

CHAPTER 7

INTRODUCTION TO JOB 7

In this chapter Job goes on to defend himself in an address to God; as that he had reason to complain of his extraordinary afflictions, and wish for death; by observing the common case of mankind, which he illustrates by that of an hireling, (<K000>Job 7:1); and justifies his eager desire of death by the servant and hireling; the one earnestly desiring the shadow, and the other the reward of his work, (<K002>Job 7:2); by representing his present state as exceeding deplorable, even worse than that of the servant and hireling, since they had rest at night, when he had none, and were free from pain, whereas he was not, (<K003>Job 7:3-5); by taking notice of the swiftness and shortness of his days, in which he had no hope of enjoying any good, (<K006>Job 7:6,7); and so thought his case hard; and the rather, since after death he could enjoy no temporal good: and therefore to be deprived of it while living gave him just reason of complaint, (<K008>Job 7:8-11); and then he expostulates with God for setting such a strict watch upon him; giving him no ease night nor day, but terrifying him with dreams and visions, which made life disagreeable to him, and death more eligible than that, (<K012>Job 7:12-16); and represents man as unworthy of the divine regard, and below his notice to bestow favours on him, or to chastise him for doing amiss, (<K017>Job 7:17,18); and admitting that he himself had sinned, yet he should forgive his iniquity, and not bear so hard upon him, and follow him with one affliction after another without intermission, and make him the butt of his arrows; but should spare him and let him alone, or however take him out of the world, (<K019>Job 7:19-21).

Ver. 1. [*Is there*] *not an appointed time to man upon earth?* etc.] There is a set time for his coming into the world, for his continuance in it, and for his going out of it; this is to man “on earth”, with respect to his being and abode here, not in the other world or future state: not in heaven; there is no certain limited time for man there, but an eternity; the life he will enter into is everlasting; the habitation, mansion, and house he will dwell in, are eternal; saints will be for ever with Christ, in whose presence are pleasures for evermore: nor in hell; the punishment there will be eternal, the fire will

be unquenchable and everlasting, the smoke of the torments of the damned will ascend for ever and ever; but men's days and time on earth are but as a shadow, and soon gone; they are of the earth, earthly, and return unto it at a fixed appointed time, time, the bounds of which cannot be passed over: this is true of mankind in general, and of Job in particular; (see ^{<1840>}Job 14:1,5,14 ^{<2000>}Ecclesiastes 3:1,2); the word "Enosh" ^{f284}, here used, signifies, as is commonly observed, a frail, feeble, mortal man; Mr. Broughton renders it "sorrowful man"; as every man more or less is; even a man of sorrows, and acquainted with griefs, is attended with them, has an experience of them: this is the common lot of mankind; and if anything more than ordinary is inflicted upon them, they are not able to bear it; and these sorrows death at the appointed time puts an end to, which makes it desirable; now, seeing there is a set time for every man's life on earth, and there was for Job's, of which he was well assured; and, by all appearance of things, and by the symptoms upon him, this time was near at hand; therefore it should not be thought a criminal thing in him, considering his extraordinary afflictions, and which were intolerable, that he should so earnestly wish the time was come; though in his more serious thoughts he determined to wait for it: some render the words, "is [there] not a warfare are for men on earth?" ^{f285} the word being so rendered elsewhere, particularly in (^{<2300>}Isaiah 40:2); every man's state on earth is a state of warfare; this is frequently said by the stoic philosophers ^{f286}; even so is that of natural and unregenerate men, who are often

engaged in war with one another, which arise from the lusts which war in their members; and especially with the people of God, the seed of the woman, between whom and the seed of the serpent there has been an enmity from the beginning; and with themselves, with the troubles of life, diseases of body, and various afflictions they have to conflict and grapple with: and more especially the life of good men here is a state of warfare, not only of the ministers of the word, or persons in public office, but of private believers; who are good soldiers of Christ, enter volunteers into his service, fight under his banners, and themselves like men; these have many enemies to combat with; some within, the corruptions of hearts, which war against the spirit and law of their minds, which form a company of two armies in militating against each other; and others without, as Satan and his principalities and powers, the men the world, false teachers, and the like: and these are properly accounted for such service, having the whole armour of God provided for them; and have great encouragement to behave

manfully, since they may be sure of victory, and of having the crown of righteousness, when they have fought the good fight of even though they are but frail, feeble, mortal, sinful men, but flesh and blood, and so not of themselves a match for their enemies; but they are more than so through the Lord being on their side, Christ being the Captain of their salvation, and the Spirit of God being in them greater than he that is in the world; and besides, it is only on earth this warfare is, and will soon be accomplished, the last enemy being death that shall be destroyed: now this being the common case of man, to be annoyed with enemies, and always at war with them, if, besides this, uncommon afflictions befall him, as was Job's case, this must make life burdensome, and death, which is a deliverance from them, desirable; this is his argument: some choose to render the words, "is [there] not a servile condition for men on earth" ^{f287} the word being used of the ministry and service of the Levites, (^{<004B>}Numbers 4:3,4); all men by creation are or ought to be the servants of God; good men are so by the grace of God, and willingly and cheerfully serve him; and though the great work of salvation is wrought out by Christ for them, and the work of grace is wrought by the Spirit of Christ in them, yet they have work to do in their day and generation in the world, in their families, and in the house of God; and which, though weak and feeble in themselves, they are capable of doing, through Christ, his Spirit, power, and grace: and this is only on earth; in the grave there is no work, nor device, nor knowledge; when the night of death comes, no man can work; his service, especially his toilsome service, is at an end; and as it is natural for servants to wish for the night, when their labours end, Job thought it not unlawful in him to wish for death, which would put an end to his toils and labours, and when he should have rest from them:

[are not] his days also like the days plan hireling? the time for which a servant is hired, whether it be for a day or for a year, or more, it is a set time; it is fixed, settled, and determined in the agreement, and so are the days of man's life on earth; and the of an hireling are few at most, the time for which he is hired is but and as the days of an hireling are days of toil, and labour, and sorrow, so are the days of men evil as well as few; his few days are full of trouble, (^{<047D>}Genesis 47:9 ^{<840E>}Job 14:1); all this and what follows is spoken to God, and not to his friends, as appears from (^{<807E>}Job 7:7,8,14,17-21).

