

CHAPTER 11

INTRODUCTION TO JOB 11

In this chapter Zophar the Naamathite, Job's third friend, attacks him, and the with great acrimony and severity, and with much indecency; he charges him not only with loquacity, and vain babbling, but with lying, and with scoffing at God, and good men, (<B101>Job 11:1-3); which he attempts to support by some things Job had said, misrepresented by him, (<B104>Job 11:4); and wishes that God would take him in hand, and convince him of the wisdom of the divine proceedings with him, and of his lenity and mercy to him, (<B105>Job 11:5,6); and then discourses of the unsearchableness of God in his counsels, and conduct; of his sovereignty, and of his power, and of the vanity and folly of men, (<B107>Job 11:7-19); and as his friends before him, having insinuated that Job was guilty of some heinous sin, or sins, and especially of hypocrisy, advises him to repentance and reformation, and then it would be well with him; and he should enjoy much comfort, peace, and safety, even to old age, (<B113>Job 11:13-19); and concludes it should go ill with the wicked man and the hypocrite, such as he suggests Job was, (<B120>Job 11:20).

Ver. 1. *Then answered Zophar the Naamathite*, etc.] The third of Job's friends, that came to visit him, (see Gill on "<B11>Job 2:11"); and who perhaps might be the youngest, since his turn was to speak last; and he appears to have less modesty and prudence, and more fire and heat in him; than his other friends; though he might be the more irritated by observing, that their arguments were baffled by Job, and had no manner of effect on him, to cause him to recede from his first sentiments and conduct:

and said; as follows.

Ver. 2. *Should not the multitude of words be answered?* etc.] Zophar insinuates, that Job was a mere babbler, a talkative man, that had words, but no matter; said a great deal, but there was nothing in what he said; that his words were but wind, yea, in effect that he was a fool, who is commonly full of words, and is known by the multitude of them; and whereas he might think to bear down all before him in this way, and to

discourage persons from giving him an answer; this Zophar suggests should not be the case, nor would he be deterred hereby from giving one, which he now undertook: some supply it, as Bar Tzemach, “should not a man of a multitude of words”^{f470}, etc. a verbose man, a dealer in many words, and nothing else, should not he be “answered?” if he uses nothing but words, and there is no argument in them, they seem not to deserve an answer, unless it be to show the emptiness of them, expose a man’s folly, and pull down his pride and vanity:

and should a man full of talk be justified? or “a man of lips”^{f471}, an eloquent man, or one that affects to be so; a man of a fine speech, who artfully colours things, and makes a show of wisdom and truth, when there are neither in what he says; is such a man to be justified? he would seem to be in his own eyes at least, if not in the eyes of others, if not answered; he would be thought to have carried his point, to have had the better of the argument, and to have got the victory by dint of words and power of oratory; for this is not to be understood of justification before God; for as no man is heard and accepted by him for his “much speaking”, as was the opinion of the Heathens, so neither are any justified on account of their many words, any more than their many works; since, in a multitude of words there are often not only much folly and weakness, but vanities and sins, (~~2009~~ Proverbs 10:19 ~~2087~~ Ecclesiastes 5:7); there is indeed a sense in which a man is justified by his words, (~~4025~~ Matthew 12:37); when he confesses Christ, and professes to be justified by his righteousness, and believes in that, and pleads it as his justifying righteousness; he is justified by that righteousness; which is contained in the confession and profession of his faith; but this is not here meant.

Ver. 3. *Should thy lies make men hold their peace?* etc.] By which he means, either lies in common, untruths wilfully told, which are sins of a scandalous nature, which good men will not dare to commit knowingly; and to give a man, especially such a man, the lie, is very indecent; and to charge a man falsely with it is very injurious: or else doctrinal ones, errors in judgment, falsehoods concerning God and things divine; which not only are not of the truth, for no lie is of the truth, but are against it; and indeed where the case is notorious in either sense, men should not be silent, or be as men deaf and dumb, as the word^{f472} signifies, as if they did not hear the lies told them, or were unconcerned about them, or connived at them: David would not suffer a liar to be near him, nor dwell in his house, (~~3910~~ Psalm 101:7); a common liar ought to be reprov'd and rejected; and

doctrinal liars and lies should be opposed and resisted; truth should be contended for, and nothing be done against it, but everything for it: it is criminal to be silent at either sort of lies; nor should the bold and blustering manner in which they are told frighten men from a detection of them, which perhaps is what may be hinted at here ^{f473}; some render the words ^{f474}, “should thine iniquity frighten men?” they are not so strong and nervous as to appear unanswerable, and deter men from undertaking a reply unto them:

and, when thou mockest, shall no man make thee ashamed? here Job is represented as a mocker of God, which is inferred from (~~1808~~-Job 10:3); and at his friends, and the arguments they used, and the advice they gave, which is concluded from his words in (~~1805~~-Job 6:25,26); and as one hardened, who was not, and could not be made ashamed of what he had said against either, by anything that had been offered for his reproof and conviction: to make a mock of God, or a jest of divine things, or scoff at good men, is very bad; indeed it is the character of the worst of men; and such should be made ashamed, if possible, by exposing their sin and folly; and if not here, they will be covered with shame hereafter, when they shall appear before God, the Judge of all, who will not be mocked, and shall see the saints at the right hand of Christ, whom they have jeered and scoffed at: but this was not Job’s true character; he was no mocker of God nor of good men; in this he was wronged and injured, and had nothing of this sort to be made ashamed of.

Ver. 4. *For thou hast said*, etc.] What follows is produced to support the charge, especially of lying, which seems to be founded on what he had said in (~~1860~~-Job 6:10,30);

my doctrine [is] pure; free from error, unadulterated, unmixed, not blended with Heathenish principles and human doctrines; but tending to purity of heart and life, as every word of God, and doctrine that comes from him, is pure, yea, very pure, like silver purified seven times; and such was Job’s doctrine which he “received” from God, “took” ^{f475} up and professed, taught and delivered to others, so far as was agreeable to the will of God, and the revelation he had then made: and it appears that Job had very clear and sublime notions of God, of his being and perfections, of his works of nature, providence, and grace; of Christ his living Redeemer, of redemption and justification by him, and of the resurrection of the dead; and had purer and better notions of divine things than his friends had, and

spoke better things of God than they did, God himself being witness, (^{<1817>}Job 42:7,8); some interpret this of the purity of his life and conversation: he is further charged with saying:

and I am clean in thine eyes: speaking to God, as Jarchi observes; and indeed so he was, and every believer is, in an evangelic sense; as to the new man, which is created in righteousness and true holiness, is without sin, and cannot commit it; and as washed from all sin in the blood of Christ, and as clothed with his righteousness, in which the saints are faultless before the throne, and are unblamable and irreprovable in the sight of God: but Zophar's meaning is, that Job had asserted that he was entirely free from sin in himself, was wholly without it, and did not commit any; and had appealed to God, as knowing it to be true; and which he seems to have grounded on what he had said, (^{<1817>}Job 10:7); through a mistake of his sense; which was not that he was free from sin entirely, but from any gross notorious sin, or from a wicked course of living, and particularly from the sin of hypocrisy, his friends suggested he was guilty of; otherwise he confesses himself a sinner, and prays for the pardon of his sins, and disclaims perfection in himself; (see ^{<1817>}Job 7:20,21 9:20,30,31); and indeed there is no creature in itself clean in the sight of God, either angels or men; every man is naturally unclean; no good man is without sin, without the being, indwelling, and commission of it; nor will any truly gracious man say he is; he knows otherwise, and acknowledges it; he that says he is must be an ignorant man, or a vain and pharisaical man; yea, must not say the truth: some have suspected the first part of the words to be Job's, "and I am clean": and the other Zophar's explaining them; that is, "in thine eyes"^{f476}; in his own apprehension, as if he had a high and conceited opinion of himself.

Ver. 5. *But O that God would speak*, etc.] To Job, and stop his mouth, so full of words; convict him of his lies, reprove him for his mocks and scoffs, and make him ashamed of them; refute his false doctrine and oppose it, and show him his folly and vanity in imagining it to be pure, and in conceit thinking himself to be free from sin, and even in the sight of God himself: Zophar seems by this wish to suggest, that what his friends had as yet spoke had had no effect upon Job, and signified nothing; and that he despaired of bringing him to any true sense of himself and his case, but that God only could do it; and therefore he entreats he would take him in hand, and speak unto him; as he had by his providences in afflicting him, so by his spirit in teaching and instructing him; and he adds:

and open his lips against thee; or rather, “with thee”, or “to thee”^{f477}; converse with thee; speak out his mind freely; disclose the secrets of his wisdom, as in (~~8106~~ Job 11:6), and that for thy good; fully convince thee of thy sins, mistakes, and follies: for, notwithstanding all the heat and warmth of Zophar’s spirit, yet, being a good man, as it cannot be thought he should wilfully and knowingly slander Job, and put a false gloss on his words, so neither could he desire any hurt or injury to be done him, or that God would deal with him as an enemy; only convince and reprove him for his sin, and justify himself and his own conduct, which he imagined Job had arraigned.

