

CHAPTER 5

INTRODUCTION TO JOB 5

In this chapter Eliphaz goes on to prove, and further confirm and establish, what he had before asserted, that not good men, but wicked men only, are afflicted of God, at least greatly, so as to have their substance wholly destroyed and perish, which was Job's case; and this partly from the case, state, and sentiments of all the saints, (~~KB~~ Job 5:1,2); and from his own observation and experience, (~~KB~~ Job 5:3-5); and then he proceeds to give some advice; and seeing afflictions do not come by chance, but are of God, it is right in such circumstances for a man to seek to the Lord for pardon and salvation, and commit his cause unto him, (~~KB~~ Job 5:6-8); who does many great things in a providential way to the good of man in general, and to the disappointment of wicked crafty men, and to the serving of the poor in particular, (~~KB~~ Job 5:9-16); so that it is best patiently to bear the afflicting hand of God, and it is an happiness to be corrected by him, since he delivers such out of all their troubles, and preserves them from many evils, and bestows many good things on them; which would be Job's case particularly, if he behaved according to the advice given, and which is left with him to consider of, (~~KB~~ Job 5:17-27).

Ver. 1. *Call now, if there be any that will answer thee*, etc.] That is, call upon God, which, if seriously, and not ironically spoken, was good advice; God is to be called upon, and especially in times of trouble; and invocation is to be made in faith, in sincerity, and with fervency, and to be accompanied with confession of sin, and repentance for it; and sooner or later God hears and answers those that call upon him; but Eliphaz suggests, that if Job did call upon him, it would be in vain, he would not hear him, he going upon the same maxim that the Jews did in Christ's time, "God heareth not sinners": (~~KB~~ John 9:31); or call upon him to give him an oracle from heaven, to favour him with a vision and revelation, and see if he could get anything that would confront and confute what he had delivered as coming that way; which, if it could be done by him, would appear to be a falsehood and an imposture, since one revelation from God is not contradicted by another: or else the sense is, "call" over the catalogue and

list of good men that have been from the beginning of the world, and see if there be any that “answers to thee” ^{f178}, whose case, character, and behaviour, correspond with thee; if ever any of them was afflicted as thou art, or ever behaved with so much indecency, impatience, murmuring, and blasphemy against God, as thou hast done; that ever opened his mouth, and cursed the day of his birth, and reflected upon the providence and justice of God as thou hast, as if thou wert unrighteously dealt with: or rather, “call now”, and summon all creatures together, angels and men, and get anyone of them to be thy patron, to defend thy cause, and plead for thee, to give a reply to what has been said, from reason, experience, and revelation: and shouldest thou obtain this, which is not likely, “lo, there is one that can answer thee” ^{f179}, as some render the words, meaning either God or himself; thus Eliphaz insults Job, and triumphs over him, as being entirely baffled and conquered by him, by what he had related as an oracle and revelation from heaven:

and to which of the saints wilt thou turn? or “look”, or “have respect” ^{f180}, that will be of any service to thee? meaning either the Divine Persons in the Godhead, sometimes called Holy Ones, as in (^{<6349>}Joshua 24:19); (^{<3190>}Proverbs 9:10 30:3 ^{<2811>}Hosea 11:12); the Holy Father, the Holy Son, and the Holy Spirit, who may and should be turned and looked unto; God the Father, as the God of providence and grace for all good things; Jesus Christ his Son, as the Redeemer and Saviour for righteousness and eternal life; the blessed Spirit, as a sanctifier to carry on and finish the work of grace; but it is suggested, it would be in vain for Job to turn and look to any of these, since he would be rejected by them as a wicked man, nor would any of them plead his cause: or else the holy angels, as the Septuagint express it, and who are called saints and Holy Ones, (^{<6332>}Deuteronomy 33:2 ^{<2783>}Daniel 8:13 ^{<3145>}Zechariah 14:5); and it is asked, which of those he could turn or look to, and could expect relief and protection from? signifying, that none of these would vouchsafe to converse with him, nor take him under their care, nor undertake to plead his cause: or rather holy men, such as are sanctified or set apart by God the Father, to whom Christ is made sanctification, and in whose hearts the Holy Spirit has wrought principles of grace and holiness, and who live holy lives and conversations; and it is insinuated, that should he turn and look to these, he would find none of them like him, nor in the same circumstances, nor of the same sentiments, or that would take his part and plead for him; but that all to a man would appear of the same mind with Eliphaz, that

none but wicked men were afflicted by God as he was, and that he was such an one, and that for the reason following: the Papists very absurdly produce this passage in favour of praying to departed saints, when not dead but living ones are meant, and even turning to them is discouraged; and besides, this would contradict another tenet of the Papists, that the Old Testament saints, until the coming of Christ, were in a sort of purgatory, called Limbus Patrum, and therefore incapable of helping saints on earth that should apply unto them.

Ver. 2. *For wrath killeth the foolish man*, etc.] Not one that is an idiot, and destitute of common sense, and has no understanding in things natural and civil; but a wicked man, who has no knowledge of things divine and spiritual, and so foolish; which is the character of every natural man, and of God's people before conversion; and even of some professors, who are foolish virgins, and carry the lamp of a religious profession without the oil of grace; and such an one Eliphaz took Job to be, whom sooner or later the wrath of the Lord, as the Targum interprets it, which is revealed from heaven, and comes down upon the children of disobedience, would consume like devouring fire: or this may be understood of the wrath and passion of such men themselves, which sometimes rises in them to such an height, as that they die in a fit of it; or do those things which bring them to death, either by the hand of God, or by the civil magistrate:

and envy slayeth the silly one; one that is simple and void of understanding, and is easily persuaded and drawn into sin, either by his own heart, or by evil men, or by the temptations of Satan; and in whose heart envy at the prosperity of others dwells, and which insensibly preys upon him, eats up his own spirits, and is rottenness to his bones, and crumbles them into dust, (^{<2140>}Proverbs 14:30); or the word may be rendered "jealousy", or "zeal"^{f181}, as it sometimes is, and may signify the jealousy of the Lord, zeal for his own glory, which he sometimes stirs up as a man of war, and which smokes against wicked men, and consumes them as fire, (see ^{<23213>}Isaiah 42:13 ^{<45715>}Psalm 79:5 ^{<15210>}Deuteronomy 29:20); Eliphaz by all this would represent and insinuate that Job was such a man, hot, passionate, and angry with God and his providence, and envious at the prosperity of others, particularly his friends; and so was a foolish and silly man, in whose breast wrath and envy rested, and would be his ruin and destruction, as he was already under slaying and killing providences.

Ver. 3. *I have seen the foolish taking root*, etc.] Such foolish wicked men as before described; those Eliphaz had observed to prosper in the world, and increase in riches, and even to have attained to a seeming stability and firmness, as if they would ever continue in such happy circumstances, (see ^{<3412>}Jeremiah 12:2 ^{<4875>}Psalms 37:35,36); by this he would obviate an objection that here might be raised and made against the assertion he was proving, that wicked men are afflicted and punished of God for their sins; whereas it is notorious that they are not in trouble as other men, but in very prosperous and flourishing circumstances; this he grants is their case for a while, as he had observed, but in a short time they pass away, they and their substance disappear, and are no more seen, as follows:

but suddenly I cursed his habitation; not that he wished ill to him, or imprecated evils upon him; for cursing and bitterness only fit the mouths of wicked men, and not good men, among whom Eliphaz must be allowed to be; but he immediately thought within himself, as soon as he saw the flourishing state of the wicked, that the curse of the Lord was in their houses, as in (^{<1033>}Proverbs 3:33); that they and all they had were under a curse, and that God find given them what they had with a curse, and had cursed all their blessings; which makes the difference between a good man and a wicked man; the one has what he has, his cottage and his small substance, with a blessing; the other his pleasant habitation, as the word ^{f182} here used signifies, his stately palace, rich furniture, and large estates, with a curse; or he prognosticated, he foresaw, and could foretell, and that without pretending to an extraordinary spirit of prophecy, that in a short time the curse of God would light upon him, and upon his house, (see ^{<3412>}Zechariah 5:3,4).

