, and a man's own reputation with respect to his faithfulness lies at stake, silence should not be kept, let the consequence be as it may; but how far this was the case may be considered.

**Ver. 3.** *Behold, thou hast instructed many,* etc.] This is introduced with a “behold”, either as a note of admiration, that such a man, who had instructed others, should act the part he now does; or as a note of attention to Job himself, and all others that should hear and read this, to observe it, and well consider it, and make the proper use of it; or as a note of asseveration, affirming it to be true and certain, notorious and unquestionable, as no doubt it was: Job was the instructor, a great man, and yet condescended to teach and instruct men in the best things, as did also Abraham, David, Solomon, and others; and a good man, and so fit to teach good things, as every good man is, and who, according to his ability, the gift and measure of grace received should instruct others; and a man of great gift he was, both in things natural, civil, and religious; one that could speak well, and to the purpose, and so was apt and able to teach; and such should not disuse and hide their talents: the persons he instructed were not only his own family, his children and servants, as Abraham before him did; but others who attended him, and waited for his counsel and advice, his words and doctrine, as for the rain, and latter rain, and which dropped and distilled as such, (see <sup>18915</sup>Job 29:15,21-23); and these were “many”; his many ignorant neighbours about him, or many professors of religion, as there might be, and it seems there were in this idolatrous country; and many afflicted ones among these, which is usually the case: Job had many scholars in his school, of different sorts, that attended on him; and these he instructed in the knowledge of the true God, his nature, perfections, and works; and of the living Redeemer, his person, office, grace, and righteousness; and of themselves, the impurity of their nature through original sin, he was acquainted with; their impotency and inability to purge

themselves, to atone for sin, and to justify and make themselves acceptable to God; as well as he instructed them in the worship of God, and the manner of it, their duty to him and to one another, and to all their fellow creatures: some render it, “thou hast corrected”, or “reproved many”<sup>f135</sup>; he had taught the afflicted to be patient under their afflictions, and had reproved them for their impatience; and the design of Eliphaz is to upbraid him with it, as in (~~4121~~Romans 2:21); thou that didst correct others for their unbecoming behaviour under afflictions, art thyself guilty of the same: “turpe est doctori, cure culpa redarguit ipsum”:

*and thou hast strengthened the weak hands*; either such as hung down through want of food, by giving it to them, both corporeal and spiritual, which strengthens men’s hearts, and so their hands; or through sluggishness, by exhorting and stirring them up to be active and diligent; or through fear of enemies, especially spiritual ones, as sin, Satan, and the world; by reason of whose numbers and strength good men are apt to be dispirited, and ready to castaway their spiritual armour, particularly the shield of faith and confidence in God, as faint hearted soldiers in war, to which the allusion is: and these were strengthened by telling them that all their enemies were conquered, and they were more than conquerors over them; that the victory was certain, and their warfare accomplished, or would quickly be: or else, whose hands were weak through a sense of sin and danger, and being in expectation of the wrath, and vengeance of God; and who were strengthened by observing to them that there was a Saviour appointed and expected, a living Redeemer, who would stand upon the earth in the latter day, and save them from their sins, and from wrath to come; (see ~~237B~~Isaiah 35:3,4); or rather, such whose hearts and hands were, weak through sore and heavy afflictions, whom Job strengthened by showing them that their afflictions were of God; not by chance, but by appointment, and according to the sovereign will of God; that they were for their good, either temporal, spiritual, or eternal; and that they would not continue always, but have an end; and therefore should be patiently bore, (see ~~4621~~1 Corinthians 12:11,12).

**Ver. 4.** *Thy words have up, holden him that was falling*, etc.] Or “stumbling”<sup>f136</sup>; that was stumbling at the providence of God in suffering good men to be afflicted, and wicked men to prosper; which has been the stumbling block of God’s people in all ages; (see ~~497D~~Psalms 73:2,3); or that was stumbling and falling off from the true religion by reason of the revilings and reproaches of men, and their persecutions for it; which is

sometimes the case, not only of nominal professors, (<sup><1021></sup>Matthew 13:21); but of true believers, though they do not so stumble and fall as to perish: or else being under afflictions themselves, were ready to sink under them, their strength being small; now Job was helped to speak such words of comfort and advice to persons in any and every of these circumstances as to support them and preserve them from failing, and to enable them to keep their place and station among the people of God. The Targum interprets it of such as were falling into sin; the words of good men to stumbling and falling professors, whether into sin, or into affliction by it, are often very seasonable, and very useful, when attended with the power and Spirit of God:

*and thou hast strengthened the feeble knees*; that were tottering and trembling, and bending, and not able to bear up under the weight of sin, which lay as an heavy burden, too heavy to bear; or of afflictions very grievous and intolerable; to such persons Job had often spoken words that had been useful to alleviate their troubles, and support them under them. It may be observed, that the cases and circumstances of good men in early times were much the same as they are now; that there is no temptation or affliction that befalls the saints but what has been common; and that Job was a man of great gifts, grace, and experience, and had the tongue of the learned, to speak a word in season to every weary soul, in whatsoever condition they were: and all this, so very laudable in him, is not observed to his commendation, but to his reproach; to show that he was not a man of real virtue, that he contradicted himself, and did not act according to his profession and principles, and the doctrines he taught others, and was an hypocrite at heart; though no such conclusion follows, supposing he had not acted according to his principles and former conduct; for it is a difficult thing for any good man to act entirely according to them, or to behave the same in prosperity as in adversity, or to take that advice themselves in affliction, and follow it, they have given to others, and yet not be chargeable with hypocrisy. It would have been much better in Eliphaz and his friends to have made another use of Job's former conduct and behaviour, namely, to have imitated it, and endeavoured to have strengthened, and upheld him in his present distressed circumstances; instead of that, he insults him, as follows.