Ver. 2. *As a servant earnestly desireth the shadow*, etc.] Either the shadow of some great rock, tree, or hedge, or any shady place to shelter him from

the heat of the sun in the middle of the day, which in those eastern countries is hot and scorching; and very burdensome and fatiguing it is for servants and labourers to work in fields and vineyards, or in keeping herds and flocks in such countries, and at such a time of the day; to which the allusion is in (^{<2007>}Song of Solomon 1:7) (^{<2334>}Isaiah 25:4 32:2 ^{<4012>}Matthew 20:12). Wherefore they “gape” for, or “pant” after some shady place for refreshment, as the word ^{f288} used signifies; or for the shadow of the evening, or the sun setting, when the longest shadow is cast, (^{<2004>}Jeremiah 6:4); and when the work of a servant is ended, and he retires to his house for refreshment and rest: and since now such a shadow in either sense is desirable, and not unlawful to wish for, Job suggests it ought not to be charged as a crime in him, that he should importunately desire to be in the shadow of death, or in the grave, where the weary are at rest; or to have the night come on him, when he should cease from all his toil and labour, sorrows and pains:

and as an hireling looketh for [the reward of] his work; or “for his work” ^{f289}; either for new work, what was set him being done, or rather for the finishing of it, that he might have rest from it; or for the reward, the hire due to him upon its being done; so Job intimates he desired death with the same view, that he might cease from his works, which should follow him, and when he should have the reward of the inheritance, not in a way of debt, but of grace: nor indeed is it sinful to look or have respect unto the recompence of reward, in order to engage to go through service more cheerfully, or to endure sufferings more patiently, (see ^{<8126>}Hebrews 11:26); for though the hireling is an emblem of a self-righteous person, that works for life, and expects it as the reward of his work, and of false teachers and bad shepherds, that take the care of the flock for filthy lucre’s sake, (see ^{<2159>}Luke 15:19) (^{<8102>}John 10:12); yet hiring is sometimes used, in a good sense, of good men, that are hired and allured by gracious promises and divine encouragements to labour in the Lord’s vineyard, and may expect their reward; (see ^{<4012>}Matthew 20:1,2,8).

Ver. 3. *So am I made to possess months of vanity,* etc.] This is not a reddition or application of the above similes of the servant and hireling, (^{<1870>}Job 7:1,2); for that is to be understood, and to be supplied at the end of (^{<1870>}Job 7:2); that as those looked for the shadow and payment of hire, so Job looked for and earnestly desired death, or to be removed out of the world; besides, the things here instanced in do not answer; for Job, instead of having the refreshing shadow, had months of vanity, and instead of rest

from his labours had nothing but wearisome nights, and continual tossings to and fro; whereas the sleep of a labouring man is sweet to him; and having laboured hard all day, the night is a time of rest to him; but so it was not with Job; wherefore this “so” refers to the common state and condition of mankind, in which Job was, with an addition of extraordinary afflictions upon him: the time of his afflictions, though but short, seemed long, and therefore is expressed by months; and some months might have passed from the time his calamities began to the present; since it must be some time before his friends heard of them, and more still before they could meet together and agree upon their coming, and were actually come to him; as also some time was spent in silence, and now in conversation with him; the Jews^{f290} make them to be twelve months: and these months were “months of vanity”, or “empty”^{f291} ones; such as winter months, empty of all joy, and peace, and comfort; times in which he had no pleasure, no ease of body or of mind; destitute of the good things of life, and of the presence of God and communion with him; and full of trouble, sorrow, and distress: and these were “given him for an inheritance”^{f292}; were his lot and portion, which he received as an inheritance from

his parents, in consequence of original sin, the source of all the troubles and miseries of human life, in common with other men; and which were allotted him by his heavenly Father, according to his sovereign will and pleasure, as all the afflictions of the Lord’s people are the inheritance bequeathed them by their Father, and the legacy of their Redeemer:

and wearisome nights are appointed to me; one after another, in succession; in which he could have no sleep nor rest, through pain of body and distress of mind; and so became the more weary, through long lying down and tossings to and fro, through groans and tears, and much watching; and these were prepared for him in the purposes of God, and appointed to him in his counsels and decrees; (see ~~1834~~ Job 23:14); or they “prepared” or “appointed”^{f293}; that is, “Elohim”, the three Divine Persons.

Ver. 4. *When I lie down, I say, when shall I arise*, etc.] Or, “then I say”, etc.^{f294}; that is, as soon as he laid himself down in his bed, and endeavoured to compose himself to sleep, in order to get rest and refreshment; then he said within himself, or with an articulate voice, to those about him, that sat up with him; oh that it was time to rise; when will it be morning, that I may rise from my bed, which is of no manner of service to me, but rather increases weariness?

and the night be gone? and the day dawn and break; or “night” or “evening be measured”, as in the margin, or “measures itself”^{f295}; or that “he”, that is, God, or “it”, my heart, “measures the evening”^{f296}, or “night”; lengthens it out to its full time: to a discomposed person, that cannot sleep, the night seems long; such count every hour, tell every clock that strikes, and long to see peep of day; these are they that watch for the morning, (⁴⁹⁰⁶Psalm 130:6);

and I am full of tossings to and fro unto the dawning of the day; or, “unto the twilight”; the morning twilight; though some understand it of the twilight or evening of the next day, (see ⁴⁸⁰⁷1 Samuel 30:17); and interpret “the tossings to and fro” of the toils and labours of the day, and of the sorrows and miseries of it, lengthened out to the eve of the following day; but rather they are to be understood either of the tosses of his mind, his distressed and perplexed thoughts within him he was full of; or of the tosses of his body, his frequent turning himself upon his bed, from side to side, to ease him; and with these he was “filled”, or “satiated”^{f297}; he had enough and too much of them; he was glutted and sated with them, as a man is with overmuch eating, as the word signifies.