Ver. 4. *His children are far from safety*, etc.] From outward safety, from evils and dangers, to which they are liable and exposed, not only from men, who hate them for their father's sake, who have been oppressors of them, or from God, who visits the iniquity of the fathers upon the children; and from spiritual and eternal safety or "salvation", or from salvation in the world to come, as the Targum, they treading in their fathers steps, and imitating their actions:

and they are crushed in the gate; or openly, publicly, as Aben Ezra and others; or in the courts of judicature whither they are brought by those their parents had oppressed, and where they are cast, and have no favour shown them; or literally by the falling of the gate upon them; and perhaps

some reference is had to Job's children being crushed in the gate or door of the house, through which they endeavoured to get when it fell upon them and destroyed them; the Targum is,

“and are crushed in the gates of hell, in the day of the great judgment:”

neither [is there] any to deliver [them]; neither God nor man, they having no interest in either, or favour with, partly on account of their father's ill behaviour, and partly on account of their own; and sad is the case of men when it is such, (see ^{<4382>}Psalm 50:21).

Ver. 5. *Whose harvest the hungry eateth up*, etc.] This is to be understood of the foolish rich man before described, as taking root and flourishing; though he sows, and reaps and gathers in his harvest, and fancies he has goods laid up for many years, to be enjoyed by him, yet he is taken away by death, and another eats what he has gathered; either his hungry heirs, that he has kept bare, and without the proper necessaries of life; or the poor whom he has oppressed, who, driven by hunger, seize upon his harvest, and eat it up, whether he be alive or dead: Saphorno interprets this of the wicked man himself, who should eat up his own harvest, and not have enough to satisfy him, the curse of God being upon his land; and another learned interpreter ^{f183} thinks the sense is, that such should be the curse of God on the fields of wicked men, that they should produce no more than what was usually left to the poor, and therefore should have no need to gather it:

and taketh it even out of the thorns; that is, either the hungry man takes the harvest out of the thorns, among which it grows, (see ^{<4037>}Matthew 13:7); or which he had gotten “through the thorns”, as Mr. Broughton renders it; that is, the owner, through many difficulties; and hunger will break through many to get at it; or though his harvest being got in, is enclosed with a thorn hedge, the hungry man gets through it, and takes it out from it, surrounded by it; the above mentioned Jewish writer understands this also of the wicked man, who takes his own harvest out from among the thorns, so that there is nothing left for the poor and his friends, as it is meet there should: the word ^{f184} for “thorns” has also the signification of armour, particularly of shields; hence the Targum is,

“and armed men with warlike arms shall take it away;”

to which agrees the Vulgate Latin version,

“and the armed men shall take it away;”

that is, soldiers should forage, spoil, and destroy it:

and the robber swalloweth up their substance; the house robber, who breaks in and devours all at once, and makes a clear riddance of it; some render it “the hairy man”^{f185} either that neglects his hair, as beggars, or such that live in desert places, as robbers, that they may appear the more terrible; or that take care of it, and nourish it, and tie it up in locks, and behind their heads, as Bar Tzemach and Ben Melech observe they do in Turkey; others translate it “the thirsty”^{f186}, and so it answers to the hungry in the preceding clause, and designs such who thirst, and gape after, and covet the substance of others, and greedily catch at it, and swallow it up at once, at one draught, as a thirsty man does a large quantity of liquor, (see ~~2012~~ Proverbs 1:12,13); this may have some respect to the Sabeans and Chaldeans, that swallowed up Job’s substance, and took away his cattle from him at once, and were no other than bands of robbers; and the use of the word for a thief or a robber, as we take it, is confirmed by a learned man^{f187}, who derives it from the Arabic word <Arabic> which signifies to smite with a club or stone.

Ver. 6. *Although affliction cometh not forth of the dust*, etc.] Or rather, “for” or “indeed”^{f188}, this being a reason showing that wicked men are justly afflicted and punished; seeing their afflictions come not from the creatures, though they may be instruments, but from God for the sins of men: the word for affliction also signifies iniquity or sin, the cause of affliction, as well as affliction the fruit of sin; and so does the word in the following clause; and Aben Ezra understands both, not of natural but moral evil, and so do others^{f189}; both senses may be taken in: sin does not come from God, the Maker of the dust of the earth, he is not the author of sin, nor does this spring out of the dust which he has made; good things, as Schmidt observes, come out of the earth for the use of man as well as beasts, bread, and wine, and oil, and all the necessaries of life; the precious things produced by the influence of the sun and moon, the precious things of the everlasting hills, and of the earth, and the fulness of it; indeed, the earth was cursed for the sin of men, but this is taken off; and, however, it is not owing to the soil, or to the air and climate in which a man lives, that he is sinful; for though there may be national vices or some sins peculiar to or more predominant in one nation than in another, yet this is not to be attributed to such causes; for all sin is from a man’s self, and proceeds out

of his own evil heart, which is desperately wicked and evil continually, and from whence all the impure streams of sin flow, (see ^{<4159>}Matthew 15:19); and so afflictions are not to be ascribed to second causes, such as the things before mentioned, or Job's losses by the Sabeans and Chaldeans; nor did he place them to that account, but to the hand of God; nor to chance and fortune, or to be reckoned fortuitous events, as if they were chance productions, spontaneous things that spring up of themselves, and not under the direction of an all wise Providence; but they are to be considered as of God, and as of his appointment, and directed by his sovereign will and pleasure, and overruled for his glory; who has fixed what they shall be, of what kind and sort, what the measure of them, to what pitch they shall rise, and how long they shall last:

neither doth trouble spring out of the ground; the same thing as before in different words, neither sin, the cause of trouble, the effect of sin; sin may very fitly be expressed by a word ^{f190} which signifies trouble, because it is both troublesome, wearisome, and offensive to God, and brings trouble to the bodies and souls of men here and hereafter. Here Eliphaz begins to lower the tone of his voice, and to speak to Job in a seemingly more kind and friendly manner, observing to him the spring of afflictions, and giving him advice how to behave under them.