Ver. 6. *And that he would show thee the secrets of wisdom*, etc.] Either of sound doctrine, in opposition to his own doctrine he had such a vain opinion of; and then he would see, as he thought, that it was not so pure as he imagined it to be: the Gospel, and the doctrines of it, are the wisdom of God, the produce of it, and in which it is displayed; as in the doctrines of election to grace and glory, of redemption by Christ, of justification by his righteousness, and pardon by his blood; by which all the divine perfections are glorified, the justice and holiness of God, as well as his grace and mercy: and there are “secrets” or mysteries in this wisdom of God, (~~4106~~ 1 Corinthians 2:6,7 ~~4031~~ Matthew 13:11); of mysterious doctrines, which, though revealed, yet the “modus”, or manner of them, is not to be searched out and understood; such is the trinity of Persons in the Godhead, the union of the two natures in Christ, the saint’s union to God and communion with him, the resurrection of the dead, etc. and these and such like them are only shown by the Lord; men cannot come at them of themselves, by their own natural reason and understanding; it is God that reveals them, in his word, and by his spirit, and gives his people an increasing knowledge of them, (~~4106~~ 1 Corinthians 2:9,10 ~~4254~~ Psalm 25:14 119:18); or it may be rather the secrets of the wisdom of Divine Providence, in the government of the world, and the ordering of all things in it according to the counsel of God, may be here meant; there is a great display of the wisdom of God in Providence, and there are secrets in it undiscoverable by creatures; his ways are past finding out, they are in the deep waters, and his footsteps are not known, nor to be traced; though sometimes he makes his judgments manifest, and his mind in them; and what he does now, which men know not, he shows them hereafter; especially his own people, and particularly when in the sanctuary of the Lord, and in the way of their duty, when everything appears right and

beautiful they before were ready to complain of; (see ^{<513>}Romans 11:33); and then it is seen:

that [they are] double to that which is! or to “wisdom” ^{f478}; as the word is rendered in (^{<307>}Proverbs 2:7); that is, to human wisdom; and then the sense is, that the secrets of divine wisdom displayed, whether in the doctrines of grace or in the methods of Providence, being shown and made manifest, would appear to be “double”; that is, vastly, yea, infinitely to exceed the wisdom of men; and that these, which men are apt to arraign as weak and wrong, are the effects of the highest wisdom, or they then appear so “to a man of wisdom” ^{f479}; so the supply may be made, as is in (^{<309>}Micah 6:9); or else the sense is, were Job let in to the secret wisdom of God more, and into the purity and holiness of his law, which some understand by “that which is”, or “wisdom”, and render it “according to the law” ^{f480} and see what that requires, and how much short he comes of it, and what and how many were his transgressions and violations of it; it then would be plain to him, that the punishment that God, in wisdom, and according to his righteous law, might inflict upon him, would be double; or, greatly, yea, infinitely exceed those afflictions he was now exercised with, and therefore he had no reason to complain; to which agrees what follows:

know therefore that God exacteth of thee [less] than thine iniquities [deserve]; or punishes, afflicts, or chastises, less than the deserts of sin; (see ^{<503>}Ezra 9:13); some render it, “God exacteth of thee [something] of thine iniquity”; so Junius and Tremellius; according to which version the sense is, that sins are debts, and these many; and that payment of part of the debt of punishment for them is only required, which is not truth; for, though there is a debt of punishment due to justice for sin, yet it is not part of it only that is required of the sinner, but the whole, if any; for indeed no part of it is exacted of God’s people, since the whole has been exacted of Christ, and he has answered and paid the whole debt, and blotted out the handwriting against them; wherefore the word used has rather the signification of forgetfulness, and may be rendered, either “God hath caused”, or “suffered thee to forget [part] of thine iniquity” ^{f481}; or thou couldest never say that thou wert clean in his eye, and free from sin; or, “God himself has forgot part of thine iniquity” ^{f482}; in that he has afflicted thee so mildly, and with so much lenity; or, “hath forgotten thee for thine iniquity” ^{f483}; forsook him, hid his face from him, laid his hand on him, and sorely chastised him, so that he seemed to be forgotten by him, or he to

forget to be gracious to him; all which were owing to his sins, these were the causes of it; or, “will condemn thee for thine iniquity”^{f484}.

