

# CHAPTER 13

## INTRODUCTION TO JOB 13

Job begins this chapter by observing the extensiveness of his knowledge, as appeared from his preceding discourse, by which it was evident he was not less knowing than his friends, (<sup><K1301></sup>Job 13:1,2); and therefore would have nothing to do with them as judges in his cause, but would appeal to God, and debate the matter before him, and leave it to his decision, since he could expect no good from them, (<sup><K1303></sup>Job 13:3,4); and all the favour he entreats of them is, that they would for the future be no longer speakers, but hearers, (<sup><K1305></sup>Job 13:5,6,13,17); he expostulates with them about their wicked and deceitful way of pleading for God, and against him, (<sup><K1307></sup>Job 13:7,8); and in order to strike an awe upon them, suggests to them, that they were liable to the divine scrutiny; that God was not to be mocked by them, that he would surely reprove them for their respect of persons, and desires them to consider his dreadful majesty, and what frail creatures they were, (<sup><K1309></sup>Job 13:9-12); then he expresses his confidence in God, that he should be saved by him, notwithstanding the afflictive circumstances he was in, (<sup><K1314></sup>Job 13:14-16); and doubted not he should be able so to plead his cause, as that he should be justified, if God would but withdraw his hand, and take off his dread from him, (<sup><K1318></sup>Job 13:18-22); he desires to know what his sins were, that he should hide his face from him, and treat him with so much severity, who was but a poor, weak, feeble creature, (<sup><K1324></sup>Job 13:24,25); and concludes with a complaint of the bitterness and sharpness of his afflictions, with which he was consumed, (<sup><K1326></sup>Job 13:26-28).

**Ver. 1.** *Lo, mine eye hath seen all [this]*, etc.] Or “all those things” <sup>f533</sup> he had been discoursing of, concerning the wisdom and power of God, and his friends also; some of these he had seen instances of, he had been an eyewitness of them, and could give an ocular testimony to them; and others he had discerned with the eyes of his understanding, being opened and enlightened, and had a clear and distinct view of them, so that he had seen and knew as much of these things as any of them had. Some <sup>f534</sup> interpret it “all” other things, pertaining to the same subject; by what he had said, it

might be concluded he knew more; this was but a sample or specimen of his knowledge, which, when observed, it might be perceived what an understanding he had in such divine things: the words are indeed absolute, “my eye hath seen all things” <sup>f535</sup>, which must not be taken in the largest and comprehensive sense of all things to be seen, heard, and understood; for though Job’s knowledge was very great, yet it did not take so great a compass as this; many things in nature his eye had not seen, others in providence he could not discern, and but a small portion of God, of his nature, perfections, ways, and works, was known by him, as he himself confesses elsewhere, (~~Job~~ Job 26:14); this therefore must be limited and restrained to the subject matter in hand, and to what he and his friends had been treating of:

*mine ear hath heard*; some things he had knowledge of by the report of others, from his forefathers, his ancestors, men of capacity and probity, that could be credited, and safely depended on, and even some things by revelation from God; for if Eliphaz his friend had an heavenly vision, and a divine revelation, which his ear received a little of, why may it not be thought that Job also was sometimes favoured with visions and revelations from God, whereby he became more intimately acquainted with divine and spiritual things?

*and understood it*; that is, what he had seen and heard; some things may be seen, and yet not known what they are; and other things may be heard, and not understood; but Job had an understanding of what he had seen with his own eyes, or had received by revelation, human or divine: and all this is introduced with a “lo” or “behold”; not as a note of admiration at his knowledge, though the things known by him were wonderful, but as a note of attention to them, and to his remark on them, and as expressive of the certainty of his sight, hearing, and understanding of these things.

**Ver. 2.** *What ye know, [the same] do I know also*, etc.] Concerning God and his perfections, his sovereignty, holiness, justice, wisdom, power, goodness, etc. and concerning his providences, and his dealings with men in an ordinary or in an extraordinary way:

*I [am] not inferior unto you*; as might be deduced from the preceding discourse; (see Gill on “~~Job~~ Job 12:3”).