Ver. 7. *Yet man is born unto trouble*, etc.] Or but ^{f191}, after the negative follows the positive part of the assertion; before we have what is denied as the cause of affliction, here what it is affirmed to be, or what it is to be ascribed unto, even to the appointment of God for sin: to be born to it is to be appointed to it, as all men are appointed to death, and to everything previous and that leads on to it; and it signifies that affliction or trouble springs from the birth sin of man, from original sin, the sin of the first parent, and of his nature; as all sins arise from hence, and are streams from this fountain of pollution, so all disorders and diseases of body, all distresses and anguish of mind, and death in every sense, corporeal, spiritual, and eternal; and these are the lot and portion, the estate and inheritance, of the sons of men by nature, what they are born unto, and are full of, (see ^{<1840>}Job 14:1); the same word is here used as in (^{<3816>}Job 5:6), and signifies labour, mischief, the mischief of sin, improbity, wickedness, moral evil; and man may be said to be born to sin, inasmuch as he is conceived, shapen, and born in it; and as he is born at once into a sinful state, and sins as soon as born, goes astray from the womb, is a transgressor from thence, and the imagination of his heart evil from his

infancy and youth upwards, he becomes a slave to sin, and is a homeborn one; not that he is laid under a necessity of force to sin, or his will compelled to it; for he sins most freely, is a voluntary slave to it; he serves various lusts as pleasures, and gives himself up to work all iniquity with greediness; but there is such a connection between his birth, the circumstances of it, and sin, that sin is the certain consequence of it, and immediately, naturally, and necessarily follows upon it; that is, by a necessity of consequence, though not of coercion or force; it is as natural for man to sin as it is for a thirsty man to covet and drink water; or as for an Ethiopian to be born black, and a leopard with spots; or, as it follows,

as the sparks fly upward; which they do naturally and necessarily when coals are blown, and which are here called “the sons of coals”^{f192}; and to these, troubles and afflictions, the fruits and effects of sin, may be aptly compared; not only for the necessity of them, it is if needs be they are, but for the nature of them, being fiery and troublesome, hence called fiery trials, and signified by fires and flames of fire, (~~4042~~-1 Peter 4:12 ~~2345~~-Isaiah 24:15 43:2); and also for the number of them, being many, and very grievous: some interpret this of flying fowls, of young vultures, as the Septuagint; of young eagles, as others; Aben Ezra makes mention of this sense, as if it was, as a fowl is born to fly, so man is born to labour; to labour in the law, according to the Targum; or to labour for his bread; or rather, to labour and sorrow; that is, to affliction and trouble: a learned man^{f193} thinks the phrase, according to the use of it in the Arabic language, designs the more rapid cast of a dart, of the vibration of it, which is very quick.

Ver. 8. *I would seek unto God*, etc.] Or “truly”^{f194}, “certainly, doubtless, I do seek unto God”, verily I do so; for so the words are introduced in the original text, and express what Eliphaz had done when under afflictions himself; for he was not without them, though he had not them to such a degree as Job had; and when he was under them, this was the course he took; he sought unto God by prayer to support him under them, to sanctify them to him, and to deliver him out of them; and this he proposes for Job’s imitation, and suggests, that if he was in his case, this would be the first step he should take; and good advice this is, nothing more proper for a man, especially a saint, than, when afflicted of God, to seek unto him, to seek his face and his favour, to entreat his gracious presence, and the discoveries of his love, that he may see that it is not in wrath, but in love, he afflicts him; to submit unto him, humble himself before him,

acknowledge his sins, and implore his pardoning grace and mercy; to entreat him to help him, in this time of need, to exercise the graces of faith and patience, and every other; to desire counsel and advice how to behave under the present trial, and to be made acquainted with the reasons, ends, and uses of the dispensation, as well as to beg for strength to bear up under it, and in his own time to grant deliverance from it:

and unto God would I commit my cause; or “direct my word or speech”^{f195} to him; that is, in prayer, as Saphorno adds; I would, as if he should say, make known my case to him, tell him the whole of it, and pour out my soul before him; and then I would leave it with him, and not wrangle, quarrel, and contend with him, but say, “here am I, let him do what seemeth good unto him”: some render the words, “truly”, or “indeed I shall discourse concerning God, and order my speech about Deity”^{f196}; I shall no longer insist on this subject, but drop it, and hereafter treat of God, his nature, being, and perfections, and particularly his works; though these are rather observed in the following verses, as so many arguments to engage Job to seek the Lord, and leave his case and cause to him.

Ver. 9. *Which doeth great things*, etc.] The things of creation are great things, the making of the heavens and the earth, and all therein, by the word of the Almighty, out of nothing, and which is a display of great power, wisdom, and goodness; the things of Providence are great things, which God is always doing; as the upholding all things in being by the word of his power, governing the whole universe, ordering all things in it, supplying and feeding all creatures, men and beasts; and especially the things of grace are great things, the covenant of grace, and its blessings, redemption by Jesus Christ, the work of grace upon the heart, the quickening and enlightening dead and dark sinners, taking away their hearts of stone and giving them hearts of flesh, and constantly supplying them with his grace for the finishing of it; the consideration of all which is a great encouragement to seek the Lord in time of need, as well as of what follows concerning them:

and unsearchable; the things of nature; many of them are such as puzzle the greatest philosophers, who are not able, with all their sagacity and penetration, to find out the causes and reasons of them; and in providence the way of God is often in the deep, and is not to be tracked and followed; and the dispensations of his grace to the sons of men are so sovereign and distinguishing, that it made the apostle say, speaking of them, “O the

depth”, etc. (^{<513>}Romans 11:33); and there are some things not to be inquired into, nor can they be searched out; secret things belong to God, as his purposes relating to the eternal state of particular persons, and the times and seasons of various future events, as the day of judgment, etc.

marvellous things; in nature, as the formation of man and all creatures; in providence, and it may be respect may be had to the wonders done in Egypt, and the marvellous things in the field of Zoan, the plagues of Egypt, and the deliverance of Israel, and their passage through the Red sea; which were things done much about this time, or before it, as some think, and of which Eliphaz might have heard, and were fresh in his memory; and wonderful things are done in grace, as the effects of marvellous loving kindness: and those

without number; the works of God are manifold, and not to be counted; the stars of heaven, the fowls of the air, the beasts of the field, and cattle on a thousand hills, the fishes of the sea, small and great, (see ^{<945>}Psalm 104:25); to which may be added, those animalcules, of which a billion do not exceed the size of a small grain of sand, as they may be seen through a microscope ^{f197}; the various things done every day in providence, the special blessings of goodness, and the kind thoughts of the heart of God, which, if one attempt to reckon up, they are more than can be numbered, (^{<946>}Psalm 40:5).

Ver. 10. *Who giveth rain upon the earth*, etc.] Not upon the land of Israel only, as the Targum and Jarchi, (see ^{<611>}Deuteronomy 11:11); but upon the whole earth; this is particularly mentioned as being of God, and which none of the vanities of the Gentiles can give; and it is a free gift of his, which tarries not for the desert of men, and is bestowed on the godly and ungodly; and is a great blessing of goodness, which enriches the earth, makes it fruitful, and through it, it produces plenty of good things for man and beast:

and sendeth water upon the fields; or “out places” ^{f198}; places outside of cities and towns, such as gardens, fields, and deserts, where showers of rain are sent of God to water them, many of which are not under the care of man, but are under the providence of God; the Targum and Jarchi interpret this of Gentile lands, as distinct from the land of Israel, to whom God “gives” rain, and to the other “sends” it; some render it, “upon the streets” ^{f199}, that is, upon persons that lie in the streets, and have no houses to dwell in, and to whom rain in hot and dry countries was welcome.

Ver. 11. *To set up on high those that be low*, etc.] Not the low plants, which, through rain, are made to run up on high, though there is a truth in that; but husbandmen and gardeners, and such like persons, in low circumstances, who, by means of showers of rain, which make their gardens, fields, and lands fruitful, are raised to enjoy good estates, and large possessions:

that those which mourn may be exalted to safety; or “are black”^{f200}, that are clothed in black, as a token of mourning; or whose faces are black with famine, (see ^{<3048>}Lamentations 4:8 5:10); or are in very distressed circumstances, and black through poverty, as the Targum, and mourn over and grieve at their sad and deplorable case; those, through rain and fruitful seasons, are brought out of such an uncomfortable situation, and put into a better condition of life, where they are as in a fortress, out of the reach of such sad calamities: some connect the words with the following, that in order to do this, to raise up the humble and exalt mourners, “he disappoints the devices of the crafty”, etc. (^{<3052>}Job 5:12).