Ver. 5. *My flesh is clothed with worms and clods of dust*, etc.] Not as it would be at death, and in the grave, as Schmidt interprets it, when it would be eaten with worms and reduced to dust; but as it then was, his ulcers breeding worms, or lice, as some^{f298}; these spread themselves over his body: some think it was the vermicular or pedicular disease that was upon him, and the scabs of them, which were all over him like one continued crust, were as a garment to him; or those sores of his, running with purulent matter, and he sitting and rolling himself in dust and ashes, and this moisture mingling therewith, and clotted together, formed clods of dust, which covered him all over; a dismal spectacle to look upon! a precious saint in a vile body!

my skin is broken: with the boils and ulcers in all parts, and was parched and cleft with the heat and breaking of them:

and become loathsome; to himself and others; exceeding nauseous, and extremely disagreeable both to sight and smell: or “liquefied”^{f299}; moistened with corrupt matter flowing from the ulcers in all parts of his body; the word in Arabic signifies a large, broad, and open wound, as a learned man^{f300} has observed; and it is as if he should say, whoever observes all this, this long time of distress, night and day, and what a

shocking figure he was, as here represented, could blame him for wishing for death in the most passionate manner?

Ver. 6. *My days are swifter than a weaver's shuttle*, etc.] Which moves very swiftly, being thrown quick and fast to and fro; some versions render it "a racer"^{f301} one that runs a race on foot, or rides on horseback, agreeably to (^{<18025>}Job 9:25); where, and in (^{<18007>}Job 7:7); to it, other similes are used, to set forth the swiftness and fleetness of man's days; as they also are elsewhere represented, as swift as a tale told, a word expressed, or a thought conceived, (^{<19019>}Psalm 90:9); and so here, by the Septuagint, are said to be "swifter than speech", though wrongly translated: this is to be understood, not of his days of affliction, distress, and sorrow; for these in his apprehension moved but slowly, and he could have been, glad that they had gone on faster; but either his days in common, or particularly his days of prosperity and pleasure, these were soon over with him; and which he sometimes wished for again, (see ^{<18201>}Job 29:1-5);

and are spent without hope; not without hope of happiness in another world, but without hope of being restored to his outward felicity in this; which Eliphaz had given him some of, but he had no hope concerning it; (see ^{<18164>}Job 5:24-26 6:11,19 19:10).

Ver. 7. *O remember that my life [is] wind*, etc.] Or, "breath"^{f302}; man's life is in his breath, and that breath is in his nostrils, and therefore not to be accounted of, or depended on; man appears by this to be a poor frail creature, whose life, with respect to himself, is very precarious and uncertain; it is but as a "vapour", an air bubble, full of wind, easily broken and dissipated, and soon vanishes away; it is like the "wind", noisy and blustering, full of stir and tumult, and, like that, swiftly passes and sweeps away, and returns not again: this is an address to God; and so some^{f303} supply it, "O God", or "O Lord, remember", etc. not that forgetfulness is in God, or that he needs to be reminded of anything; but he may seem to forget the frailty of man when he lays his hand heavy on him; and may be said to be mindful of it when he mercifully takes it off: what Job here prays for, the Lord often does, as he did with respect to the Israelites, (^{<19839>}Psalm 78:39);

mine eye shall no more see good: meaning not spiritual and eternal good, here and hereafter; he knew he should, after this life, see his living Redeemer even with the eyes of his body, when raised again; that he should see him as he is, not through a glass, darkly, but face to face, in all his

glory; and that for himself, and not another, and even see and enjoy things he had never seen before: but his sense is, that he should see or enjoy no more temporal good; either in this world, being without hope of any, or in the grave, whither he was going and would shortly be; and therefore entreats that some mercy might be shown him while he lived; to which sense the following words incline.

Ver. 8. *The eye of him that hath seen me shall see me no [more]*, etc.] Or “the eye of sight”^{f304}; the seeing eye, the most acute and quick sighted eye; so Mr. Broughton renders it, “the quick eye”^{f305}: this is to be understood as “after”^{f306} death, that then the sharpest eye should not see him, he would be out of the reach of it; which must be taken with a limitation; for men after death are seen by the eyes of the omniscient God, their souls, be they in heaven or in hell, and their bodies in the grave; and as for good men, such as Job, they are at once with him in his immediate presence, beholding and beheld by him; and they are seen by angels, whose care and charge their souls become immediately upon death, and are carried by them into heaven, where they are fellow worshippers with them; and they are seen by glorified saints, to whose company they are joined; for if the rich man in hell could see Abraham, and Lazarus in his bosom, (~~21623~~ Luke 16:23), then much more do the saints see one another: but the meaning is, that when a man is dead, he is seen no more by men on earth, by his relations, friends, and acquaintance; the consideration of which is a cutting stroke at parting, (see ~~4015~~ Acts 20:25,38); the state of the dead is an invisible state, and therefore called in the Greek tongue “Hades”, “unseen”; so the dead will remain, with respect to the inhabitants of this world, till the resurrection, and then they shall see and be seen again in the same bodies they now have; for this is no denial of the resurrection of the dead, as some Jewish writers charge Job with, and infer from this and some following passages:

thine eyes [are] upon me, and I [am] not; am a dead man, a phrase expressive of death, and of being in the state of the dead, or however of being no more in this world, (see ~~01024~~ Genesis 5:24 42:36 ~~23115~~ Jeremiah 31:15); not that the dead are nonentities, or are reduced to nothing; this is not true of them, either with respect to soul or body; their souls are immaterial and immortal, and exist in a separate state after death, and their bodies, though reduced to dust, are not annihilated; they return to earth and dust, from whence they came; but still they are something, they are earth and dust, unless these can be thought to be nothing; and this dust is

taken care of and preserved, and will be gathered together, and moulded, and framed, and fashioned into bodies again, which will endure for ever: nor is the meaning, that they are nowhere; the spirits of just men made perfect are in heaven, in paradise, in a state of life, immortality, and bliss; and the souls of the wicked are in their own place, in the prison of hell, reserved with devils, to the judgment of the great day; and the bodies of both are in the graves till the day of the resurrection; but they are not, and no more, in the land of the living, in their houses and families, in their shops and business, and places of trade and merchandise, or in the house of God serving him there, according to their different stations. And this Job ascribes to God, “thine eyes [are] upon me”: meaning not his eyes of love, favour, and kindness, which had respect unto him; and yet, notwithstanding this, as it did not secure him from afflictions, so neither would it from death itself; for “though [his] eyes [were] upon [him]” in such sense, yet he “would not be” ^{f307}, or should die; but rather his angry eyes, the frowns of his countenance, which were now upon him, and might be discerned in the dispensations of his providence towards him, by reason of which he “was not” as he was before; not fit for anything, as Saphorno understands it; or should he frown upon him, one angry look would sink him into the state of the dead, and he should be no more, who “looks on the earth, and it trembles”, (^{<1946>}Psalm 104:32). Mr. Broughton renders it as a petition, “let thine eyes be upon me, that I be no more”; that is, let me die, the same request he made in (^{<810>}Job 6:8,9); but it seems best to interpret it of the eyes of God’s omnipresence and providence, which are on men in every state and place; and the sense be, either as granting, that though the eyes of men should not see him after death, yet the eyes of God would be upon him when he was not, or in the state of the fiend; or else, that should he long defer doing him good, it would be too late, he should soon die, and then, though he should look after him, and seek for him, he should not be in the land of the living, according to (^{<1872>}Job 7:21); or this may denote the suddenness of death, which comes to a man in a moment, as Bar Tzemach observes, in the twinkling of an eye; nay, as soon as the eye of God is upon a man, that is, as soon almost as a man appears in the world, and the eye of Divine Providence is upon him, he is out of it again, and is no more; (see ^{<100>}Ecclesiastes 3:2).

Ver. 9. [*As the cloud is consumed and vanisheth away*, etc.] Which being dispersed by the wind, or broke up by the sun, is never seen, or returns more; for though the wise man speaks of clouds returning after the rain,

this is not to be understood of the same clouds, but of succeeding ones, (^{<2117B>}Ecclesiastes 12:2); so pardon of sin is expressed by the same metaphor, to show that sin thereby is no more, no more to be seen or remembered, (^{<236B>}Isaiah 43:25 44:22); the Targum renders it “as smoke”, by which the shortness and consumption of men’s days are expressed, (^{<1947B>}Psalms 102:3); but by the simile of a cloud here is not so much designed the sudden disappearance of life as the irrevocableness of it when gone, as the reddition or application following shows:

so he that goeth down to the grave shall come up no [more]; the grave is the house or long home that all must go to, it being the appointment of God that all should die, or be in the state of the dead; which is meant by the grave, since all are not interred in the earth; and this, as here, is frequently expressed, as if it was man’s act being hither brought; and when it designs an interment in the earth, it is with great propriety called a going down; and however that be, yet the state of the dead is a state of humiliation, a coming down from all the grandeur, honour, and glory of the present state, which are all laid in the dust; and when this is man’s case, he comes up no more from it, that is, of himself, by his own power; none but Christ, who is God over all, ever did this; or none naturally, or by the laws of nature, for noticing short of almighty power can effect this; it must be done in an extraordinary way, and is no less than a miraculous operation; nor will this be done until the general resurrection of the just and unjust, when all that are in their graves shall come forth, the one to the resurrection of life, and the other to the resurrection of damnation; excepting in some few instances, as the Shunammite’s son, (^{<1146>}2 Kings 4:32-35); the man that touched the bones of the prophet Elisha, (^{<1231>}2 Kings 13:21); the daughter of Jairus, (^{<4054>}Mark 5:41,42); the widow of Nain’s son, (^{<3714>}Luke 7:14,15); Lazarus, (^{<3143>}John 11:43,44); and those that rose at our Lord’s resurrection, (^{<1253>}Matthew 27:53); this is further explained in (^{<3070>}Job 7:10).

Ver. 10. *He shall return no more to his house*, etc.] In a literal sense, built or hired by him, or however in which he dwelt; and if a good man, he will have no desire to return to that any more, having a better house, an house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens; or in a figurative sense, either his body, the earthly house of his tabernacle, an house of clay, which has its foundation in the dust; to this he shall not return until the resurrection, when it will be rebuilt, and fitted up for the better reception and accommodation of him; or else his family, to whom he shall not come back

again, to have any concern with them in domestic affairs, or in part of the business of life, as David said of his child when dead, “I shall go to him, but he shall not return to me”, (~~1023~~ 2 Samuel 12:23);

neither shall his place know him any more; the place of his office, or rather of his habitation; his dwelling house, his farms and his fields, his estates and possessions, shall no more know, own, and acknowledge him as their master, proprietor, and possessor, these, coming at his death into other hands, who now are regarded as such; or the inhabitants of the place, country, city, town, village, and house in which he lived, shall know him no more; no more being seen among them, he will soon be forgotten; out of sight, out of mind ^{f308}.