**Ver. 5.** *But now it is come upon thee, and thou faintest*, etc.] The affliction and evil that he feared, (<sup><1025></sup>Job 3:25); or rather the same trials and afflictions were come upon him as had been on those whom he had

instructed and reproved, and whose hands and hearts he had strengthened and comforted; and yet now thou thyself “faintest”, or “art weary”<sup>f137</sup>, or art bore down and sinkest under the burden, and bearest it very impatiently<sup>f138</sup>, quite contrary to the advice given to others; and therefore it was concluded he could not be a virtuous, honest, and upright man at heart, only in show and appearance. Bolducius renders the words, “God cometh unto thee”, or “thy God cometh”; very wrongly, though the sense may be the same; God cometh and visits thee by laying his afflicting hand upon thee:

*it toucheth thee, and thou art troubled*; suggesting that it was but a touch, a slight one, a light affliction; thereby lessening Job’s calamity and distress, or making little and light of it, and aggravating his impatience under it, that for such a trial as this he should be so excessively troubled, his passions should be so violently moved, and he be thrown into so much disorder and confusion, and be impatient beyond measure; no bounds being set to his grief, and the expressions of it; yea, even to be in the utmost consternation and amazement, as the word<sup>f139</sup> signifies.

**Ver. 6.** [*Is not [this] thy fear*, etc.] The fear of God, that which is of him, comes from him, is a grace of his implanted in the hearts of his people at conversion, and is increased and encouraged, and drawn forth into fresh exercise through the grace and goodness of God displayed; for a slavish fear, or a fear of punishment, of wrath and damnation, is not the true grace of fear, which maybe in unregenerate men, and even in the devils; but this lies in a reverential affection for God on account of his goodness, and in a carefulness not to offend him on that account; in an hatred of sin, and a departure from it; in an attendance on the worship of God, and is sometimes put for the whole of it; and is accompanied with faith in God, joy in the Holy Ghost, humility of soul, and holiness of heart and life: now Job professed to have this fear of God in his heart, and was thought to have it; this was his general character, (~~BOOK~~ Job 1:1); but, in his present case and circumstances, Eliphaz asks what was become of it, where it was now, and in what it appeared? and jeers him about it, as if he should say, does it lie in this, in fainting and sinking under afflictions, in being troubled and terrified, and thrown into a consternation by them, and in breaking out into such rash expressions of God and his providence? is it come to this at last, or rather to nothing at all? for he suggests either that Job never had the true grace of fear in him, contrary to the character given of him, and confirmed by God himself, (~~BOOK~~ Job 1:1, 8 2:3); or that he had cast it off and

it was gone from him, and left, (<sup><1850></sup>Job 15:4); which can never be, where it once is, it being the great security against a final and total apostasy from God, (<sup><2430></sup>Jeremiah 32:40); or that what he had was merely hypocritical, like that which is taught by the precept of men, was only in appearance, and not in reality, as his conduct now showed; for had he had the true fear of God before his eyes, and on his heart, he could never have cursed the day of his birth, nor arraigned the providence of God, and charged him with injustice, as he supposed he did; whereby his fear, his piety, his religion he had professed, appeared to be just nothing at all <sup>f140</sup>: it follows,

*thy confidence*; that is, in God; for Job professed none in any other, in any creature or creature enjoyment, (<sup><1832></sup>Job 31:24); this when right is a strong act of faith and trust in the Lord, a thorough persuasion and full assurance of interest in him as a covenant God, and in his love and favour, and in Christ as the living Redeemer, and of the truth of the work of grace upon the heart, and of the certainty of the performance of it; also a holy boldness in prayer to God, and a firm and assured belief of being heard and answered; as well as an open and courageous profession of him before men, without any fear of them; for all this Job had been famous, and now he is asked, where it all was? and what was become of it? how it appeared now? and intimates he never had any, or had cast it away, and that it was come to nothing; as was concluded from the rash expressions of his lips, and from the sinkings of his spirit under his present afflictions; but Job's trust and confidence in God and in Christ still continued; (see <sup><1835></sup>Job 13:15 19:25);

*thy hope*; which also is a grace wrought in the heart, in regeneration; is of things unseen and future, yet to be enjoyed either here or hereafter; and that which is right has Christ for its object, ground, and foundation, and is of singular use to keep up the spirits of men under afflictive providences: and Eliphaz observing Job to be very impatient under them, inquires about his hope; and intimates that what he had professed to have was the hope of the hypocrite, and not real, and was now come to nothing; hope that is true, though it may become low, it cannot be lost; nor was Job's, especially with respect to spiritual and eternal things; (see <sup><1847></sup>Job 14:7,14 19:25-27);

*and the uprightness of thy ways*? before God and men, walking uprightly in the ways of God, according to the revelation of his will made unto him, and acting the just and upright part in all his dealings with men; and for which he was celebrated, and is a part of the character before given of him,