Ver. 7. *Canst thou by searching find out God?* etc.] God is not to be found out by human search; that there is a God may be found out by inquiring into the book of nature, by considering the creatures that are made, who all proclaim some first cause or maker of them, who is God; but then it cannot be found out what God is, his nature, being, and perfections: an Heathen philosopher^{f485}, being asked by a certain king what God was, required a day to give in his answer; when that was up he desired a second, and still went on asking more; and being demanded the reason of his dilatoriness, replied, the more he had considered the question, the more obscure it was to him: the world by wisdom, or the wiser part of the Heathen world, knew not God; though they knew there was one, they knew not who and what he was; and therefore in some places altars were erected to the unknown God, (^{<4173>}Acts 17:23): and though some of the perfections of God may be investigated from the works of nature, such as the power, wisdom, and goodness of God, (^{<4119>}Romans 1:19,20); yet not all his perfections, such as his grace, mercy, etc. proclaimed and displayed in Christ; nor indeed his counsels, purposes, and decrees, which lie in his eternal mind, are the thoughts of his heart, the deep things of God, which none but the Spirit of God searches, knows, and reveals; and since Zophar’s request was, that God should show to Job “the secrets of wisdom”, these may be meant here, either evangelical wisdom, the wisdom of God in a mystery hid in his heart from everlasting, and the mysterious truths and doctrines or it, things which eye has not seen, nor ear heard, nor has it entered into the heart of man to conceive of; these are not to be found out by human search, but are by the revelation of God; or else the reasons of the proceedings of God in Providence, which are out of the reach of men, dark, intricate, mysterious, unsearchable, and past finding out:

canst thou find out the Almighty unto perfection? to the uttermost of his nature and perfections; all his attributes, the last of them, and the extremity thereof: that God is perfect and entire, wanting nothing, and is possessed of all perfections, may be found out, or otherwise he would not be God; but his essence and attributes, being infinite, can never be traced and comprehended by finite minds; there are some perfections of God we have no idea of, but are lost in confusion and amazement as soon as we think of them and reason about them, as his eternity and immensity particularly; for, when we have rolled over in our minds millions and millions of ages, we

are as far off from eternity as when we began; and when we have pervaded all worlds, and every space and place, we have got no further into immensity than at first; we are confounded when we think of a Being without beginning and without bounds, unoriginated, and unlimited; yea, even it is but a small part of the works of God in creation that is known by men, or of God in and by them; nay, by divine revelation, which gives the clearest and most enlarged view of him, whereby he has proclaimed his name, a God gracious and merciful, etc. yet it is only his back parts that are shown, not his face; it is only through a glass, darkly, we now see; indeed, in the other world, we shall see him face to face, and as he is, yet then never comprehend his essence: and, after all, it is only in Christ that God is to be found, to saving purposes; in him is the most glorious display of him; being the brightness of his glory, and the express image of his person; and not only all his perfections are in him, as a divine Person, but they are glorified by him as Mediator; every step in salvation is taken in Christ, and every blessing of grace comes through him; what of the divine Presence and communion with God is enjoyed is by him; and he will be the medium of the enjoyment of God, and of all the glory and happiness of the saints in the world to come.

Ver. 8. [*It is*] *as high as heaven; what canst thou do?* etc.] Or, “is higher than the heavens”^{f486}; either the wisdom of God and the secrets of it; the perfection of his wisdom, by which he has made the heavens; or evangelical wisdom, hid in his heart, and which the highest of creatures, the angels, come at the knowledge of only by revelation; and therefore, what can man do to find it out, unless God reveals it? or wisdom displayed in dark providences, which can never be accounted for until the judgments of God are made manifest: or else, “he [that is] God”, as the Vulgate Latin version, is “higher than the heavens”; the heaven is his throne on which he sits, and therefore he must be higher than that; the heavens, and heaven of heavens, cannot contain him; he fills up the infinite space beyond them; how is it possible therefore to find him out, to comprehend him?

deeper than hell; what canst thou know? meaning, neither the grave nor the place of the damned, for both which “Sheol” is sometimes used, but the centre or lowest part of the earth; there is a depth in God, in his essence, in his thoughts, in his wisdom, displayed in nature, providence, and grace, that is unfathomable; we can know nothing of it but what he is pleased to make known; (see ¹⁹¹¹⁵Psalm 92:5 ⁶¹¹³³Romans 11:33); the Targum of the verse is,

“in the height of heaven, what canst thou do? in the law, which is deeper than hell, what canst thou know?”

Ver. 9. *The measure thereof [is] longer than the earth, and broader than the sea.*] Length is generally ascribed to the earth, and width to the sea; the ends of the earth are used for a great distance, and the sea is called the great and wide sea; see ^{f487} (~~470~~ Psalm 72:1 104:25); but God and his perfections, particularly his wisdom and understanding, are infinite, (~~475~~ Psalm 147:5); and will admit of no dimensions; as his love, so his wisdom, has an height which cannot be reached, a depth that cannot be fathomed, and a length and breadth immeasurable; (see ~~488~~ Ephesians 3:18); from hence it appears that God is omniscient, omnipresent, and incomprehensible; and since he is to be found in Christ, and in him only, it is in vain for us to seek for him elsewhere: next the sovereignty of God is discoursed of.