Ver. 11. *Therefore I will not refrain my mouth*, etc.] From speaking and complaining; seeing, besides the common lot of mankind, which is a state of warfare, sorrow, and trouble, and is as much as a man can well grapple with, extraordinary afflictions are laid upon me, which make life insupportable; and seeing I enjoy no good in this present life, and am shortly going where no temporal good is to be expected, and shall never return to this world any more to enjoy any; therefore I will not be silent, and forbear speaking my mind freely, and uttering my just complaint, for which I think I have sufficient reason: or “I also will not refrain my mouth” ^{f309}; in turn, as a just retaliation, so Jarchi; since God will not refrain his hand from me, I will not refrain my mouth from speaking concerning him; since he shows no mercy to me, I shall utter my miserable complaints, and not keep them to myself; this was Job’s infirmity when he should have held his peace, as Aaron, and been dumb and silent as David, and been still, and have known, owned, and acknowledged the sovereignty of God, and not vented himself in passion as he did:

I will speak in the anguish of my spirit; or “in the straitness” ^{f310} of it; he was surrounded on all sides with distress, the sorrows of death compassed him about, and the pains of hell got hold upon him; he was like one pent up in a narrow place, in a close confinement, that he could not get out of, and come forth from; and he felt not only exquisite pains of body from his boils and sores, but great anguish of soul; and therefore he determines to speak in and “of” ^{f311} all this, to give vent to his grief and sorrow, his passion and resentment:

I will complain in the bitterness of my soul; his afflictions were like the waters of Marah, bitter ones, very grievous and disagreeable to flesh and

blood, and by which his life and soul were embittered to him; and in and of ^{f312} this he determines to complain, or to utter in a complaining way what he had been meditating on, as the word ^{f313} signifies; so that this was not an hasty and precipitate action, but what upon deliberation he resolved to do; to pour out his complaint before God, and leave it with him, in a submissive way, would not have been amiss, but if he complained of God and his providence, it was wrong: “why should a living man complain?” not even a wicked man, of “the punishment of his sin”, and much less a good man of fatherly chastisements? We see what the will of man is, what a stubborn and obstinate thing it is, “I will, I will, I will”, even of a good man when left to himself, and not in the exercise of grace, and under the influence of it; the complaint follows, by way of expostulation.

Ver. 12. [*Am*] *I a sea, or a whale*, etc.] Like the restless sea, to which very wicked, profligate, and abandoned sinners are compared, that are continually casting up the mire and dirt of sin and wickedness; am I such an one? or like the raging sea, its proud waters and foaming waves, to which fierce and furious persecutors and tyrannical oppressors are compared; did I behave in such a manner to the poor and distressed in the time of prosperity? nay, was I not the reverse of all this, kind and gentle to them, took their part, and rescued them out of the hands of those that oppressed them? (see ^{<839D>} Job 29:12-17); or like its tossing waves, which attempt to pass the bounds that are set to them; am I such an one, that have transgressed the laws of God and then, which are set as boundaries to restrain the worst of men? and am I a whale, or like any great fish in the ocean, the dragon in the sea, the leviathan, the piercing and crooked serpent? an emblem of cruel princes, as the kings of Egypt and Assyria, or antichrist, (^{<2370>} Isaiah 27:1); (see ^{<874B>} Psalm 74:13,14). The Targum is,

“as the Egyptians were condemned to be drowned in the Red sea, am I condemned? or as Pharaoh, who was suffocated in the midst of it for his sin, since thou settest a watch over me?”

or, as another Targum,

“am I as the great sea, which is moved to extreme parts, or the leviathan, which is ready to be taken?”

or else the sense is, have I the strength of the sea, which subsists, notwithstanding its waves are continually heating, and which carries such mighty vessels upon it, and would bear down all before it, if not restrained?

or of a whale, the leviathan, whose flakes of flesh are joined together, and his heart as firm as a stone, and as hard as a piece of the nether millstone, and laughs at the spear, the sword, and the dart? no, I have not; I am a poor, weak, feeble creature, whose strength is quite exhausted, and not able to bear the weight of the chains and fetters of afflictions upon me; or rather the principal thing complained of, and which he illustrates by these metaphors, is, that he was bound with the cords of afflictions, and compassed with gall and travail, and hedged in hereby, that he could not get out, as the church says, (^{<2816>}Lamentations 3:5,7); or could not get released from his sorrows by death, or otherwise; just as the sea is shut up with bars and doors, that its waves can come hitherto, and no further; and as the whale is confined to the ocean, or surrounded with vessels and armed men in them, when about to be taken; and thus it was with Job, and of this he complains:

that thou settest a watch over me? which Jarchi and others understand of Satan; and though in his hands, he was not suffered to take away his life; but besides him may be meant all his afflictions, calamities, and distresses, in which he lay fettered and bound, in which he was shut up as in a prison, and by which he was watched over and guarded; and from which he could make no escape, nor get a release.

Ver. 13. *When I say, my bed shall comfort me*, etc.] When he thought within himself that he would lie down upon his bed and try if he could get a little sleep, which might comfort and refresh him, and which he promised himself he should obtain by this means, as he had formerly had an experience of:

my couch shall ease my complaint; he concluded, that by lying down upon his couch, and falling asleep, it would give some ease of body and mind; that his body would, at least, for some time be free from pain, and his mind composed, and should cease from complaining for a while; which interval would be a relief to him, and of considerable service. Some render it, “my couch shall burn”^{f314}; be all on fire, and torture me instead of giving ease; and so may have respect to his burning ulcers.