Ver. 12. *He disappointeth the devices of the crafty*, etc.] Or, “it disappointeth”; that is, the rain, as some Jewish commentators^{f201} interpret it, and the whole paragraph to this sense; the rain coming upon the earth makes it fruitful, and causes it to produce a plentiful crop, whereby the schemes of crafty men are disappointed, who in a time of drought withhold the corn, and enhance the price of it, and distress the poor; and this in order to make a penny of them, according to (^{<3006>}Amos 8:4,6); but through the rain falling are not able to gain their end, but are obliged to bring out their corn, and sell it at a low price, and so are taken in their own craftiness; their counsel becomes brutish, and they are brought into bad circumstances themselves, and the poor saved from being ground and oppressed by them, and have hope for the future of plenty of provisions, to the confusion and astonishment of their oppressors: but the Targum interprets this of the Egyptians cunningly devising mischief against the Israelites, without success; and not amiss, since that affair might be well known to Eliphaz, and he might have it in view: the fact was this, a new king of Egypt, after the death of Joseph, observing the great increase of the people of Israel in his dominions, and fearing, in case of a war, they should join the enemy, and get out of the land by such an opportunity, calls his nobles, courtiers, and counsellors together, to form some wise schemes how to diminish them, (^{<1208>}Exodus 1:8-10); and the first was to set taskmasters over them, and afflict them with hard bondage, but this

succeeded not, (^{<B011>}Exodus 1:11-14); for the more they were afflicted the more they multiplied and grew; another decree was, to order the midwives to kill the male children of the Israelites, and save alive the females, (^{<B015>}Exodus 1:15,16); but the midwives, fearing God, obeyed not the order, and the people still multiplied, (^{<B017>}Exodus 1:17-21); and then a third project was formed, to cast every son born to the Israelites into the river, and drown them, (^{<B022>}Exodus 1:22); but notwithstanding this they were preserved, as Moses, (^{<B020>}Exodus 2:10), and doubtless many others; the people increased so, that they went out of Egypt six hundred thousand men, (^{<B027>}Exodus 12:37); this was a recent thing, it may be in the times of Eliphaz, and which he might easily call to mind: and he might also have respect to a more remote case, that of the builders of Babel, who devised a scheme to build a tower, whose top should reach to heaven, and secure them from a dispersion of them throughout the earth, (^{<B010>}Genesis 11:1-9); when God descended in the display of his power and providence, confounded their language, so that they were obliged to desist from their enterprise, and were scattered throughout the earth, which by their scheme they thought to have prevented: this may be applied to wicked crafty men in common, who devise schemes to commit sin, and gratify their lusts, to get for themselves riches and honour, and to do mischief to others, which God in his providence breaks, frustrates, and makes of none effect; and to false teachers, that walk in craftiness, lie in wait to deceive, and make use of cunningly devised fables, coin new doctrines, invent new forms of worship, and appoint new ordinances, and contrive different ways and methods of salvation; all which is foolishness with God, and to such persons (^{<B013>}Job 5:13) is applied by the Apostle Paul, (^{<B019>}1 Corinthians 3:19): and this may likewise respect wicked princes and potentates, with their counsellors and wise politicians, who in former, as well as in later times, have formed designs against their neighbours, and to the hurt of the interest of true religion particularly; but have been baffled and confounded by Divine Providence, of which, as there were many instances in Israel of old, so in our British Isles of late:

so that their hands cannot perform [their] enterprise; what their heads have contrived, what they have resolved and determined upon, and what they have began to effect, but could not go on with; or, “bring it soundly to pass”, as Mr. Broughton renders it; that is, could not complete it, or bring it to perfection; and indeed not able to do “any thing”^{f202}, as some translate the word, not anything of what they devised and contrived: it signifies “that

which is”, which has a being and substance, and solidity in it ^{f203}, but nothing of this kind could be done; it is sometimes rendered “wisdom”, and “sound wisdom”, (^{<307>}Proverbs 2:7 ^{<308>}Micah 6:9); and so it is here by some ^{f204}, and may signify, that though their counsels were deeply laid, and wisely formed, according to the best rules of wisdom and prudence, they yet are not able to bring them to pass; which shows the infinitely superior wisdom of God, and his overruling providence, and which therefore must be a great encouragement to seek unto him, and leave every cause and case with him.

Ver. 13. *He taketh the wise in their own craftiness*, etc.] As beasts are taken in a pit, or birds in a snare or net, or with birdlime; so these crafty men, who are wise in their own opinion, and really so in things natural, civil, and worldly, or however, to do evil are entangled and taken in their own schemes; they fall into the pit they have digged for others, and are snared in the works of their own hands, as Haman and his sons were hanged on the gallows he prepared for Mordecai, (^{<309>}Esther 7:10 9:25); or, “by their own craftiness” ^{f205}, by the crafty schemes they themselves have formed: so sometimes those very things crafty men design to prevent, are brought about by the very means they make use of; thus Joseph’s brethren designed to prevent the accomplishment of his dreams, which portended their subjection to him, (^{<310>}Genesis 37:9), by selling him to the Ishmaelites, who carried him to Egypt, where, in process of time, he was made governor of the land, and where his brethren became obedient to him, (^{<311>}Genesis 42:6); with which fact Eliphaz might be acquainted, it being not long before his time: so the Jews, to prevent the Romans taking away their city and nation, contrived to put Christ to death, and did, whereby they brought the wrath of God upon them, executed by those very persons; the same they did also, to prevent the spread of his fame and glory in the world, and that he might not be believed on as the Saviour of men, whereas, hereby he became the Saviour of them; and he a crucified Christ, being preached to the world by his ministers, the savour of his knowledge has been diffused in every place, his glory great in all the earth, and will be more so: the Targum applies this to the wise men of Pharaoh, and the Apostle Paul to the Jewish doctors and wise philosophers of the Gentiles, (^{<312>}1 Corinthians 3:19); which quotation proves the authority of this book:

and the counsel of the froward is carried headlong: that is, the counsel or well contrived schemes of the crafty and wise before mentioned, who twist and wind about, as the word ^{f206} here used signifies, that there is no tracing

their measures, and finding out the spring of them, nor the ends they have in view; yet these are sometimes carried on to execution in a rash and precipitate manner, and so miscarry; and like a man that is had to a precipice, and is thrown down from thence, and is destroyed at once, so are their counsels and schemes dashed to pieces by the providence of God: or, “is hastened” ^{f207}; too much haste is made to accomplish it, and so it comes to nought, through an over eagerness to have it done at once; not waiting a fit opportunity for the accomplishment of it.

Ver. 14. *They meet with darkness in the daytime*, etc.] Which may denote their infatuation in things the most plain and clear, and which are obvious to everyone’s view, even to such as are of much meaner capacities the themselves; and so it sometimes is, that the greatest politicians, men of the greatest sagacity and penetration, capable of forming and conducting the wisest counsels, yet blunder in things plain and easy to everyone; which must be imputed to their being given up to a judicial blindness of mind by the Lord, who destroys the wisdom of the wise, and brings to nothing the understanding of the prudent; or this may signify the defeat of their counsels, when they are in the highest pitch of esteem among men, as Ahithophel’s counsel was as the oracle of God; or the destruction of such persons and their schemes when they are in the meridian of their glory, who being in high and slippery places, come to desolation in a moment:

and grope in the noon day as in the night; which intends the same as before; this was threatened to the Jews in case of disobedience, and was fulfilled in them, (^{<63>}Deuteronomy 28:29 ^{<28>}Isaiah 59:9,10); a learned man renders it, “as the night they grope”, or “feel, at noon day” ^{f208}; as the Egyptians felt darkness when it was noon, and when light was in all the dwellings of the Israelites, (^{<10>}Exodus 10:22,23); this may be applied to the case of many in a land of Gospel light, who are in darkness, walk in darkness, and are darkness itself; though the light of the glorious Gospel shines all around them on others, and know no more of divine and spiritual things than the Gentiles, but grope or feel about like persons blind, and in the dark as much as they, (^{<47>}Acts 17:27); nay, they not only have the great things of the Gospel hid from them, and Satan blinds their minds lest this light should shine into them, but “they run into darkness” ^{f209}, as the words of the first clause may be rendered; those “*lucifugae*”, such as the Jews were, and the Deists now are run from the light of divine revelation, and love darkness, and which is the aggravation of their condemnation, (^{<19>}John 3:19,20).