Ver. 10. *If he cut off,* etc.] The horns, power, dominion, and authority of the wicked; or the spirits of princes, or kingdoms and states, whole nations, as he did the seven nations of Canaan; or families, as Job’s, his servants, and his children; or particular persons, by diseases, or by judgments, by famine, sword, and pestilence; there is none can hinder him; he will do what he pleases: or, as others render it, “if he changes” ^{f488}; if he makes revolutions in governments, changes in families, and in the estates of men, as in Job’s; or changes men’s countenances by death, and sends them out of time into eternity, there is no opposing him: or, “if he passes through” ^{f489}, as the word is sometimes used; (see ~~388~~ Isaiah 8:8); if he comes out of his place to punish the inhabitants of the earth, and goes through a kingdom and nation, making or suffering to be made devastations everywhere, as he went through the land of Egypt and smote all the firstborn in it, there is no stopping him: or, “if he passes on” ^{f490}, or “from” hence, or goes away; (see ~~408~~ 1 Samuel 11:3); or departs from a people or particular person, even his own people, and hides his face from them, and is long, at least as they think, before he returns; who can behold him, or find him out, or cause him to show himself? (see ~~823~~ Job 23:3,8,9 34:29); or, “if he subverts” ^{f491} and overturns things, or should reduce the world and all things in it to a chaos, as at the deluge, or as he overturned the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah, or should set on fire the whole course of nature, and burn up the whole world and all in it, and reduce it to ashes, as he will; there is none can stay his hand, and obstruct him in his designs and measures:

and shut up; should he do so; shut up in a civil sense, either in a prison, as Gersom, or in the hands of an enemy, by giving them unto them, to be enclosed and straitened by them, there is none can deliver; (^{<498>}Psalm 31:8 ^{<4523>}Deuteronomy 32:30); or to shut them up as he did Noah in the ark, by protecting them by his power and providence, and so appear to be on their side, and for them; who then can be against them? or what does it signify if any are, if the Lord shuts them up and keeps them close? or in a spiritual sense, if he concludes men in sin, and shuts them up in unbelief, and under the law; who but himself can set them free? or, if good men are shut up in their frames, and straitened in their souls, that they cannot come forth in the lively exercise of grace, and free discharge of duty; there is no opening for them till he pleases, (^{<4988>}Psalm 88:8 ^{<4824>}Job 12:14);

or gather together, then who can hinder him? either gathers them into one place, in a civil sense; or in a gracious manner, with great mercies and everlasting kindness to himself, to have communion with him; to his son, to partipate of the blessings of his grace, and to his church and people, to enjoy all spiritual privileges with them; or, gathers men at and by death; (see ^{<4834>}Job 34:14,15); and as he will gather them at the last day, even all nations, before him, the tares, and burn them and his wheat, and put them into his garner; and when he does any and every of these things, who can hinder him or turn him back from doing what he pleases: Job says much the same in (^{<4892>}Job 9:12); the Targum is,

“if he passes through and shuts up the heavens with clouds, and gathers armies, who can turn him back?”

Ver. 11. *For he knoweth vain men*, etc.] Or, “men of vanity” ^{f492}, as all men are; men of low degree are vanity, and men of high degree a lie, and they are both lighter than vanity, (^{<4969>}Psalm 62:9); and the Lord knows them, and knows them to be so; he knows all men, and all that is in them; he knows the vanity of their minds, and the vain thoughts that are in them; all their vain and idle words, and their vain lives and conversations; and therefore it is no wonder he does the above things at his pleasure:

he seeth wickedness also; the wickedness of their hearts and lives, their secret and open wickedness, their wicked thoughts, words, and actions; or, “men of wickedness”; even wicked men; they are all seen by him; nothing is or can be hid from him; he is God omniscient, the searcher of the hearts and trier of the reins of the children of men:

will he not then consider [it]? so as to punish or correct for it? he will: or, “he does not consider”^{f493}; he seems as if he did not; as if he took no notice of wicked men, and of their wickedness, because he does not immediately punish or correct for it; or, he has no need to take any time to consider thereof, he sees and knows at once what it is, and what men are: Gersom reads this clause in connection with the former; “he sees [the men] of wickedness”, and him who does “not consider” the ways of the Lord; or, the man does not consider that God sees him; so Ben Melech.