**Ver. 3.** *Surely I would speak to the Almighty*, etc.] Or “therefore I would speak” <sup>f536</sup>, since he knew as much as his friends, and they knew no more

than he, if so much, he would have no more to do with them, they should not be his judges; nor would he be determined by them, but would appeal to God, and plead his own cause before him, by whom he doubted not he should be candidly heard; he knew that he was the Judge of all the earth, and would do right; and that he sat on a throne judging righteously, and would maintain his right and his cause; that he would judge him according to his righteousness and integrity, of which he was conscious, and would pass a just decisive sentence in his favour, and give the cause for him against his friends, as he afterwards did; for this is not to be understood of speaking to him in prayer, though that is a speech either of the heart or of the tongue, or of both, to God; and which he allows of, yea, delights in, and which is a wonderful condescension; and therefore it may be used with boldness and freedom, and which gracious souls are desirous of; and the consideration of God being “almighty”, or “all sufficient”, is an argument, motive, and inducement to them to speak or pray unto him, since he is able to do all things for them they want or desire of him; but here it is to be understood of speaking to him, or before him, in a judicial way, at his bar, before his tribunal, he sitting as a Judge to hear the cause, and decide the controversy between Job and his friends. So, he render it, “I would speak for the Almighty, and desire to reason for God”<sup>f537</sup>; seeing he knew so much of him; not speak against him, as his friends suggested he had, but for him, on behalf of his sovereignty, justice, holiness, wisdom, and strength, as he had done, and would do yet more; by which he would have it known, that as he had as much knowledge as they, he was as zealous as any of them to plead for God, and defend him, and promote his honour and glory to the uttermost; but the other sense is best:

*and I desire to reason with God:* not at the bar of his justice, with respect to the justification of his person by his own righteousness; so no man can reason with God, as to approve himself just with him; nor will any sensible man desire to enter into judgment with him on that foot; a poor sensible sinner may reason with God at the throne of grace, and plead for pardoning mercy and justifying grace through the blood and righteousness of Christ, and from the declarations, proclamations, and promises of grace through him; but of neither of these sorts of reasoning, are the words to be understood, but of debating the matter in controversy between Job and his friends before God, that he might hear it, and decide it; this was what Job was desirous of, of having the cause brought before him, the case stated and pleaded, and reasoned on in his presence; this he signifies would be a

pleasure to him; he “should delight” to have it so, as the word <sup>f538</sup> here used may be interpreted.

**Ver. 4.** *But ye [are] forgers of lies*, etc.] This is a hard and very harsh saying; Job was now in a passion, provoked by his friends, and retorts upon them what they had charged him with, (<sup><3810></sup>Job 11:3); so often in controversies and disputes between good men undue heats arise, and unbecoming words drop from their lips and pens; to tell lies is a bad thing, but to forge them, to tell a studied premeditated lie, is dreadfully shocking, contrary to the grace of God, and which good men cannot allow themselves in, it is the character of bad men, (see <sup><2678></sup>Isaiah 63:8 <sup><3869></sup>Psalms 119:69); but it may be Job may not design lies in a strict and proper sense, but falsehoods and untruths; for though no lie is of the truth, yet every untruth is not a lie; because a man may deliver an untruth, not knowing it to be so, but taking it for a truth, speaks it, without any design to impose upon and deceive others. Doctrinal lies may be intended, such as the false prophets told, whereby they made the hearts of the righteous sad, and were the untempered mortar they daubed with, (<sup><3130></sup>Ezekiel 13:10,22); and the word here used has the same signification, and may be rendered, “daubers of lies” <sup>f539</sup>; that colour over things, and make falsehoods look like truths, and deliver them for such, and like others speak lies in hypocrisy: now those here referred to were these, that God did not afflict good men, at least in any very severe manner, and that Job, being thus afflicted, was a bad man, and an hypocrite; both these Job charges as lies:

*ye [are] all physicians of no value*; or “idol physicians” <sup>f540</sup>; not that pretended to the cure of idols, but were no better than idols themselves, and understood no more how to cure than they, than an Heathen deity, the god of physic Aesculapius, or anyone that might be reckoned such; but was no other than an image of wood or stone, and so could not be possessed of the faculty of healing, and such were Job’s friends; an idol is nothing, and is good for nothing, and such were they as physicians, they were idol physicians, like the “idol shepherd”, (<sup><38117></sup>Zechariah 11:17); of no value at all: the Rabbins <sup>f541</sup> say, the word used signifies a nerve or sinew of the neck, which when broken is incurable; and such physicians were they, that could do him no service, no more than cure a broken neck; this is to be understood of them, not as physicians of his body, that they pretended not to be; he was greatly diseased from head to foot, and had no hope of a recovery of his health, nor did they pretend to prescribe for him, nor does he reproach them on that account; but as physicians of his soul, afflicted