Ver. 15. *But he saveth the poor*, etc.] Who are so in a literal sense, and whom the Lord saves with a temporal salvation; these being the butt of the crafty, wise, and cunning, on whom their eyes are, for whom they lay snares, and lie in wait to draw them in; and these being helpless and without friends, God takes notice of them, appears for them, and arises for their help, and saves them:

from the sword; of their enemies, drawn against them and ready to be sheathed in them:

from their mouth; from their reproaches, calumnies, detraction, and evil speaking; or “from the sword, their mouth”^{f210}, as some; or “from the sword of their mouth”^{f211}, as others; or which comes out of it; whose mouths and tongues are as sharp swords, which destroy their credit and reputation, and threaten them with ruin; the Targum is,

“from the slaughter of their mouth:”

and from the hand of the mighty; their mighty enemies, that, are mightier than they; the Targum is,

“from the hand of a mighty king;”

such an one as Pharaoh, which the same paraphrase makes mention of in (^{<1854>}Job 5:14), and from whom the poor Israelites were delivered: this may be applied to the poor in a spiritual sense, who are poor in spirit, and are sensible of their spiritual poverty, whom the Lord looks unto, has a regard for, and saves them from “the sword” of avenging justice; that being awaked against the man, his fellow, and so warded off from them, and from the mouth of a cursing and condemning law, and from Satan the accuser of the brethren; and of wicked men, whose tongue rising up in judgment against them, he condemns; and from the “hand” of Satan the strong man armed, and who is stronger than they; and of all their spiritual enemies.

Ver. 16. *So the poor hath hope*, etc.] Who observing this and that and the other poor man crying to the Lord and saved, hopes that he may be saved by him also; and having had experience of salvation out of one trouble or more, even out of six troubles, as in (^{<1859>}Job 5:19), entertains a comfortable hope he shall be saved out of the seventh, or whatsoever he is in: the word^{f212} used signifies one that is weak and feeble, attenuated, and exhausted of his strength, wealth, and substance; and may be applied to

one spiritually poor, and in a very destitute and forlorn condition in himself; and yet, through the revelation of the grace and mercy of God to him, has hope of safety in Christ, the strong hold and hope set before him to flee unto; and of salvation by him, it being in him, and for the chief of sinners, and altogether free; and of eternal life through him, as being promised of God, that cannot lie: the free gift of God through Christ, and in his hands to dispose of:

and iniquity stoppeth her mouth: that is, iniquitous men: very wicked men, who are iniquity and wickedness itself; these shall stop their mouths, through shame at what they have said concerning the poor that God saves, (see ^{<3109>}Micah 7:9,10); and through admiration at the goodness of God in saving them, (^{<25215>}Isaiah 52:15); having nothing to say against the ways and dispensations of Divine Providence, they are apt to quarrel with, (^{<39470>}Psalms 107:40-42); and especially at the last day such shall have their mouths stopped, and shall not be able to open them against the Lord or his people, being convinced of their hard speeches which they have spoken against them, (^{<6015>}Jude 1:15); and will be like the man at the feast without a wedding garment, speechless, or muzzled, and his mouth stopped, (^{<4222>}Matthew 22:12).

Ver. 17. *Behold, happy [is] the man whom God correcteth,* etc.] Reproves, rebukes, convinces by his word, which is profitable for correction of men's minds and manners; and by his messengers, the prophets and ministers, who are sent as reprovers of the people, and to rebuke them sharply, that they may be sound in their principles, and sober in their conversation; and by his Spirit, which makes the correction of the word and ministers effectual, and who reproves and convinces of sin, righteousness, and judgment; and sometimes this is done by afflictive providences, by blows as well as words, which are the rod of correction God makes use of with his children; for this is not the correction of a judge reprovng, condemning, and chastising malefactors and criminals, but of a father correcting his children, in love, in judgment, and in measure, for faults committed; (^{<2182>}Proverbs 3:12); so God's corrections are for sin, to bring his people to a sense of it, to humiliation and repentance for it, and to an acknowledgment of it; and often for remissness in duty, private or public, and when they set too high a value on the creature, and creature enjoyments, trust in them, and glory of them, to the neglect of the best things: now such persons are happy who are corrected by God in this manner; for these corrections are fruits and evidences of the love of God to

them, and of their relation to God as children; he grants them his presence in them, he sympathizes with them, supplies and supports them under them, and delivers out of them; he makes them work for their good, spiritual and eternal; by these he prevents and purges sin, tries and brightens their graces; makes them more partakers of his holiness; weans them from this world, and fits them for another: and this account is introduced with a “behold”, as a note of attention, exciting it in Job and others; thereby suggesting that it was worthy of notice and regard, and a matter of moment and importance; and as a note of admiration, it being a wonderful thing, a mere paradox with natural men especially, and contrary to all their notions and things, that an afflicted man should be a happy man, who generally reckon good men to be unhappy men, because of their afflictions, reproaches, and persecutions; and as a note of asseveration, affirming the truth and certainty of the assertion, and which is confirmed by after testimonies, and by the experience of the saints, (^{194B}Psalm 94:19 119:67,71); the Targum restrains this to Abraham; but it is true of every good man whom God afflicts in a fatherly way:

therefore despise not thou the chastening of the Almighty; who is able to save and to destroy to take off his hand, or lay it heavier it not regarded, to bear up his people under all their afflictions, or to deliver them out of them; or of Shaddai ^{f213}, God all sufficient, who has a sufficiency in himself, and needs not anything from his creatures; whose grace is sufficient for his people, to supply them in all their straits and difficulties; or of him who is all nourishing, who has breasts of consolation to draw out to his people in distress, the word ^{f214} used coming from one that signifies a pap, or breast, as some think; hence mention is made of the blessings of the breast, when he is spoken of under this character, (⁰⁴²⁵Genesis 49:25); now this chastising of his is not to be understood of chastisement in a way of vindictive wrath and justice, and as a proper punishment for sin, for this is laid on Christ, the surety of his people, (²⁵³⁵Isaiah 53:5); and to inflict this on them would be a depreciating the satisfaction of Christ, be contrary to the justice of God, and to his everlasting and unchangeable love; but this is the chastening of a father, and in love, and for the good of his people, in when he deals with them as with children: the word signifies “instruction” ^{f215}; affliction is a school of instruction, in which the saints learn much of the mind and will of God, and more of his love, grace, and kindness to them; and are enriched with a larger experience of divine and spiritual things: and therefore such chastening should not be “despised” or rejected

as nauseous and loathsome, as the word signifies: indeed no affliction is joyous; the bread of affliction, and water of adversity, are not palatable or grateful to flesh and blood; yea, are even a bitter and disagreeable potion, as the cup of sorrow was to the human nature of Christ; but yet should not be rejected, but drank, for the same reason he gives, it being the cup given by his heavenly Father, (^{<4381>}John 18:11); nor should it be despised as useless and unprofitable, as the word is used in (^{<4382>}Psalm 118:22); seeing afflictions are of great use for humiliation for sin, for the increase of grace and holiness; the chastening of the Father of spirits is for profit now, and works a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory, (^{<5820>}Hebrews 12:10 ^{<4047>}2 Corinthians 4:17); this passage seems to be referred to by Solomon, (^{<2081>}Proverbs 3:11); and is quoted by the apostle, in (^{<5815>}Hebrews 12:5); where he uses a word ^{f216} by which he translates this, which signifies to “make little of”; and as on the one hand afflictions should not be magnified too much, as if there were none, nor ever had been any but them; so, on the other hand, they should not be slighted and overlooked, and no notice taken of them, as if they were trifling and insignificant, and answered no end or purpose; the hand of God should be observed in them, and acknowledged; and men should humble themselves under his mighty hand, and quietly and patiently bear it; and, instead of despising, should bless him for it, it being for their good, and many salutary ends being answered by it.