Ver. 12. *For vain man would be wise*, etc.] Or “hollow”^{f494}, empty man; empty of all that is good, though full of all unrighteousness; without God, the knowledge, love, and fear of him; without Christ, the knowledge of him, faith in him, and love to him; destitute of the Spirit, and of his grace, having no good thing in him: yet such a man “would be wise”; not desirous of true wisdom, but would be thought to be wise; he in conceit thinks himself that he is very wise, and he would fain have others think so of him; or is, or “may”, or “will be wise”^{f495}; may be made wise by the chastisements of God through afflictions, being sanctified to him by the grace of God; though he is a vain man, and also is what is after said of him; afflicting dispensations are sometimes teaching ones, and in the school of afflictions many useful lessons are learnt, whereby men become wiser; (see ^{<4942>}Psalm 94:12); though some understand the word in a very different sense, and interpret it bold, audacious, proud, and haughty; man takes heart^{f496}, and lifts up himself against God, stretches his hand, and hardens his heart against him:

though man be born [like] a wild ass’s colt; foolish and stupid, without understanding of divine and spiritual things; given to lust and wantonness, to serve divers lusts and pleasures; not subject to the yoke of the law of God, stubborn, refractory, and untameable, but by the grace of God; the ass, and especially the wild ass, and the colt of one, being a very stupid creature, and a very lustful and wanton one, chooses to be free, will not bear the yoke, but ranges about in desert places; (see ^{<8915>}Job 39:5 ^{<4923>}Jeremiah 2:23,24); some render the words, “and a wild ass’s colt is”, or “may be born a man”^{f497}; that is, one that is by his first birth, and by his life and conversation, like a wild ass’s colt, is or may be born again, and be made a new man, as Jarchi also interprets it, and so become a wise, knowing, and good man, which is a great truth; but whether the truth in this text, is not so clear: the Targum seems to incline this way;

“a refractory, youth that grows wise shall become a great man.”

Ver. 13. *If thou prepare thine heart, and stretch out thine hands towards him.*] In this and the following verses Zophar proceeds to give some advice to Job; which, if taken, would issue in his future happiness, but otherwise it would be ill with him; he advises him to pray to God with an heart prepared for such service; so some render the last clause in the imperative, “stretch out thine hands ^{f498} towards him”; that is, towards God; for, though not expressed, is implied, whose immensity, sovereignty, and omniscience, Zophar had been discoursing of; and, though stretching out the hands is sometimes a gesture of persons in distress and mournful circumstances, thereby signifying their grief and sorrow, and of others in great danger, in order to lay up anything for safety; and of conquered persons resigning themselves up into the hands of the conqueror; and of such who are desirous of being in friendship, alliance, and association with others; yet it is also sometimes used as for the whole of religious worship, (~~1340~~ Psalm 44:20); so particularly for prayer, (~~1380~~ Psalm 88:9); and this was what all Job’s friends advised him to, to humble himself before God, to pray for the forgiveness of his sins, and for the removal of his afflictions and deliverance from them; (see ~~1383~~ Job 5:8 8:5,6); in order to which it is proper the “heart [should be] prepared”; as it is requisite it should be to every good work by the grace of God so to this: and then may it be said to be prepared for such service, when the spirit of God is given as a spirit of grace and supplication, whereby the heart is impressed with a sense of its wants, and so knows what to pray for; and arguments and fit words are put into the mind and mouth, and it knows how to pray as it should; and is enabled to approach the throne of grace with sincerity, fervency, and in the exercise of faith, being sprinkled from an evil conscience by the blood of Jesus, and resigned to the divine will, in all its petitions it is directed to make: now this is the work of God, to prepare the heart; the preparation of the heart, as well as the answer of the tongue, is from the Lord; he is prayed to for it, and it is affirmed he will do it, (~~1360~~ Proverbs 16:1 ~~1398~~ 1 Chronicles 29:18 ~~1907~~ Psalm 10:17); but it is here represented as if it was man’s act, which is said not to suggest any power in man to do it of himself; at least this is not the evangelic sense of such phrases; for Zophar might be of a more legal spirit, and not so thoroughly acquainted with the evangelic style; but this might be said, to show the necessity of such a preparation, and to stir up to a concern for it, and to expect and look for it from and by the grace of God.