(~~ROB~~ Job 1:1,8 2:3); but it is insinuated by Eliphaz that there was nothing in it; it was only in show, in appearance, it was not from the heart; or it would not be thus with him as it was, nor would he behave in the manner he now did: some read the words as in the margin, and in some copies of our Bible, “is not thy fear thy confidence? and the uprightness of thy ways thy hope?” and with some little variation Mr. Broughton; “is not thy religion thy hope, and thy right ways thy confidence?” that is, didst thou not hope and expect, and even wert thou not confident of it, that because of thy fear of God, and of the uprightness of thy ways before men, that thou shouldest not only be increased in thy worldly substance, but be preserved and protected in the enjoyment of it? and were not these the reasons which induced thee to be religious, and make such a show of it? suggesting, that he was only religions from mercenary views and selfish principles, and so tacitly charges him with what the devil himself did, (~~ROB~~ Job 1:9); and this way go many Jewish and Christian interpreters<sup>f141</sup>: some render the words much in the same way, but to a better sense, and more in favour of Job, and by way of instruction and comfort to him: “should not thy fear be thy confidence, and thy hope, and the uprightness of thy ways?”<sup>f142</sup> shouldest thou not take encouragement from thy fear of God, and the uprightness of thine heart and ways, to expect deliverance and salvation, and not faint and sink as thou dost? or is not this the cause of all thine impatience, thy fear of God, trust and hope in him, and thine integrity? concluding thou shouldest have been dealt with after another manner for the sake of these things, and therefore art ready to think thou art hardly dealt with by God, having deserved better treatment; thus making Job to think highly of himself, and to entertain wrong notions of God; so Schmidt; but the first sense I have given of the words seems best.

**Ver. 7.** *Remember, I pray thee, who ever perished, being innocent?* etc.] Here Eliphaz appeals to Job himself, and desires him to recollect if ever anyone instance had fallen under his observation, in the whole course of his life, or it had ever been told him by credible persons, that an “innocent” man, by whom he means not one entirely free from sin original or actual, for he knew there was no such persons in the world, since the fall of Adam, but a truly good and gracious man, who was not guilty of any notorious and capital crime, or did not live a vicious course of life; if he ever knew or heard of any such persons that “perished”, which cannot be understood of eternal ruin and destruction, which would be at once granted, that such as these described can never perish in such a sense, but have everlasting life;



nor of a corporeal death, which is sometimes the sense of perishing, since it is notorious that innocent and righteous persons so perish or die, (see <sup>2075</sup>Ecclesiastes 7:15) (<sup>2501</sup>Isaiah 57:1); and could it be meant of a violent death, an answer might have been returned; and Eliphaz perhaps was not acquainted with it himself, that that innocent and righteous person Abel thus perished by the hands of his brother: but this is rather to be understood of perishing by afflictions, sore and heavy ones, not ordinary but extraordinary ones; and which are, or look like, the judgments of God on men, whereby they lose their all, their substance, their servants, their children, as well as their own health, which was Job's case; and therefore if no parallel instance of an innocent person ever being in the like case, it is insinuated that Job could not be an innocent man:

*or where were the righteous cut off?* such as are truly righteous in the sight of God, as well as before men, who have the gift of righteousness bestowed on them, and live soberly, righteously, and godly; in what age or country was it ever known that such persons, in their family and substance, were cut off by the hand and providence of God, and abandoned and forsaken by him, and reduced to such circumstances that there could be no hope of their ever being in prosperous ones again? and Job now being in such a forlorn and miserable case and condition, it is suggested, that he could not be a righteous man: but admitting that no such instance could be produced, Eliphaz was too hasty and premature in his conclusion; seeing, as it later appeared, Job was not so cut off, abandoned, and forsaken by God, as not to rise any more; for his latter end was greater than his beginning: and besides, innocent and righteous persons are often involved in the same calamities as wicked men are, and their afflictions are the same; only with this difference, to the one they are the proper punishment of sin, to the other they are fatherly chastisements and trials of their grace, and issue in their good; the Targum explains it of such persons, as Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, none such as they perishing, or being cut off.

**Ver. 8.** *Even as I have seen*, etc.] Here he goes about to prove, by his own experience, the destruction of wicked men; and would intimate, that Job was such an one, because of the ruin he was fallen into:

*they that plow iniquity, and sow wickedness, reap the same*; figurative expressions, denoting that such who devise iniquity in their hearts, form and plan schemes of it in their minds, signified by “plowing iniquity”, and who were studious and diligent to put into practice what they devised; who

took a great deal of pains to commit sin, and were constant at it, expressed by “sowing wickedness”: these sooner or later eat the fruit of their doings, are punished in proportion to their crimes, even in this life, as well as hereafter, (see <sup><8087></sup>Hosea 8:7 10:13) (<sup><8087></sup>Galatians 6:7,8); though a Jewish commentator <sup>f143</sup> observes, that the thought of sin is designed by the first phrase; the endeavour to bring it into action by the second; and the finishing of the work, or the actual commission of the evil, by the third; the punishment thereof being what is expressed in (<sup><8049></sup>Job 4:9); the Targum applies this to the generation of the flood.