Ver. 18. *For he maketh sore, and bindeth up,* etc.] Or, “though he maketh sore, yet he bindeth up” ^{f217}; as a surgeon, who makes a wound the sorer by probing and opening it, to let out the matter and make way for his medicine, and then lays on the plaster, and binds it up: so God causes grief and puts his people to pain, by diseases of body, or by making breaches in, their families and estates, and such like cutting providences; and then he binds up their breach, and heals the stroke of their wound, and in the issue makes all whole again: so in spiritual things; he cuts and wounds, and gives pain and uneasiness, by the sharp twoedged sword of the word, and by his Spirit making use of it; and lays open all the corruption of nature, and brings to repentance and humiliation for all transgressions; and then pours in the oil and wine of pardoning grace and mercy, and binds up the wounds that are made:

he woundeth, and his hands make whole; or “heal” ^{f218}; the same thing is meant, expressed by different words; and the whole suggests, that every afflicted man, and particularly Job, should he behave well, and as he ought,

under the afflicting hand of God, would be healed, and become sound and whole again, in body, mind, family, and estate; for, though God for the present caused grief, yet he would have compassion, since he did not willingly grieve the children of men; did not do it for his own pleasure, but for their good; as a skilful surgeon cuts and wounds in order to heal; (see ^{<1623>}Deuteronomy 32:39 ^{<3001>}Hosea 6:1 ^{<2032>}Lamentations 3:32, 33).

Ver. 19. *He shall deliver thee in six troubles*, etc.] Behaving as before directed; seeking unto God, committing his cause and case to him, and leaving it with him; and not despising the chastening of the Lord, but receiving and bearing it with reverence, patience, and submission: and then the sense is, that God would deliver out of whatsoever troubles he was or should be in, though they were ever so many; a certain number being put for an uncertain one, (^{<1349>}Psalm 34:19);

yea, seven there shall no evil touch thee; which is a number expressive of multitude and of perfection, and so may denote the multitude and fulness of afflictions: the tribulations of God's people are many, through which they pass to heaven, and there is a measure of them to be filled up; and when they are come to the height, and the measure is fully up, then the Lord puts a stop to them, and delivers out of all their troubles; and in the midst of them all, so preserves them, that "no evil" shall so much as "touch" them; not the evil of punishment; for, though those troubles and afflictions that attend them are evil things, in a natural or civil sense, they are disagreeable and distressing, yet they are not the effect of vindictive justice; there is not a drop wrath and vengeance in them; and though they do come upon them and unto them, upon their persons and families; yet not so as to do any real hurt, or as to destroy them; (see ^{<1910>}Psalm 91:10); some think that seven particular troubles are meant, hereafter mentioned, as Jarchi; as famine, war, an evil tongue, destruction, dearness of provision, the beasts of the earth, and the stones of the field.

Ver. 20. *In famine he shall redeem thee from death*, etc.] In a time of extreme want of provisions, God so cares for his own dear people, that they shall not be starved to death by the famine; so in the famine in Egypt, which the Targum takes notice of, in the times of Abraham, and of Isaac, and of Jacob, and the patriarchs, there was food provided for them, so that they and their families were sustained, and perished not for lack of the necessaries of life: God sometimes goes out of his ordinary way, and works

wonders for his poor and needy in distress, when they cry unto him; (see ^{<3417>}Isaiah 41:17,18);

and in war from the power of the sword; or, “from the hands of the sword” ^{f219}: from swords in hand, when drawn, and men are ready to push with them with all their force; as he delivered and preserved Abraham from the sword of the four kings, when he waged war with them, (^{<0140>}Genesis 14:20); and the Israelites, in the war of Amalek, in the times of Moses, (^{<0278>}Exodus 17:8-13), which the Targum here refers to; and David from the harmful sword of Goliath, (^{<0174>}1 Samuel 17:46,47), and others with whom he was concerned in war: and so the Lord covers the heads of his people in the day of battle oftentimes, when multitudes fall on their right hand and on their left.

Ver. 21. *Thou shall be hid from the scourge of the tongue*, etc.] Of Satan, as Jarchi, the accuser of the brethren; or rather from the evil tongue of wicked men, their slanders, calumnies, and reproaches; the tongue is a small weapon, but it is a cutting one; it is like a scourge or whip, with which wicked men strike hard: the enemies of Jeremiah encouraged one another to smite him with their tongue, (^{<2488>}Jeremiah 18:18); and a sad thing it is to be under the lash of some men’s tongues, and a great mercy it is to be delivered from them: God does sometimes hide his people, and keeps them secretly, as in a pavilion, from the strife of tongues; (^{<4811>}Psalms 31:20); he either restrains the tongues of men, lays an embargo on them, and will not suffer them to say that evil of his people which Satan and their wicked hearts prompt them to; or, if they are suffered to defame and speak evil of good men, yet they do it in such a romantic way, and so overcharge and load it, that it is not credited by any what they say, even by those of their own party; so that the characters of God’s people suffer not by their lies and calumnies: some render it, “when the tongue wanders about” ^{f220}; walks through the earth, and spares none, all ranks and degrees of men; God hides his people from being hurt by it, (see ^{<4731>}Psalms 73:9); Aben Ezra interprets the word rendered “tongue” of a nation or people; and so it may be understood of one nation entering into another, passing through it, and making desolations in it; as the Scythians, Gauls, Goths, Huns, and Vandals, have done in different ages; and that, in such a time of calamity, God has his hiding places in Providence for the protection and safety of his people: but the Targum interprets it of an evil tongue, and particularly of the tongue of Balaam:

neither shall thou be afraid of destruction when it cometh: meaning either of pestilence, which is the destruction that wastes at noonday, (^{<1916>}Psalm 91:6,10); which, when it comes into a nation or neighbourhood, shall not come nigh the good man, and infect him; or if it does, shall not carry him off; and if it does that, it carries him home to heaven and happiness, and therefore he has no reason to be afraid of it: or of a general calamity; as when there is a complication of judgments in a nation, or in the world in general, as war, famine, pestilence, earthquakes, etc. as if all were just falling to pieces and into ruin; and yet even then the saints have no cause to fear; (see ^{<1941>}Psalm 46:1-4); or the destruction of the whole world at the last day, when the heavens and earth, and all therein, shall be burnt up: for then good and righteous men will be safe with Christ, and dwell with him in the new heavens and the new earth, which shall be prepared for them; (see ^{<1810>}2 Peter 3:10-13); the Targum refers this to the destruction of the Midianites.