Ver. 14. *Then thou scarest me with dreams*, etc.] Not with dreams and visions being told him, as were by Eliphaz, (^{<18043>}Job 4:13); but with dreams he himself dreamed; and which might arise from the force of his distemper, and the pain of his body, whereby his sleep was broken, his imagination disturbed, and his fancy roving, which led him to objects as seemed to him

very terrible and dreadful; or from a melancholy disposition his afflictions had brought upon him; and hence in his dreams he had dismal apprehensions of things very distressing and terrifying; or from Satan, in whose hands he was, and who was permitted to distress and disturb him at such seasons; all which he ascribes to God, because he suffered it so to be: and now these dreams not only hindered sound sleep, and getting that ease and refreshment he hoped for from thence, but even they were frightful and scaring to him, so that instead of being the better for his bed and his couch, he was the worse; these dreams added to his afflictions, and in them he suffered much, as Pilate's wife is said to do, (⁴¹⁷⁹Matthew 27:19);

and terrifiest me through visions; spectres, apparitions, and such like things, being presented to his fancy, while sleeping and dreaming, which filled him with terror, and sorely distressed him, so that he could receive no benefit hereby, but rather was more fatigued and weakened.

Ver. 15. *So that my soul chooseth strangling*, etc.] Not to strangle himself, as Ahithophel did, or to be strangled by others, this being a kind of death inflicted on capital offenders; but rather, as Mr. Broughton renders it, "to be choked to death" by any distemper and disease, as some are of a suffocating nature, as a catarrh, quinsy, etc. and kill in that way; and indeed death in whatsoever way is the stopping of a man's breath; and it was death that Job chose, let it be in what way it would, whether natural or violent; so weary was he of life through his sore and heavy afflictions:

[and] death rather than my life; or, "than my bones"^{f315}; which are the more solid parts of the body, and the support of it, and are put for the whole and the life thereof; or than these bones of his, which were full of strong pain, and which had nothing but skin upon them, and that was broken and covered with worms, rottenness, and dust; the Vulgate Latin version renders it, "and my bones death"; that is, desired and chose death, being so full of pain, (see ⁴⁹⁵⁰Psalm 35:10).

Ver. 16. *I loathe [it]*, etc.] Or "them"^{f316}, either his life, which was a weariness to him, or his bones, which were so painful and nauseous; or rather, "I am become loathsome", to himself, to his servants, and to his friends, and even his breath was strange to his wife; or "being ulcerated, I pine and waste away"^{f317}, and must in course be quickly gone:

I would not live always; no man can or will; there is no man that lives but what shall see death, (⁴⁹⁴⁸Psalm 89:48); Job knew this, nor did he expect or

desire it; and this was not his meaning, but that he desired that he might not live long, or to the full term of man's life, yea, that he might die quickly; and indeed to a good man to die is gain; and to depart out of the world, and be with Christ, is far better than to continue in it. And had Job expressed himself without passion, and with submission to the divine will, what he says would not have been amiss:

let me alone; or “cease from me”^{f318}; from afflicting him any more, having as great a weight upon him as he could bear, or greater than he could well stand up under; or from supporting him in life, he wishes that either God would withdraw his afflicting hand from him, or his preserving hand; either abate the affliction, or dismiss him from the world:

for my days [are] vanity; a “breath”^{f319} or puff of wind; a “vapour”, as Mr. Broughton renders it, that soon vanishes away; days empty of all that is good, delightful, and pleasant, and full of evil, trouble, and sorrow, as well as fleeting, transitory, and soon gone, are as nothing, yea, less than nothing, and vanity.

Ver. 17. *What [is] man, that thou shouldest magnify him?* etc.] Man in his best estate, in his original state, was but of the earth, earthly; a mutable creature, and altogether vanity; so that it was wonderful God should magnify him as he did, raise him to such honour and dignity, as to set him over all the works of his hands, and bestow peculiar marks of his favour upon him in Eden's garden; but man in his low and fallen estate, being, as the word here used is generally observed to signify, a frail, feeble, weak, and mortal creature; yea, a sinful one; it is much more marvellous that God should magnify him, or make him great, that is, any of the human race, as he has some, so as “to set his heart upon them”, as Jarchi connects this with the following clause; to think of them and provide for them in his purposes and decrees, in his council and covenant, to choose any of them to grace here, and glory hereafter: he has magnified them, by espousing them to his Son, whereby they share with him in his glory, and in all the blessings of his goodness; through the incarnation of Christ, by means of which the human nature is greatly advanced and honoured; and by their redemption through Christ, whereby they are raised to an higher dignity, and restored to a greater estate than they lost by the fall; by clothing them with the rich robe of Christ's righteousness, comparable to the gold of Ophir, and raiment of needlework; and by adorning them with the graces of the blessed Spirit; and, in a word, by taking them into his family, making

them his children and his heirs, rich in grace, and heirs of the kingdom of heaven, and kings and priests unto him; taking them as beggars from the dunghill, to sit among princes, and to inherit the throne of glory. The words may be understood in a different sense, and more agreeably to the context, and to the scope of Job's discourse, as they are by some^{f320}, of God's magnifying men by afflicting them; according to which, man is represented as a poor, weak, strengthless creature, a worm and clod of the earth; and the Lord as the mighty God, as of great and infinite power and strength, between whom there is no manner of proportion; God is not a man, that they should come together, or as if on equal foot; nor man a match for God; to wrestle with principalities and powers, which are not flesh and blood, is too much for men of themselves, and how much less able are they to contend with God? Now Job by this suggests, that his thought and sentiment of the matter was, and in which he has a particular view to himself, and his own case; that as on the one hand it was a demeaning the might and majesty of God, by making himself a combatant with man; so on the other hand it was doing man too much honour, as if he was one of more importance and consequence, and more mighty and powerful than he is; whereas he is unworthy of the divine notice in any respect, either to bestow his favours, or lay his afflicting hand upon him; compare with this (~~02044~~ 1 Samuel 24:14). Hence a late learned writer^{f321}, agreeably to the use of the word in the Arabic language, renders it, "what is mortal man, that thou shouldest wrestle with him?" strive and contend with him as if he was thy match, when thou couldest at one blow, and even at a touch, dispatch him at once?