**Ver. 9.** *By the blast of God they perish*, etc.] They and their works, the ploughers, sowers, and reapers of iniquity; the allusion is to the blasting of corn by the east wind, or by mildew, etc. having used the figures of ploughing and sowing before; and which is as soon and as easily done as corn, or anything else, is blasted in the above manner; and denotes the sudden and easy destruction of wicked men by the power of God, stirred up by his wrath and indignation, because of their sins; who when he blows a blast on their persons, substance, and families, they perish at once:

*and by the breath of his nostrils are they consumed*; meaning his wrath and anger, which is like a stream of brimstone, and kindles a fire on the wicked, which are as fuel to it, and are soon consumed by it; the allusion is to breath in a man’s nostrils, and the heat of his wrath and fury discovered thereby: some think this refers to Job’s children being destroyed by the wind, (see <sup><2104></sup>Isaiah 11:4).

**Ver. 10.** *The roaring of the lion, and the voice of the fierce lion*, etc.] Which Aben Ezra interprets of God himself, who is compared to a lion; who not only by his voice terrifies, but in his wrath tears the wicked in pieces, and destroys them, and so is a continuation of the preceding account; and others, as R. Moses and R. Jonah, whom he mentions, take this to be a continuation of the means and methods by which God destroys wicked men sometimes, namely, by beasts of prey; this being one of his sore judgments he threatens men with, and inflicts upon men, (see <sup><8322></sup>Leviticus 26:22 <sup><2642></sup>Ezekiel 14:21); and in this they are followed by some Christian interpreters, who render the words “at” or “by the roaring of the lion, and by the voice of the fierce lion, by the teeth of the young lions” <sup>f144</sup>, they the wicked “are broken”, ground to pieces, and utterly destroyed; but it is better, with Jarchi, Ben Gersom, and others, to understand it of kings and princes, of the mighty ones of the earth,

tyrannical and oppressive rulers and governors; comparable to lions of different ages; because of their grandeur and greatness, their power and might, their cruelty and oppression in each of their different capacities; signifying, that these do not escape the righteous judgments of God: the Targum interprets the roaring of the lion of Esau, and the voice of the fierce lion of Edom; and another Jewish writer<sup>f145</sup> of Nimrod, the first tyrant and oppressor, the mighty hunter before the Lord; but these are too particular; wicked men in power and authority in general are here, and in the following clauses, intended, (see ~~2017~~ Jeremiah 4:7 50:17 Na 2:11-13) (~~2017~~ 2 Timothy 4:17); and the sense is, that such ploughers and sowers of iniquity as are like to fierce and roaring lions are easily and quickly destroyed by the Lord:

*and the teeth of the young lions are broken*: the power of such mighty ones to do mischief is taken away from them, and they and their families are brought to ruin; the teeth of lions are very strong in both jaws; they have fourteen teeth, four incisors or cutters, four canine or dog teeth, six molars or grinders.

**Ver. 11.** *The old lion perisheth for lack of prey*, etc.] Or rather “the stout” and “strong lion”<sup>f146</sup>, that is most able to take the prey, and most skilful at it, yet such shall perish for want of it; not so much for want of finding it, or of power to seize it, as of keeping it when got, it being taken away from him; signifying, that God oftentimes in his providence takes away from cruel oppressors what they have got by oppression, and so they are brought into starving and famishing circumstances. The Septuagint render the word by “myrmecoleon”, or the “ant lion”, which Isidore<sup>f147</sup> thus describes;

“it is a little animal, very troublesome to ants, which hides itself in the dust, and kills the ants as they carry their corn; hence it is called both a lion and an ant, because to other animals is as an ant, and to the ants as a lion,”

and therefore cannot be the lion here spoken of; though Strabo<sup>f148</sup> and Aelianus<sup>f149</sup> speak of lions in Arabia and Babylon called ants, which seem to be a species of lions, and being in those countries, might be known to Eliphaz. Megasthenes<sup>f150</sup> speaks of ants in India as big as foxes, of great swiftness, and get their living by hunting:

*and the stout lion's whelps are scattered abroad*; or “the whelps of the lioness”,<sup>f151</sup> these are scattered from the lion and lioness, and from one another, to seek for food, but in vain; the Targum applies this to Ishmael, and his posterity; Jarchi, and others, to the builders of Babel, said to be scattered, (<sup>01108</sup>Genesis 11:8); rather reference may be had to the giants, the men of the old world, who filled the earth with violence, which was the cause of the flood being brought upon the world of the ungodly. Some think that Eliphaz has a regard to Job in all this, and that by the “fierce lion” he designs and describes Job as an oppressor and tyrant, and by the “lioness” his wife, and by the “young lions” and “lion’s whelps” his children; and indeed, though he may not directly design him, yet he may obliquely point at him, and suggest that he was like to the men he had in view, and compares to these creatures, and therefore his calamities righteously came upon him.

**Ver. 12.** *Now a thing was secretly brought to me*, etc.] From reason and experience, Eliphaz proceeds to a vision and revelation he had from God, showing the purity and holiness of God, and the frailty, weakness, folly, and sinfulness of men, by which it appears that men cannot be just in the sight of God, and therefore it must be wrong in Job to insist upon his innocence and integrity. Some indeed have thought that this was a mere fiction of Eliphaz, and not a real vision; yea, some have gone so far as to pronounce it a diabolical one, but without any just foundation; for there is nothing in the manner or matter of it but what is agreeable to a divine vision or to a revelation from God; besides, though Eliphaz was a mistaken man in the case of Job, yet was a good man, as may be concluded from the acceptance of a sacrifice for him by the Lord, which was offered for him by Job, according to the order of God, and therefore could never be guilty of such an imposture; nor does Job ever charge him with any falsehood in this matter, who doubtless would have been able to have traversed and exposed him; add to all this, that in his discourse annexed to and continued along with this account, stands a passage, which the apostle has quoted as of divine inspiration, (<sup>4019</sup>1 Corinthians 3:19); from (<sup>3813</sup>Job 5:13). When Eliphaz had this vision, whether within the seven days of his visit to Job, or before, some time ago, which he might call to mind on this occasion, and judging it appropriate to the present case, thought fit to relate it, is not certain, nor very material to know: it is introduced after this manner, “a thing” or “word”, a word of prophecy, a word from the Lord, a revelation of his mind and will, which was hidden and secret, and what before he was