Ver. 22. *At destruction and famine thou shalt laugh*, etc.] Not deride and despise them, and make a jest of them; for good men have a reverence and awe of the righteous judgments of God upon them, when they are in the world, (^{<1912>}Psalm 119:120); but the sense is, that such shall reckon themselves safe and secure amidst such calamities, provision being made for their protection and sustenance; and be cheerful and comfortable, putting their trust and confidence in the Lord, as Habakkuk was, in a time of great distress, when all the necessaries of life were cut off from the stall, the herds, the flocks, and the fields; (^{<1817>}Habakkuk 3:17-19); just as a man that is in a good harbour, or has a good house over his head, laughs at blustering storms and winds ^{f221}, or thinks himself secure, and so is cheerful and pleasant amidst all the noise that is about him, (see ^{<1810>}Habakkuk 1:10);

neither shalt thou be afraid of the beasts of the earth; either, literally taken, beasts of prey, that wander about in the earth, noisome and pernicious ones; which are one of God's sore judgments which he threatens the disobedient with, and promises the obedient he will rid them of; and therefore they have no reason to be afraid of them, (see ^{<1942>}Ezekiel 14:21 ^{<1816>}Leviticus 26:6,22); some think serpents are particularly designed, which creep upon the earth, and whose food is the dust of the earth, with all other poisonous animals, between which and men there is an antipathy; and yet good men need not be afraid of these; (see ^{<1168>}Mark 16:18 ^{<1818>}Acts 28:3-5); or figuratively, cruel and barbarous men, thieves and robbers, as

Jarchi; or rather fierce and furious persecutors, and particularly the beasts of Rome, Pagan and Papal; though the literal sense is to be preferred; the Targum interprets this of the camp of Og, comparable to the beasts of the earth.

Ver. 23. *For thou shalt be in league with the stones of the field,* etc.] So as to receive no hurt from them, by walking among them, and even barefoot, which was usual in the eastern countries, (see ^{<3912>}Psalm 91:12); or by their being in the field, so as to hinder the increase of them; but on the contrary, even from such fields as were stony ground, a large crop has been produced, and so rather receive benefit by them, as men do from those with whom they are in league; and may therefore likewise signify, that these stones should be useful in being boundaries or fences about their fields, and landmarks in them, which should not be removed: many interpreters take notice of a sense that Pineda gives of these words, and which Cocceius calls an ingenious one, that it refers to a custom in Arabia, which may be called Scopelism, and was this; a man's enemies would lay stones in his field, and these signified, that if any attempted to till and manure those grounds where they were laid, some evil would befall him by the means of those persons who laid the stones there; and which stones were thought to be ominous and formidable; something like it is in (^{<1100>}2 Kings 3:19,25); and so the sense is, that a good man had nothing to fear from such stones, he being in league with them; and this malicious practice is thought to have had its origin in Arabia Petraea ^{f222}; but the first sense seems best:

and the beasts of the field shall be at peace with thee; a covenant being made with them, as in (^{<3218>}Hosea 2:18); meaning either literally, the beasts of the field; and these either the same as before, wild beasts, or beasts of prey; or rather, in distinction from them, tame beasts, as cows and horses, which should be so far from doing any harm, as sometimes is done by these tame creatures, that they should be very serviceable in tilling fields and drawing carriages, and the like: or else figuratively, men comparable to such creatures; and so the sense may be, that when a man's ways please the Lord, and he behaves according to his mind and will, particularly under afflictions, even his enemies are made to be at peace with him; (^{<1167>}Proverbs 16:7); the Targum interprets this of the Canaanites, comparable to the beasts of the field.

Ver. 24. *And thou shalt know that thy tabernacle [shall be] in peace,* etc.] Not a place of religious worship, though the Targum renders it an house of doctrine or instruction; for we read not of any such but the tabernacle of Moses, erected in the wilderness, and which was indeed about, or little after, the times of Job; but it cannot be reasonably thought he did or could attend there; nor the tabernacle of his body, now in great pain and anguish, in which there were no rest nor soundness, being filled with sore boils and burning ulcers; but his dwelling house, which was built as a tent or tabernacle: such were the houses of the eastern people, made to move from place to place, for the sake of pasturage for their flocks and herds, in which their wealth consisted; so Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, dwelt in tabernacles; and hence in later times more firm, fixed, and stable dwellings, were so called; David calls his palace the tabernacle of his house, (^{49DDB}Psalm 132:3); though this also includes all that dwelt in his house, his family; and the meaning is, that should he behave aright under the afflicting hand of God, his family should live in concord, harmony, and love; there should be no discord, animosity, and contention among them, but they should be at peace and in unity among themselves; as indeed Job's children were while he had them, and before this calamity came upon him; and that also they should be secure from enemies, and dwell unmolested by them; and be in the utmost safety, enjoying all kind of prosperity, inward and outward, temporal and spiritual; which the word peace includes, as used in eastern countries, whose common salutation was, "peace be with thee"; thereby wishing all kind of happiness: or the words may be rendered, "peace [shall be] thy tabernacle"^{f223} as is a good man's tabernacle: he dwells in God, who is all love, all peace, in whom there is no wrath or fury; he dwells by faith in Christ, who is his peace, his peace maker, and peace giver; and in whom he has peace amidst all the tribulation he meets with in the world; the peace of God, which passes all understanding, keeps and guards him in Christ, as in a garrison, safe and secure; and he enjoys much peace, as the fruit of the Spirit, arising from a view of interest in the blood, righteousness, and sacrifice of Christ; and when he dies he enters into peace, and dwells and abides in it as his everlasting mansion, (^{257D}Isaiah 57:2); now all this, Eliphaz says, Job, behaving well, should know; that is, have an experience of it; should really enjoy it, and find it in fact true what he asserted:

and thou shalt visit thy habitation, and shalt not sin; meaning not his wife, as some interpreters, Jewish and Christian, understand it; and so in the

Talmud ^{f224}, the word being rendered “she that tarried at home”, (~~19812~~ Psalm 68:12); which is a description of a good housewife, that keeps at home and minds the affairs of her family; but rather it designs the same as his tabernacle in the preceding clause, his dwelling house, and signifies a fine, fair, and beautiful one; a spacious and goodly building, and well stored with rich household goods; and including his family also: and to “visit” this is to take care of his family, rule and govern them well, protect and defend them, and provide all things necessary for them; as well as to inspect into the affairs of his house, inquire, examine, and see how things are managed; to know the state, condition, and circumstances it is in; which is looking well to the ways of his household: and this he should do, and “not sin”; not that a man, even a good man, can so conduct himself always in his family as not to be guilty of any sin at all, but not of sin in common, or continually; at least not any gross and notorious ones: the sense is, that he should not sin himself, while making such a visit and inquiry, by an undue heat, excessive anger, by rash and passionate expressions, things not being entirely to his mind; or be the cause of sin in others, by provoking his children to wrath, by threatening and menacing his servants in a severe, boisterous, and blustering manner; but reproving both, as there may be occasion, in a mild and gentle way; or else not sin by conniving at it and not correcting for it, which was the fault of Eli: Ben Gersom thinks Eliphaz tacitly suggests, and strikes at, Job’s indulgence to his children; and so Saphorno: the word used having the signification of wandering and straying, some take the sense to be this; that he should have a sure and certain dwelling place to come into, and abide in, and should not wander about ^{f225}, or be as a stroller and vagabond in the earth: though this has sometimes been the case of good men; as of the godly in the times of the Maccabees, who wandered in deserts and mountains, in caves and dens of the earth; and even of the disciples of Christ, who had no certain dwelling place; yea, of Christ himself, who had not where to lay his head: rather, since the word signifies to miss the mark, and so be disappointed; in which sense it is used in (~~17316~~ Judges 20:16); the sense may be, that when he visited his habitation he should find nothing amiss or wanting, but everything should answer his expectations and wishes, so Aben Ezra; and Mr. Broughton renders it, “shalt not misprosper”; and others, “shalt not be frustrated” ^{f226}; balked, disappointed of thine ends and views, designs, hopes, and wishes.