Ver. 14. *If iniquity [be] in thine hand*, etc.] For, as the heart must be prepared for the stretching out of the hand in prayer to God, so it is not any hand that is to be stretched out or lifted up unto God; not hands full of blood, or defiled with sin, but holy hands; (see ^{<3015>}Isaiah 1:15) (^{<3018>}1 Timothy 2:8); it is not said, if iniquity be in thine heart, or on thy conscience,

put it far away; for sin cannot be put away out of the heart, it will have a place there as long as we live; though it should not be regarded, cherished, and nourished there; if so, God will not hear prayer, (^{<3068>}Psalm 66:18); and nothing can put away or remove afar off guilt from the conscience but the blood of Jesus; which, being sprinkled, purifies the heart and purges the conscience from dead works; but it is said, if it is in thine hand, which is the instrument of action, and may signify the commission of sin, and a series and course of sinning, which Job's friends suspected he was privately guilty of; and therefore advise him to leave off such a sinful course, and abstain from all appearance of evil, and live a holy and godly conversation:

and let not wickedness dwell in thy tabernacles; in any room or apartment of his house; some restrain this, and iniquity in the former clause, to ill gotten goods, obtained by rapine and oppression, which he is advised to restore to those that had been injured by him; but there is no need to limit it to any sin: besides, wickedness may be put for wicked men, and the sense be, that, as he should not indulge to any iniquity himself, so neither should he suffer wicked men to dwell in his house, but make a general reformation in himself and in his family.

Ver. 15. *For then shall thou lift up thy face without spot*, etc.] Either before men, being in all good conscience, walking in all the commandments and ordinances of the Lord, blameless, exercising a conscience void of offence towards God and men; and so be able to say as Samuel did, "whose ass have I taken?" etc. (^{<0928>}1 Samuel 12:3); or rather before God, as in (^{<1826>}Job 21:26); using an holy boldness and an humble confidence with him at the throne of grace, in the view of the blood, righteousness, and sacrifice of his living Redeemer he had knowledge of, as every true believer may; who, though he is not without spot in himself, yet, being washed in the blood of Christ, and clothed in his righteousness, he is all fair, and without spot or wrinkle, or any such thing; and may stand before the throne without fault, and appear before God, and in his sight, unblamable and irreprovable:

yea, thou shalt be steadfast: firm and solid, rooted and grounded in the love of God; having a firm persuasion of interest in it, and that nothing shall separate from it; being built on the foundation of Christ, and established in the exercise of faith on him; the affections being steady towards him, and fixedly set on divine and heavenly things; continuing steadfast in the doctrines of grace, and not carried about with strange doctrines, or every wind of doctrine; as well as constant and immovable in the work of the Lord, always employed in his service, and doing his will, from which nothing can move; not reproach, affliction, and persecution; and to be thus steady and fixed is a great privilege:

and shalt not fear; evil tidings of evil times; of wars and rumours of wars, famine, pestilence, earthquakes, and other judgments; of changes and revolutions in kingdoms and states, or of what is coming upon the world, according to promise and prophecy, the heart being fixed and well established, trusting in the Lord; nor be afraid of evil men or devils, or any enemies whatever, nor of death, the king of terrors, that being one of the believer's blessings, and a friend of his; nor of hell and damnation, or the second death, or wrath to come; from all which the saints are secure.

Ver. 16. *Because thou shall forget [thy] misery*, etc.] Former afflictions and distresses; having an abundance of prosperity and happiness, and long continued; and so, in process of time, the miseries and distresses before endured are forgotten; thus it was with Joseph in his advanced state, and therefore he called one of his sons Manasseh, (⁴¹⁵Genesis 41:51); and as it is with convinced and converted persons and believers in Christ, who, under first convictions and awakenings, are filled with sorrow and distress, on a view of their miserable estate by nature; but when Christ is revealed to them as their Saviour and Redeemer, and the love of God is shed abroad in their hearts, and they have faith and hope in Jesus, and a comfortable view of heaven and happiness, and eternal life, by him, they forget their spiritual poverty, and remember their misery no more, unless it be to magnify the riches of the grace of God; (see ³¹⁶Proverbs 31:6,7);

[and] remember [it] as waters [that] pass away; either the waters of the stream in a river, which, when gone, are seen and remembered no more or as waters occasioned by floods in the winter season, which when over, and summer is come, are gone and are no more discerned; and as they pass from the places where they were, so from the minds of men: or it may be respect is had to the waters of Noah's flood, which, according to the divine

promise and oath, should no more go over the earth, (^{<0095>}Genesis 9:15); and being past and gone, and no fear or danger of their returning, are forgotten.