not so well acquainted with; this was “brought” unto him by the Spirit of God, or by a messenger from the Lord, sent on this occasion, and for this purpose; and the manner in which it was brought was “secretly” or “by stealth”, as Mr. Broughton and others <sup>f152</sup> render it; it was “stolen” unto him, or “secretly” brought, as the Targum, and we, and others <sup>f153</sup>; it was in a private way or manner; or “*suddenly*”, as some others <sup>f154</sup>, at unawares, when it was not expected by him: it may have respect to the still and silent manner in which it was revealed to him,

“*there was silence, and he heard a voice*”;

a still one, a secret whisper; or to the almost invisible person that revealed it, whose image he saw, but could not discern his form and likeness; or it may be to the distinguishing favour he enjoyed, in having this revelation particularly made to him, and not to others; he heard this word, as it were, behind the curtain, or veil, as the Jews <sup>f155</sup> say, explaining this passage:

*mine ear received a little of it*; this revelation was made, not by an impulse upon his spirits, but vocally, a voice was heard, as after declared, and Eliphaz was attentive to it; he listened to what was said, and heard, and took it in with much delight and pleasure, though but a small part of it, as his capacity was able to retain it; or it was but a small part of the will of God, an hint of his only, as some interpret it <sup>f156</sup>. Schultens has shown, from the use of a word near this in the Arabic language, that it signifies “a string of pearls”; and so may design a set of evangelic truths, comparable to gold, silver, and precious stones, and which are indeed more desirable than them, and preferable to them; what they are will be observed hereafter.

**Ver. 13.** *In thoughts from the visions of the night*, etc.] While Eliphaz was thinking of and meditating upon divine things, or while he was revolving in his mind some night visions he had, before this was made unto him, (see <sup>2029</sup>Daniel 2:29); in meditation the Lord is often pleased to make known more of his mind and will to his people; and this is one way in which he was wont to do it in former times, in a vision either in the day, as sometimes, or in the night, as at others, and as here, (see <sup>44216</sup>Numbers 12:6);

*when deep sleep falleth on men*; on sorrowful men, as Mr. Broughton renders it; such who have been laborious all the day, and getting their bread with sorrow and trouble, and are weary; who as soon as they lie down fall asleep, and sleep falls on them, and to such it is sweet, as the wise man

says, (<sup><2062></sup>Ecclesiastes 5:12); now it was at such a time when men ordinarily and commonly are asleep that this vision was had.

**Ver. 14.** *Fear came upon me, and trembling*, etc.] Not only a dread of mind, but trembling of body; which was often the case even with good men, whenever there was any unusual appearance of God unto them by a voice, or by any representation, or by an angel; as with Abraham in the vision of the pieces, and with Moses on Mount Sinai, and with Daniel in some of his visions, and with Zechariah, when an angel appeared and brought him the tidings of a son to be born to him; which arises from the frailty and weakness of human nature, a consciousness of guilt, a sense of the awful majesty of God, and an uneasy apprehension of what may be the consequences of it:

*which made all my bones to shake*; not only there was inward fear and outward tremor of body, but to such a degree, that not one joint in him was still; all the members of his body shook, and every bone was as if it was loosed, which are the more firm and solid parts, as is common many considerable tremor.

**Ver. 15.** *Then a spirit passed before my face*, etc.] Which some interpret of a wind <sup>f157</sup>, a blustering wind, that blew strong in his face; and so the Targum renders it, a stormy wind, such an one as Elijah perceived when the Lord spoke to him, though he was not in that, (<sup><1191></sup>1 Kings 19:11); or such a whirlwind, out of which the Lord spake to Job, (<sup><8801></sup>Job 38:1); or rather, as Jarchi, an angel, an immaterial spirit, one of Jehovah's ministering spirits, clothed in an human form, and which passed and repassed before Eliphaz, that he might take notice of it:

*the hair of my flesh stood up*; erect, through surprise and dread; which is sometimes the case, when anything astonishing and terrible is beheld; the blood at such times making its way to the heart, for the preservation of that, leaves the external members of the body cold, and the skin of the flesh, in which the hair is, being contracted by the impetuous influx of the nervous fluid, causes the hair to stand upright, particularly the hair of the head, like the prickles or hedgehogs <sup>f158</sup>; which has been usual at the sight of an apparition <sup>f159</sup>.