Ver. 25. *Thou shalt know also that thy seed [shall be] great*, etc.] Not his seed sown in the earth, and the increase of that, but his children, as the next clause explains it, as Bar Tzemach well observes; and designs either their greatness in worldly things, in wealth and riches, in honour and dignity, in power and authority, or else their numbers; for the word may be rendered “much” or “many”^{f227}, a multitude of children being reckoned a great temporal blessing; but this seems rather intended in the following words:

and thine offspring as the grass of the earth; as numerous as the spires of grass, which can no more be told than the stars of the heavens, or the sand of the sea, by which the same thing, a numerous progeny, is sometimes illustrated: this is to be understood not of his immediate offspring, but his descendants in successive ages and generations, and which should be as beautiful as the grass of the earth when in its verdure; pointing at the comeliness of their persons, their honour and dignity raised unto, the largeness of their substance, the greatness of their prosperity, and flourishing circumstances they should be in; though it may also denote the original of them, amidst all, being of the earth and earthy, and their frailty and fading condition; for which reason all flesh is said to be as grass, and men are frequently compared unto it, (see ^{<3906>}Psalm 90:5,6 102:4 103:15) (^{<2306>}Isaiah 40:6-8).

Ver. 26. *Thou shalt come to [thy] grave in a full age*, etc.] Or, “go into thy grave”^{f228}, which is represented as a house to enter into and dwell in; and so the wise man calls it man’s long home, and Job his house, and which is appointed for all living, (^{<2125>}Ecclesiastes 12:5 ^{<3873>}Job 17:13 30:23); for all men must die, and so come to the grave, good men as well as bad, the righteous and the wicked: this is not to be understood literally, for the dead cannot go or come to their graves, but are carried thither, as Stephen was, and all are; but it denotes their willingness to die, who choose to be absent from the body, that they may be present with the Lord, and are desirous to depart this world, and be with him, as the Apostle Paul was; and therefore cheerfully give up the ghost, and resign their souls into the hands of Christ, desiring him to receive them; and rejoice when they observe the grave is near, and ready for them; while others have their souls demanded and required of them, and are forced to death and the grave against their wills, and are driven away in their wickedness: now this, with respect to good men, is said to be “in a full age”, not “in abundance”, as the Vulgate Latin version, in an abundance or fulness of wealth and honour, and with great pomp and splendour, which is not the case of all

good men, but of very few; nor in the full time which God has determined and appointed men should live, which may be called “the fulness of time”; for in this every man comes to the grave, good and bad, young and old; no man dies before or lives beyond it, (see ^{<1840>}Job 14:5) but in the full age of men or the common term of man’s life; the highest which he usually attains unto, which is threescore years and ten, and at most fourscore, (^{<1900>}Psalm 90:10); and such who die before this are said to die before their time, the usual term of life; who die before the midst of this, are said not to live out half their days, (^{<2007>}Ecclesiastes 7:17 ^{<1953>}Psalm 55:23); but he that arrives to this dies in a good old age, and has filled up his days, which men, at most, ordinarily live: Mr. Broughton renders it, “in lusty old age”, enjoying great health, strength, and vigour; and so Nachmanides takes the word to be compounded of **k**, “as”, and **j l**, “moist”, lively, strong, and lusty; as if the sense was, that Job should die indeed in old age, but, when old, be as hearty as a young man in his full strength, and whose bones are moistened with marrow; as was the case of Moses, whose eyes were not dim, nor his natural force or radical moisture abated, (^{<1540>}Deuteronomy 34:7); but the word denotes extreme decrepit old age ^{f229}, coming from the root in the Arabic language, which signifies to be of an austere, rugged, wrinkled, contracted countenance ^{f230}, which is usually the case of old men: now this is to be understood, not as if every good man arrives to such an age, or that none but good men do; for certain it is, that some good persons, as Abijah, die in their youth, and many wicked men live to a great age, (see ^{<2007>}Ecclesiastes 7:15); but Eliphaz here speaks suitably to the legal dispensation under which he was, in which temporal blessings were promised to good men, as shadows of spiritual things, and this of long life was a principal one, (see ^{<1916>}Psalm 91:16 ^{<1916>}Ephesians 6:2,3); this is illustrated by the following simile:

like as a shock of corn cometh in in his season; there is a very great resemblance between ripe corn and old age; corn, when it is in its full ear, and ripe, its ears will hang down; the stalks, being dry and withered, are weak, and not able to bear the weight of them; so old men stoop, their knees bend, the strong men bow themselves, being unable to bear the weight of the body; fields of corn, ripe for the harvest, look white, and so the hairs of a man’s head in old age; the almond tree flourishes, which, when in full bloom, is a lively emblem of the hoary head: and there is a great likeness between ripe corn, and shocks and sheaves of it, and a good old man; a good man is comparable to a corn of wheat that falls into the

ground, to which Christ compares himself, (^{<8124>}John 12:24); and to wheat he compares his saints, (^{<4130>}Matthew 13:30); for their choiceness, excellency, purity, and solidity; and these, like a corn of wheat, grow up gradually in grace, in spiritual light, knowledge, faith, and experience, and at length come to maturity; the good work is performed and perfected in them, and they come to the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ; and then they are cut down with the scythe or sickle of death, which is the proper time, like corn “in his season”; which, if cut before it is ripe, would not be fit for use, and, if it stood longer, would shed and come to nothing; and then, as corn, when cut down and reaped, is put up in shocks and sheaves, which are lifted up from the earth, and made to “ascend”, as the word ^{f231} signifies, and are laid in carts and wagons, and carried home with expressions of joy, (hence we read of the joy of harvest,) and are laid up in the barn or granary; so the saints are carried by angels, the reapers, into Abraham’s bosom, as Lazarus was, into heaven, and as all the elect will be gathered by the angels at the harvest, the end of the world; attended with their shouts and acclamations, and with expressions of joy from Gospel ministers, who now go forth bearing the precious seed of the word, and sow it in tears, but then shall return with joy, bringing their sheaves with them, (see ^{<4130>}Matthew 13:30,39 24:31) (^{<1005>}Psalm 126:5,6 ^{<3129>}1 Thessalonians 2:19,20).

Ver. 27. *Lo this, we have searched it*, etc.] This is the concluding part of Eliphaz’s first oration or speech to Job; and in order to engage his attention to it, observes, that what he had said was not his own single opinion, but the sentiment of the rest of his friends; and that it was the result of laborious and diligent investigation; that they had searched the records of former times, and inquired of ancient people, as well as had made the strictest observations on things during their course of life;

so it [is]; and the sum and amount of all was what he had declared, and which they had found to be sure and certain, the truth of the matter; that it is an undoubted truth, which should not be disputed and called in question, but to be held as a first principle, which was this; that wicked men are punished for their sins, and that good men are never greatly afflicted, at least not to such a degree as to be stripped of all the necessaries of life, and to be in a most desolate and perishing condition; and since this had been so thoroughly investigated by them, and such “a probatum est” was written upon it, he exhorts Job to

hear it; agree to it, believe it, receive it, and make a proper use of it, as he hoped he would:

and know thou [it] for thy good; or “for thyself”^{f232}; take it to thyself, as belonging to thee, as suitable to thy case; apply it to thyself, learn some lessons from it, and make good use of it; which is what is proposed by all that has been said.