and distressed, they came to administer comfort to him under his afflictions, but they were miserable comforters, as he elsewhere calls them, (~~2014~~ Job 16:2); instead of acting the part of the good Samaritan, and pouring in oil and wine into his wounds, (~~2014~~ Luke 10:34), they poured in vinegar, and made them bleed and smart the more, and added affliction to his affliction; instead of healing, they wounded him yet more and more; and, instead of binding up his wounds, opened them wider, and gave him sensible pain; instead of giving him the cordials of the Gospel, they gave him the corrosives the law; and instead of pointing out unto him the gracious promises of God, for the support of his afflicted soul, they loaded him with charges of sin, and set him to work by repentance and reformation to obtain the forgiveness of them: they said many good things, but misapplied them, being ignorant of the case, and so were physicians of no value; as such are who are ignorant of the nature and causes of a disease, and therefore make wrong prescriptions, though the medicines they prescribe may in themselves be good: indeed, in the cases of souls, or for the healing of the diseases of the soul, which are natural and hereditary, epidemical and universal, nauseous and loathsome, and of themselves mortal, all physicians are of no value; but Jesus Christ, who is the only physician of souls, the able, skilful, and infallible one, that cures all fully freely that apply unto him; bodily physicians are no use in such cases, nor merry companions, nor legal preachers, who direct to supple the wounds with tears of repentance, and bind them up with rags of a man's own righteousness; Christ is the only Saviour, his blood the balsam that heals every wound, and his righteousness that affords peace, joy, and comfort to afflicted minds, and delivers from those weights and pressures of mind with which they are bowed down.

**Ver. 5.** *And that ye would altogether hold your peace*, etc.] Since what they said of him was not true, nor anything to the purpose, or that tended to the comfort of his afflicted soul, but the reverse; and therefore he could have wished they had never broke silence, but continued as they were the first seven days of their visit; and now, since they had spoken, and had done no good by speaking, but hurt, he desires for the future they would be silent, and say no more:

*and it should be your wisdom*: it would be the greatest evidence of it they could give; they had shown none by speaking; it would be a proof of some in them, should they hold their peace; a very biting expression this (see ~~2017~~ Proverbs 17:28).

**Ver. 6.** *Hear now my reasoning*, etc.] Job entreats his friends that they would be no longer speakers, but hearers; that they would vouchsafe to sit still, and hear what he had to say; though he was greatly afflicted, he had not lost his reason, wisdom was not driven out from him, (<sup>1863</sup>Job 6:13); he had still with him his reasoning powers, which he was capable of making use of, and even before God, and desires that they would attend to what he had to say on his own behalf:

*and hearken to the pleadings of my lips*; he was capable of pleading his own cause, and he was desirous of doing it before God as his Judge; and begs the favour of his friends to be silent, and hear him out, and then let judgment be given, not by them, but by God himself.

**Ver. 7.** *Will you speak wickedly for God?* etc.] As he suggests they did; they spoke for God, and pleaded for the honour of his justice, by asserting he did not afflict good men, which they thought was contrary to his justice; but: then, at the same time, they spoke wickedly of Job, that he being afflicted of God was a bad man, and an hypocrite; and this was speaking wickedly for God, to vindicate his justice at the expense of his character, which there was no need to do; and showed that they were poor advocates for God, since they might have vindicated the honour of his justice, and yet allowed that he afflicted good men, and that Job was such an one:

*and talk deceitfully for him?* or tell lies for him, namely, those just mentioned, that only wicked men, and not good men, were afflicted by him, and that Job was a bad man, and an hypocrite.

**Ver. 8.** *Will ye accept his person?* etc.] Accepting persons ought not to be done in judgment by earthly judges; which is done when they give a cause to one through favour and affection to his person, because rich, or their friend, and against another, because otherwise; and something like this Job intimates his friends did in the present case; they only considered what God was, holy, just, wise, and good in all he did, and so far they were right, and too much respect cannot be given him; but the fault was, that they only attended to this, and did not look into the cause of Job itself, but wholly neglected it, and gave it against him, he being poor, abject, and miserable, on the above consideration of the perfections of God; which looked like what is called among men acceptation, or respect of persons:

*will ye contend for God?* it is right to contend for God, for the being of God against atheists, for the perfections of God, his sovereignty, his

omniscience, omnipresence, etc. against those that deny them, for his truths and doctrines, word, worship, and ordinances, against the corrupters of them; but then he and those are not to be contended for in a foolish and imprudent manner, or with a zeal, not according to knowledge, much less with an hypocritical one, as was Jehu's, (<sup><1218></sup>2 Kings 10:28-31); God needs no such advocates, he can plead his own cause, or make use of persons that can do it in a better manner, and to better purpose.