and that thou shouldest set thine heart upon him? have an affection for him, love him, delight in him, highly value and esteem him; it is wonderful that God should have such a regard to any of the sons of men; and yet it is certain that he has, as appears by the good things he has provided and laid up for them in covenant, by sending his Son to die for them, by calling and quickening them by his Spirit and grace, and drawing them with loving kindness to himself; by taking continual care of them, and keeping them as the apple of his eye: though these words may be interpreted agreeably to the other sense, "that thou shouldest set thine heart upon him?" or towards him, to afflict him and chastise him with afflictions, so Bar Tzemach; or to stir up himself against him, as Seforno: and the above late learned writer chooses to render them, "that thou shouldest set thine heart against him?"^{f322} and so the Hebrew^{f323} participle is used in many other places; (see

^{<631D>}Ezekiel 13:2 21:3); compare with this (^{<8344>}Job 34:14,15), where R. Simeon Bar Tzemach ^{f324} thinks Elihu has respect to this passage of Job, and reproves him for it.

Ver. 18. *And [that] thou shouldest visit him every morning*, etc.] That is, “daily”, continually, as Aben Ezra interprets it; either in a way of love, grace, and mercy; so God has visited men, by raising up and sending his Son to be a Redeemer of them; the Son of God has visited them, as the dayspring from on high, by his incarnation and appearance in this world; (see ^{<4168>}Luke 1:68,78); and the Lord visits them, by calling them by his grace, (see ^{<4154>}Acts 15:14); by communing and conversing with them in a free and friendly manner; by helping right early, and by renewing his mercies to them every morning, all which is matter of admiration: or else the word may be taken in a different sense, as it sometimes is, either for punishing man for sin, as in (^{<2115>}Exodus 20:5 ^{<2119>}Jeremiah 5:9); or for chastising the Lord’s people, which is a visiting them, though in a fatherly way, and in love, and which is often and frequently done, even every morning, (see ^{<1982>}Psalms 89:32,33 73:14); and so the sense agrees with the former, though by some given with this difference thus, “what is man, that thou shouldest magnify him?” or make him great both in things temporal and spiritual, as he had made Job in the time of his prosperity, which he may have respect unto; having been the greatest man in all the east, with respect to both characters, whereby it was plain he had interest in the love and affections of the heart of God; and “yet, notwithstanding, nevertheless, thou visitest him” ^{f325}, with afflictions and chastisements continually; which may seem strange, and look like a contradiction, that thou shouldest:

[and] try him every moment? by afflictive providences; in this way the Lord often tries the faith and patience, the fear and love, the hope and humility of his people, and all other graces, whereby they appear and shine the brighter, which was Job’s case, (see ^{<1830>}Job 23:10); and which he doubtless had in view in all he had said, and more particularly expostulates about in the following verses.

Ver. 19. *How long wilt thou not depart from me*, etc.] From wrestling and contending with him, and afflicting of him; the Lord was too hard a combatant for job, and therefore he chose to be rid of him, and was impatient of it; or “look off from me” ^{f326}; so Mr. Broughton renders it, “how long wilt thou not look from me?” this is to be understood not of a look of love, which Job would never have desired to have averted from

him; but a frowning and angry look, such as the Lord put on in this dispensation of his providence towards him; the allusion may be to that sharp and constant look, which antagonists in wrestling have upon each other while conflicting together, and so the metaphor before used is still carried on:

nor let me alone till I swallow down my spittle? some think Job has reference to his disease which affected his throat, that being so dried up, or having a quinsy in it, that he could not swallow his spittle, or it was with great difficulty he did it; or rather it is a proverbial expression, signifying that his afflictions were incessant, that he had no respite nor intermission, had not space enough given him to swallow down his spittle, or take his breath, as in (~~1898~~ Job 9:18); so Schultens observes, that with the Arabians this was a proverbial form of speech, when they required time for anything, “give me time to swallow my spittle”; or when they had not proper time, or any intermission, used to say, “you will not give me time to swallow my spittle”; and one being asked a multitude of questions, replied, “suffer me to swallow my spittle”, that is, give me time to make an answer: or the sense is, that his antagonist in wrestling with him held him so fast, and kept him so close to it, and so twisted him about, and gave him fall upon fall, so that he had no time to swallow his spittle; or he so collared him, and gripped him, and almost throttled him, that he could not swallow it down; all which intends how closely and incessantly Job was followed with one affliction upon another, and how severe and distressing they were to him.

Ver. 20. *I have sinned*, etc.] Some render it, “if I have sinned” ^{f327}; be it so that I have, as my friends say, yet since there is forgiveness with thee, why should I be so afflicted as I am? but there is no need of such a supplement, the words are an affirmation, I have sinned, or I am a sinner; not that he owned that he had been guilty of any notorious sin, or had lived a sinful course of life, on account of which his afflictions came upon him, as his friends suggested; but that he was not without sin, was daily guilty of it, as men, even the best of men, ordinarily are; and being a sinner was not a match for a holy God; he could not contend with him, nor answer him for one sin of a thousand committed by him in thought, word, or deed; and therefore desires him to desist and depart from him, (see ~~1898~~ Luke 5:8);

what shall I do unto thee? this he said, not as one in distress of mind on account of sin, and under the load of the guilt of it, inquiring what he must do to make satisfaction for it, how and what way he could be saved from

it; for he knew that nothing done by him in a ceremonial way by sacrifices, nor in a moral way by the performance of duties, could take away sin, or atone for it, or save him from it; he knew this was only by his living Redeemer, and whom he knew and determined should be his salvation, and he only; (see ^{<R08D>}Job 9:30,31 13:15,16 19:25); but rather as it may be rendered, “what can or ought I do unto thee?” ^{f328} that is, more than I have done, namely, to confess my sin unto thee; what more dost thou require of me? or what more can be done by me, than to repent of my sin, acknowledge it, and beg pardon for it? as he does in (^{<R07E>}Job 7:21): or “what can I do unto thee?” thou art all over match for me, I cannot struggle and contend with thee, a sinful man with an holy God:

O thou preserver of men? as he is in a providential way, the supporter of men in their lives and beings; or, “O thou keeper of men” ^{f329}, as he is, not only of Israel, but of all others, and that night and day; perhaps Job may refer to his setting and keeping a watch over him, (^{<R07E>}Job 7:12); and enclosing and hedging him all around with afflictions, so that he could not get out of the world as he desired; or, “O thou observer of men” ^{f330}, of their words, ways, works, and actions, and who kept such a strict eye upon him while wrestling with him, and therefore what could he do? or, “O thou Saviour of men” ^{f331}, by whom only I can be saved from the sins I have been and am daily guilty of:

why hast thou set me as a mark against thee? as a butt to shoot thine arrows at, one affliction after another, thick and fast, (see ^{<R06E>}Job 16:12) (^{<R08D>}Lamentations 3:12); the words I think may be rendered, “why hast thou appointed me to meet thee”, or “for a meeting with thee?” ^{f332} as one man challenge, another to meet him in such a place and fight him: alas! I am not equal to thee, I am a mere worm, not able to contend with thee the mighty God, or to meet thee in the way of thy judgments, and to endure the heavy strokes of thy angry hand; and so Bar Tzemach paraphrases it,

“thou hast hated me, and not loved me; that thou hast set, or appointed me to meet thee, as a man meets his enemy in the time of his wrath, and he stirs up against him all his fury:”

and to the same sense, and much in the same words, Jarchi interprets it:

so that I am a burden to myself? weary of his life, through the many pressing and heavy afflictions upon him, as Rebekah was of hers, because of the daughters of Heth, (^{<0274>}Genesis 27:46). The reading which we

follow, and is followed by the Targum, and by most interpreters, Jewish and Christian, is a correction of the scribes, and one of the eighteen places corrected by them; which is no argument of the corruption of the Hebrew text, but of the contrary; since this was only placed in the margin of the Bible, as the Masorites afterwards did with their various readings, showing only what was their sense of this, and the like passages; and as an instruction how in their opinion to understand them, still retaining the other reading or writing; and which, according to Aben Ezra, may be rightly interpreted, and is, “so that I am a burden to thee”^{f333}; and which is followed by some, signifying, as Job thought at least, that he was so offensive to him that he could not bear him, but treated him as an enemy; was weary of him, as God is said to be of sinners and their sins, and of the services and duties of carnal professors, (see ²⁰¹⁴Isaiah 1:14 43:24); so Abendana interprets it,

“thou hast set me for a mark unto thee, as if I was a burden to thee.”

Ver. 21. *And why dost thou not pardon my transgression*, etc.] Or “lift [it] up”^{f334}; every sin is a transgression of the law of God, and the guilt of it upon the conscience is a burden too heavy to bear, and the punishment of it is intolerable; pardon lifts up and takes away all manner of sin, and all that is in sin; it takes off the load of sin from the conscience, and eases it, and loosens from obligation to punishment for it, which comes to pass in this manner: Jehovah has taken lifted up sin from his people, and has put and laid it, or caused it to meet on his Son, by the imputation of it to him; and he has voluntarily taken it on himself, and has bore it, and has taken it away by his blood and sacrifice, which being applied to the conscience of a sinner, lifts it up and takes it from thence, and speaks peace and pardon to him; it wholly and entirely removes it from him, even as far as the east is from the west; and for such an application Job postulates with God, with whom there was forgiveness, and who had proclaimed himself a God pardoning iniquity, transgression, and sin; and which he does when he both removes the guilt of it from the conscience, and takes away all the effects of it, such as afflictions and the like; in which latter sense Job may well be understood, as agreeing with his case and circumstances:

and take away mine iniquity? or “cause it to pass away”^{f335} from him, by applying his pardoning grace and mercy to his conscience, and by removing his afflicting hand from him:

for now shall I sleep in the dust; having sin pardoned, and the hand of God removed; I shall depart out of the world in peace, lie down in the grave, and rest quietly till the resurrection; there being in the bed of dust no tossings to and fro as now, nor a being scared with dreams and terrified with night visions. Mr. Broughton renders it, “whereas I lie now in the dust”; as if it referred to his present case, sitting as a mourner in dust and ashes, and his flesh clothed with clods of dust; or, in a figurative sense, lying in the dust of self-abhorrence; but the former sense seems best:

and thou shalt seek me in the morning, but I [shall] not [be]; meaning not in the morning of the resurrection, for then he will be found; but it is a figurative way of speaking, as Bar Tzemach observes, just as one goes to visit a sick man in a morning, and he finds him dead, and he is not any more in the land of the living: many interpreters understand this as Job’s sense, that he should quickly die; he could not be a long time in the circumstances he was; and therefore if the Lord had a mind to bestow any good thing on him in the present life, he must make haste to do it, since in a short time he should be gone, and then, if he sought for him, it would be too late, he should be no more; but the sense is this, that when he lay down in the dust, in the grave, he should be seen no more on earth by any man, nay, not by the eye of God himself, should the most early and the most diligent search be made for him. Mr. Broughton takes it to be a petition and request to die, rendering the words,

“why dost thou not quickly seek me out, that I should be no more?”

and to which others^{f336} agree.