Ver. 17. *And [thine] age shall be clearer than the noonday*, etc.] That is, the remainder of his days; the latter part of his life, which was yet to come, should be no more attended with the darkness of adversity; but the light of prosperity should shine upon him, and exceed the light of the sun at noonday: the phrase is expressive of the wonderful change there should be in his state and circumstances; (see ^{<2880>}Isaiah 58:10);

thou shall shine forth; like the rising sun, or as when it breaks forth out of a cloud; in a temporal sense, it may be understood of his enjoying health, wealth, and friends, the candle of the Lord shining upon him, as in days past; and in a spiritual sense, of his being favoured with the light of God's countenance, the Sun of righteousness rising upon him, with healing in his wings; the graces of the Spirit being brightened, and in lively exercise, and a large share of spiritual light and knowledge being given: the word used has a contrary sense, and signifies darkness and obscurity, and may be rendered "although thou art", or hast been, or mayest "be dark"^{f499}; under dark and afflictive providences, as he had been, and still was and in darkness of soul, under the hidings of God's face: yet

thou shall be as the morning; whose light breaks forth suddenly, and makes everything gay and cheerful; especially a morning without clouds, when it is bright and clear, and is increasing more and more: by this metaphor is signified, that Job would at once emerge out of his darkness, afflictions, and trouble, and have abundance of joy and comfort, which would be increasing in every sense; (see ^{<2048>}Proverbs 4:18).

Ver. 18. *And thou shall be secure*, etc.] From coming into like darkness, difficulties, and distress again, and from every evil and enemy; nothing shall come nigh to disturb and hurt, nothing to be feared from any quarter, all around: or "shalt be confident"^{f500}; have a strong faith and full assurance of it, in the love of God, in the living Redeemer, and in the promises which respect the life that now is, and that which is to come:

because there is hope; of the mercy of God, of salvation by Christ, and of eternal glory and happiness, as well as of a continuance of outward prosperity; faith and hope mutually assist each other; faith is the substance

of things hoped for, and hope of better and future things on a good foundation encourages faith and confidence:

yea, thou shalt dig [about thee]; to let in stakes for the pitching and fixing of tents to dwell in, and for more commodious pasturage; or for wells of water, for the supply both of the family and the flocks; or rather, for ditches and trenches to secure from thieves and robbers, or for drains to carry off floods of water:

[and] thou shalt take thy rest in safety; lie down on the bed and sleep in the night season in peace and quietness, having nothing to fear; being well entrenched, and secure from depredations and inundations; and, more especially being hedged about and protected by the power and providence of God; (see ^{<398B>}Psalm 3:5 4:8); the Targum is,

“thou shalt prepare a grave, and lie down, and sleep secure.”

Ver. 19. *Also thou shall lie down, and none shall make [thee] afraid,* etc.] Either lie down on his bed, as before, or by his flocks, and where they lie down, and none should disturb him or them; not thieves and robbers, such as the Chaldeans and Sabeans had been to him, nor lions, bears, and wolves;

yea, many shall make suit unto thee; make their supplications, present their requests and petitions for relief under necessitous circumstances, or for protection from the injuries and insults of others; as the poor and needy, the widow and fatherless, had done to him in times past, when in his prosperity, and when he was a friend unto them, and the father of them; (see ^{<398B>}Proverbs 19:6); or, “the great ones ^{f501} shall make suit to thee”; to have his favour and friendship, his counsel and advice, his company and conversation; he should be applied unto and courted by men of all sorts, which would be no small honour to him; (see ^{<398B>}Psalm 45:12).

Ver. 20. *But the eyes of the wicked shall fail,* etc.] Either through grief and envy at Job’s prosperity, and with looking for his fall into troubles again; or rather through expectation of good things for themselves, and for deliverance out of trouble, but all in vain; (see ^{<2947>}Lamentations 4:17);

and they shall not escape; afflictions and calamities in this life, nor the righteous judgment, nor wrath to come: or, “refuge shall perish from them” ^{f502}; there will be none to betake themselves unto for safety; in vain will

they seek it from men; refuge will fail them, and no man care for them; and in vain will they fly to rocks and mountains to fall upon them:

and their hope [shall be as] the giving up of the ghost; it is with them as when a man is just expiring, and it is all over with him, and there is no hope of his reviving; so the hope of wicked men is a dying hope, a lost hope; it is not hope, but despair; their hope is gone, and they are lost and undone; and if they retain their hope in life, when they come to die they have none; though the righteous has hope in his death, their hope dies with them, if not before them: or, “their hope is the giving up of the ghost”^{f503}; all they have to hope and wish for is death, to relieve them from their present troubles and agonies they are in; and sometimes are left amidst their guilt, despair, and horror, to destroy themselves: now Zophar by all this would suggest, that should not Job take his advice, he would appear to be such a wicked man, whose eyes would fail for his own help, and would not escape the judgments of God here and hereafter, and would die without hope, in black despair; or at least without any hope that would be of any avail.