**Ver. 16.** *It stood still*, etc.] That is, the spirit, or the angel in a visible form; it was before going to and fro, but now it stood still right against Eliphaz, as if it had something to say to him, and so preparing him to attend to it;

which he might do the better, it standing before him while speaking to him, that he might have the opportunity of taking more notice of it:

*but*, notwithstanding this advantageous position of it,

*I could not discern the form thereof*; what it was, whether human or any other:

*an image [was] before mine eyes*; he saw something, some appearance and likeness, but could not tell what it was; perhaps the fear and surprise he was in hindered him from taking in any distinct idea of it, or that particular notice of it, so as to be able to form in his own mind any suitable notion of it, or to describe it to others:

*[there was] silence* both in the spirit or image, which, standing still, made no rushing noise, and in Eliphaz himself, who kept in his breath, and listened with all the attention he could to it; or a small low voice, as Ben Melech interprets it: so it follows,

*and I heard a voice*; a distinct articulate voice or sound of words, very audibly delivered by the spirit or image that stood before him:

*[saying]*; as follows.

**Ver. 17.** *Shall mortal man be more just than God?* etc.] Poor, weak, frail, dying man, and so sinful, as his mortality shows, which is the effect of sin; how should such a man be more righteous than God? who is so originally and essentially of himself, completely, perfectly, yea, infinitely righteous in his nature, and in his works, both of providence and grace; in chastising his people, punishing the wicked, and bestowing favours upon his friends, even in their election, redemption, justification, pardon, and eternal happiness: yea, not only profane wicked sinners can make no pretensions to anything of this kind, but even the best of men, none being without sin, no, not man in his best estate; for the righteousness he had then was of God, and therefore he could not be more just than he that made him upright. This comparative sense, which our version leads to, is more generally received; but it seems not to be the sense of the passage, since this is a truth clear from reason, and needed no vision or revelation to discover it; nor can it be thought that God would send an angelic spirit in such an awful and pompous manner, to declare that which every one knew, and no man would contradict; even the most self-righteous and self-sufficient man would never be so daring and insolent as to say he was more righteous than

God; but the words should be rather rendered, “shall mortal man be justified by God, or be just from God?” or “with” him, or “before” him <sup>f160</sup>, in his sight, by any righteousness in him, or done by him? shall he enter into his presence, stand at his bar, and be examined there, and go away from thence, in the sight and account of God, as a righteous person of himself? no, he cannot; now this is a doctrine opposed to carnal reasoning and the common sentiments of men, a doctrine of divine revelation, a precious truth: this is the string of pearls Eliphaz received, (see ~~<R042>~~ Job 4:12); that mortal man is of himself an unrighteous creature; that he cannot be justified by his own righteousness in the sight of God; and that he must look and seek out for a better righteousness than his own, to justify him before God; and this agrees with Eliphaz’s interpretation of the vision, (~~<R154>~~ Job 15:14); with the sentiments of his friend Bildad, who seems to have some respect to it, (~~<R274>~~ Job 25:4); and also of Job himself, (~~<R302>~~ Job 9:2); and in like manner are we to understand the following clause:

*shall a man be more pure than his Maker?* even the greatest and best of men, since what purity was in Adam, in a state of innocence, was from God; and what good men have, in a state of grace, is from the grace of God and blood of Christ, without which no man is pure at all, and therefore cannot be purer than him from whom they have it: or rather “be pure from”, or “with”, or “before his Maker” <sup>f161</sup>, or be so accounted by him; every man is impure by his first birth, and in his nature state, and therefore cannot stand before a pure and holy God, who of purer eyes than to behold iniquity; or go away his presence, and be reckoned by him a pure and holy creature of himself; nor can any thing that he can do, in a moral or ceremonial manner, cleanse him from his impurity; and therefore it is necessary he should apply to the grace of God, and blood of Christ, for his purification.

**Ver. 18.** *Behold, he put no trust in his servants,* etc.] Some think the divine oracle or revelation ends in (~~<R047>~~ Job 4:17), and that here Eliphaz makes some use and improvement of it, and addresses Job, and argues with him upon it, with a view to his case and circumstances; but rather the account of what the oracle said, or was delivered by revelation, is continued to the end of the chapter, there being nothing unworthy of God, either in the matter or manner of it: and here Eliphaz himself is addressed, and this address ushered in with a “behold”, as a note of admiration, asseveration, and attention; it being somewhat wonderful and of importance, sure and certain, and which deserved to be listened to, that



God, the Maker of men and angels, did not, and does not, “put” any “trust” or confidence “in his servants”; meaning not the prophets in particular, as the Targum, though they are in an eminent sense the servants of God; nor righteous men in general, as Jarchi and others, who though heretofore servants of sin, yet through grace become servants of righteousness, and of God; but as men who dwelt in houses of clay are opposed to them, and distinguished from them, in (~~1049~~ Job 4:19), they must be understood of angels, as the following clause explains it; who always stand before God, ministering unto him, ready to do his will, and to do it in the most perfect manner creatures are capable of; they go forth at his command into each of the parts of the world, and execute his orders; they worship him, and celebrate his perfections, ascribing honour and glory, wisdom, power, and blessing to him; and this they do cheerfully, constantly, and incessantly. Now though God has intrusted these servants of his with many messages of importance, both under the Old and New Testament dispensation, yet he has not trusted them with the salvation of men, to which they are not equal, but has put it into the hands of his Son; nor indeed did he trust them with the secret of it, so as to make them his counsellors about it; no, Christ only was the wonderful Counsellor in this affair; the counsel of peace, or that respecting the peace and reconciliation of men, was only between him and his Father; God was only in and with Christ, and not angels reconciling men, or drawing the plan of their reconciliation; and when this secret, being concluded on and settled, was revealed to angels, it is thought by some to be the reason of so many of them apostatizing from God; they choosing rather to have nothing to do with him, than to be under the Son of God in human nature: but, besides this, there are many other things God has not trusted the angels with, as his purposes and decrees within himself, and the knowledge of the times and seasons of the accomplishment of them, particularly the day and hour of judgment; though the sense here rather seems to be this, that God does not and did not trust them with themselves; he knew their natural weakness, frailty, mutability, how liable they were to sin and fall from him, and therefore he chose them in Christ, put them into his hands, and made him head over them, and so confirmed and established them in him; and, as it may be rendered, “did not put stability or firmness”<sup>f162</sup> in them, so as to stand of themselves; or “perfection” in them, as some render it<sup>f163</sup>, which cannot be in a creature as it is in God:

*and his angels he charged with folly*; that is, comparatively, with respect to himself, in comparison of whom all creatures are foolish, be they ever so

wise; for he is all wise, and only wise; angels are very knowing and intelligent in things natural and evangelical, but their knowledge is but imperfect, particularly in the latter; as appears by their being desirous of looking into those things which respect the salvation of men, and by learning of the church the manifold wisdom of God, (~~600D~~ 1 Peter 1:2 ~~480D~~ Ephesians 3:10); or by “folly” is meant vanity, weakness, and imperfection <sup>f164</sup>, a liableness to fall, which God observed in them; and which are in every creature in its best estate, and were in Adam in his state of innocence, and so in the angels that fell not, especially previous to their confirmation by Christ, (see ~~490B~~ Psalm 39:5); and so the sense is the same with the preceding clause: some render it by repeating the negative from that, “and he putteth not glorying” or “boasting in his angels” <sup>f165</sup>; he makes no account of their duties and services, so as to glory in them; it is an humbling himself to regard them; or he puts nothing in them that they can boast of, since they have nothing of themselves, all from him, and therefore cannot glory as though they had received it not. Others observe, that the word has the signification of light, and differently render the passage; some, “though he putteth light in his angels” <sup>f166</sup>, makes them angels of light, comparable to morning stars, yet he puts no trust in them; and what they have is from him, and therefore not to be compared with him, nor can they glory in themselves; or, “he putteth not light”, or “not clear light into [them]” <sup>f167</sup>; that which is perfect, and fire from all manner of darkness; such only is in himself the Father of lights, with whom it dwells in perfection, and there is no shadow of turning in him: some would have this understood of the evil angels, whom God charged with folly; but this is too low a term, a phrase not strong enough to express their sin and wickedness, who are not chargeable only with imprudence, but with rebellion and treason against God; nor does this sense agree with parallel places, (~~854D~~ Job 15:14-16 25:4,5); and besides, the beauty of the comparison of them with men would be lost, and the strength of the argument with respect to them would be sadly weakened, which we have in (~~804D~~ Job 4:19).

**Ver. 19.** *How much less [on] them that dwell in houses of clay*, etc.]

Meaning men, but not as dwelling in houses, in a proper sense, made of clay dried by the sun, as were common in the eastern countries; nor in mean cottages, as distinguished from cedar, and ceiled houses, in which great personages dwelt, for this respects men in common; nor as being in the houses of the grave, as the Targum, Jarchi, and others, which are no

other than dust, dirt, and clay; for this regards not the dead, but the living; but the bodies of men are meant; in which their souls dwell; which shows the superior excellency of the soul to the body, and its independency of it, being capable of existing without it, as it does in the separate state before the resurrection; so bodies are called tabernacles, and earthen vessels, and earthly houses, (<sup><60113></sup>2 Peter 1:13,14) (<sup><4007></sup>2 Corinthians 4:7 5:1); and bodies of clay, (<sup><1812></sup>Job 13:12); so the body is by Epictetus <sup>f168</sup> called clay elegantly wrought; and another Heathen writer <sup>f169</sup> calls it clay steeped in, or macerated and mixed with blood: being of clay denotes the original of bodies, the dust of the earth; and the frailty of them, like brittle clay, and the pollution of them, all the members thereof being defiled with sin, and so called vile bodies, and will remain such till changed by Christ, (<sup><1012></sup>Philippians 3:21); now the argument stands thus, if God put no trust in angels, then much less in poor, frail, mortal, sinful men; he has no dependence on their services, whose weakness, unprofitableness, and unfaithfulness, he well knows; he puts no trust in their purposes, and resolutions, and vows, which often come to nothing; nor does he trust his own people with their salvation and justification, or put these things upon the foot of their works, but trusts them and the salvation and justification of them with his Son, and puts them upon the foot of his own grace and mercy: and if he charges the holy angels with folly, then much more (for so it may be also rendered) will he charge mortal sinful men with it, who are born like the wild ass's colt, and are foolish as well as disobedient, even his chosen ones, especially before conversion; or thus if so stands the case of angels, then much less can man be just before him, and pure in his sight: the weakness, frailty, and pollution of the bodies of men, are further enlarged on in some following clauses:

*whose foundation [is] in the dust;* meaning not the lower parts of the body, as the feet, which support and bear it up; rather the soul, which is the basis of it, referring to its corruption and depravity by sin; though it seems chiefly to respect the original of the body, which is the dust of the earth, of which it consists, and to which it will return again, this being but a poor foundation to stand upon, (<sup><0017></sup>Genesis 2:7 3:17 <sup><2117></sup>Ecclesiastes 12:7); for the sense is, whose foundation is dust, mere dust, the particle **b** being redundant, or rather an Arabism:

*[which] are crushed before the moth?* that is, which bodies of men, or houses of clay founded in the dust; or, "they crush them"; or "which" or "whom [they] crush" <sup>f170</sup>; either God, Father, Son, and Spirit, as some; or

the angels, as others; or distresses, calamities, and afflictions, which sense seems best, by which they are crushed “before the moth” or “worm”<sup>f171</sup>; that is, before they die, and come to be the repast of worms, (~~<RB>~~ Job 19:26); or before a moth is destroyed, as soon, or sooner<sup>f172</sup>, than it is; so a man may be crushed to death, or his life taken from him, as soon as a moth’s; either by the immediate hand of God, as Ananias and Sapphira, (~~<RB>~~ Acts 5:5,10); or by the sword of man, as Amasa by Joab, (~~<RB>~~ 2 Samuel 20:10); or rather, “like a moth”<sup>f173</sup>, as easily and as quickly as a moth is crushed between a man’s fingers, or by his foot: some, as Saadiah Gaon, and others, render it, “before Arcturus”<sup>f174</sup>, a constellation in the heavens, (~~<RB>~~ Job 9:9); and take the phrase to be the same as that, “before the sun”; (~~<RB>~~ Psalm 72:17); and to denote the perpetuity and duration of their being crushed, which would be as long as the sun or Arcturus continued, that is, for ever; but either of the above senses is best, especially the last of them.

**Ver. 20.** *They are destroyed from morning to evening*, etc.] That is, those that dwell in houses of clay, before described; the meaning is, that they are always exposed to death, and liable to it every day they live; not only such who are persecuted for the sake of religion, but all men in common, for of such are both the text and context; who have always the seeds of mortality and death in them, that is continually working in them; and every day, even from morning to evening, are innumerable instances of the power of death over men; and not only some there are, whose sun rises in the morning and sets at evening, who are like grass in the morning, gay, and green, and by evening cut down and withered, live but a day, and some not that, but even it is true of all men, comparatively speaking, they begin to die the day they begin to live; so that the wise man takes no notice of any intermediate time between a time to be born and a time to die, (~~<RB>~~ Ecclesiastes 3:2); so frail and short is the life of man; his days are but as an hand’s breadth, (~~<RB>~~ Psalm 39:5);

*they perish for ever*: which is not to be understood of the second or eternal death which some die; for this is not the case of all; those that believe in Christ shall not perish for ever, but have everlasting life; but this respects not only the long continuance of men under the power of death until the resurrection, which is not contradicted by thus expression; but it signifies that the dead never return to this mortal life again, at least the instances are very rare; their families, friends, and houses, that knew them, know them no more; they return no more to their worldly business or enjoyments, (see ~~<RB>~~ Job 7:9,10 10:21);

*without any regarding [it]*; their death; neither they themselves nor others, expecting it so soon, and using no means to prevent it, and which, if made use of, would not have availed, their appointed time being come; or “without putting” <sup>f175</sup>, either without putting light into them, as Sephorno, which can only be true of some; or with out putting the hand, either their own or another’s, to destroy them, being done by the hand of God, by a distemper of his sending, or by one providence or another; or without putting the heart to it, which comes to the sense of our version; though death is so frequent every day, yet it is not taken notice of; men do not lay it to heart, so as to consider of their latter end, and repent of their sins, and reform from them, that they may not be their ruin; and this is and would be the case of all men, were it not for the grace of God.

**Ver. 21.** *Doth not their excellency [which is] in them go away?* etc.]

Either the soul which is in them, and is the most excellent part of them; this, though it dies not, yet it goes away and departs from the body at death; and so do all the powers and faculties of it, the thoughts, the affections, the mind, and memory, yea, all the endowments of the mind, wisdom, learning, knowledge of languages, arts, and sciences, all fail at death, (~~1~~1 Corinthians 13:8 ~~Psalm~~ Psalm 146:8); and so likewise all that is excellent in the body, the strength and beauty of it depart, its strength is weakened in the way, and its comeliness turned into corruption: or, as it may be rendered, “which is with them” <sup>f176</sup>; and so may likewise denote all outward enjoyments, as wealth and riches, glory and honour, which a man cannot carry with him, do not descend into the grave with him, but then go away: a learned man <sup>f177</sup> renders the words, “is not their excellency removed [which was] in them?” and thinks it refers to the corruption of nature, the loss of original righteousness, and of the image of God in man, which formerly was his excellency in his state of innocence, but now, through sin and the fall, is removed from him; and this, indeed, is the cause, the source and spring, of his frailty, mortality, and death; hence it follows:

*they die even without wisdom*; that dies with them, or whatsoever of that they have goes away from them at death; wise men die as well as fools, yea, they die as fools do, and multitudes without true wisdom, not being wise enough to consider their latter end; they die without the wisdom which some are made to know, in the hidden part, without the fear of God, which is real wisdom, or without the knowledge of Christ, and of God in Christ, which is the beginning, earnest, and pledge of life eternal. Now then since man is such a frail, mortal, foolish, and sinful creature, how can he be

just before God, or pure in the sight of his Maker? which, is the thing designed to be proved and illustrated by all this; and here ends the divine oracle, or the revelation made to Eliphaz, when he had the vision before related.