**Ver. 9.** *Is it good that he should search you out?* etc.] That is, God; searching is ascribed to him after the manner of men; not that he is ignorant of persons or things he searches after, or exercises that application, diligence, and industry, and takes those pains which are necessary in men to find out anything; when he makes search, it is not on his own account, but others; at least it is only to show his knowledge of persons and things, and to make men known to others, or things to them themselves; and is here to be understood in a judicial sense, as it frequently is the case, so it was here, a man that is "first in his own cause", as the wise man says, (<sup><1217></sup>Proverbs 18:17), "seemeth just"; to himself and others; it looks upon the representation he makes of things as if he was in the right: "but his neighbour cometh and searcheth him"; traverses his arguments in his own vindication, and shows the fallacy of them; so Job's friends, making the worst of his cause, and the best of their own, seemed right in their own eyes; but God, who is the searcher of hearts, and who knows all things, could see through their coverings of things, and could not be deceived by them, but would find them out, and expose them; as he did afterwards, when he gave judgment against them, and declared they had not said that which was right, as his servant Job had, (<sup><1217></sup>Job 42:7,8); and therefore it was not to their profit and advantage, and to their honour and credit, to be searched out by him, or to run the risk of it, as they did, which is the amount of this question:

*or as one mocketh another, do ye [so] mock him?* men may be mocked by their fellow creatures, either by words or gestures, as good men usually are in all ages, especially the prophets of the Lord, and the ministers of his word; or they may be deceived and imposed upon by the false glosses and colourings of artful men, as simple men are deceived by the fair speeches of false teachers, which is no other than an illusion of them, or mocking them: in the first sense God may be mocked, though he should not; there have been and will be such bold and daring creatures as to mock at his promises and his providence, to mock at his word, ordinances, and ministers, which



is interpreted by him a mocking and despising himself; but in the latter sense he cannot be mocked, and it is a vain thing to attempt it; “be not deceived, God is not mocked”, (Ga, 6:7); he sees through all the fallacious reasonings of men; he judges not according to outward appearance; he sees and knows the heart, and all the views and designs of men, and can detect all their sophisms and false glosses; he is not to be deceived by specious pretences of doing such and such actions for his glory, as casting out good men, and their names, or traducing their characters that he may be glorified, or killing them to do him service, (~~2Tim~~ Isaiah 66:5 ~~4Tim~~ John 16:2); he is not to be flattered as one man may flatter another; to do this with him, is to mock him, he is not to be mocked in this way.

**Ver. 10.** *He will surely reprove you*, etc.] Or “in reprov- ing he will reprove you” <sup>f542</sup>; he will certainly do it, it may be depended upon, and be expected; he will never suffer sin to go unrep- roved and uncorrected; he will do it to the purpose, with sharpness and severity, as the nature of the crime requires; he reprov- es by his spirit, and it is well for men when he thoroughly, and in a spiritual and saving way, reprov- es them by him, and convinces them of sin, righteousness, and judgment; and he reprov- es by his word, which is written for reproof and correction; and by his ministers, one part of whose work it is to rebuke and reprove men for bad practices, and bad principles; and in some cases they are to use sharpness, and which when submitted to, and kindly taken, it is well; and sometimes he reprov- es by his providences, by afflictive dispensations, and that either in love, as he rebukes his own children, or in wrath and hot displeasure, as others, which is here designed; and as it is always for sin he rebukes men, so particularly he rebukes for the following, as might be expected:

*if ye do secretly accept persons*; acceptance of persons in judgment is prohibited by God, and is highly resented by him; yea, even the acceptance of his own person to the prejudice of the character of an innocent man; which seems to be what Job has respect unto, as appears from (~~4Tim~~ Job 13:8); and some versions render it, “if ye accept his face” <sup>f543</sup>; and though this may be done no openly and publicly, but in a covert and secret manner, under disguise, and with specious pretences to the honour and glory of God.

**Ver. 11.** *Shall not his excellency make you afraid*, etc.] To commit sin, any sin, and particularly that just mentioned, which they might expect to be reprov- ed for; there is an excellency in the name of God, which is fearful



and dreadful, and in the nature and perfections of God, his power, justice, and holiness, in which he is glorious and tremendous, and should deter men from sinning against him; and there is an excellency in his works of nature and providence, which are wondrous, and show him to be near at hand, and can at once, if he pleases, take vengeance for sin: or “shall not his height”<sup>f544</sup>, etc. his sublimity, his superiority to all beings; he is the most high God, higher than the highest among men, he is above all gods, all that are so called; and therefore all the inhabitants of the earth should stand in awe of him, and not sin: or “shall not his lifting up”<sup>f545</sup>? etc. on a throne of judgment, as the Targum adds; he is the Judge of the whole earth, and will judge his people, and right their wrongs; he sits on a throne high, and lifted up, judging righteously; and will maintain the cause of the innocent, and avenge himself on those that injure them, and therefore it must be a fearful thing to fall into his hands: some render it, “shall not his burning”<sup>f546</sup>; or flaming fire, etc. as Jarchi observes, and apply it to hell fire, and the everlasting burnings of the lake which burns with fire and brimstone; and which are very terrible, and may well frighten men from sinning against God; but the first sense seems to be best:

*and his dread fall upon you?* the dread of men, of powerful and victorious enemies, is very terrible, as was the dread of the Israelites which fell upon the inhabitants of Canaan, (<sup><1807></sup>Joshua 2:9); but how awful must be the terror of the great and dreadful God, when that falls upon men, or his terrible wrath and vengeance are revealed from heaven, and threaten every moment to fall upon the transgressors of his law, upon those that mock him and injure his people.

**Ver. 12.** *Your remembrances [are] like unto ashes*, etc.] Either of things they put Job in remembrance of, the mementos which they had suggested to him; (see <sup><1807></sup>Job 4:7); or the things which they had brought forth out of their memories, the instances they had given of what had been in the world, the arguments, objections, and reasonings, they had made use of in this controversy; their “memorable sentences”<sup>f547</sup>, as some render it, were of no more moment and importance than ashes, and easily blown away like them; or whatsoever was memorable in them, or they thought would perpetuate their memory hereafter, as their houses and lands, and towns and cities, called by their names, these memorials should perish, (<sup><1807></sup>Psalm 49:11 9:6); or their wealth and riches, their honour and glory, their learning, wisdom, and knowledge, all should fade, and come to nothing; the memory of the just indeed is blessed, the righteous are had in

everlasting remembrance, because of their everlasting righteousness; but as anything else, that may be thought to be a remembrance of man, it is but as ashes, of little worth, gone, and often trampled upon; and men should remember that they are but dust and ashes, as Aben Ezra <sup>f548</sup> observes, even in their best estate, in comparison of the excellency of God, before spoken of; and as Abraham confessed in the presence of God, (<sup><01827></sup>Genesis 18:27);

*your bodies to bodies of clay*; that is, are like to bodies of clay, to such as are made of clay after the similitude of human bodies; and such are the bodies of men themselves, they are of the earth, earthly, they are houses of clay, which have their foundation in the dust; earthen vessels, and earthly houses of this tabernacle, poor, mean, frail, brittle things, are crushed before the moth, and much more before the Almighty; the word is by some rendered “eminencies”, the most eminent men; what is most eminent in them are like to “eminences of clay” <sup>f549</sup>, or heaps of dirt: some interpret this, as the former expression, of their words, reasonings, arguments, and objections; which though great swelling words, were vain and empty, mere bubbles, and though reckoned strong reasonings, unanswerable arguments, and objections, had no strength in them, but were to be easily thrown down like hillocks of clay; and though thought to be like shields, or high and strong fortresses, as some <sup>f550</sup> take the word to signify, yet are but clayey ones.

**Ver. 13.** *Hold your peace, let me alone*, etc.] Or, cease “from me” <sup>f551</sup>: from speaking to me, or hindering me from speaking. Job might perceive, by some motions of his friends, that they were about to interrupt him; and therefore he desires they would be silent, and let him go on:

*that I may speak*; or, “and I will speak”,

*and let come on me what [will]*; either from men, or from God himself; a good man, when he knows his cause is good, and he has truth on his side, is not careful or concerned what reproach may be cast upon him, or what censures from men he may undergo; or what persecutions from them he may endure; none of these things move him from his duty, or can stop his mouth from speaking the truth; let him be threatened with what he will, he cannot but speak the things which he has seen and heard, and knows to be true; as for what may come upon him from God, that he is not solicitous about; he knows he will lay nothing upon him but what is common to men, will support him under it, or deliver him from it in his own time and way, or however make all things work together for his good: some render it,

“and let something pass by me”, or “from me”<sup>f552</sup>; that is, somewhat of his grief and sorrow, while he was speaking and pouring out his complaints before God; but the former sense seems best.

**Ver. 14.** *Wherefore do I take my flesh in my teeth*, etc.] Or bite my lips, to keep in my words, and refrain from speaking? I will not do it:

*and put my life in my hand?* or, expose it to danger by a forced silence; when I am ready to burst, and must if I do not speak; I will not thus endanger my life; it is unreasonable I should, I will speak my mind freely and fully, that I may be refreshed; so Seforno interprets it of Job’s putting his hand to his mouth, that he might be silent; and of putting a forcible restraint upon himself, that he might not declare what was upon his mind; (see <sup><RB39></sup>Job 13:19); but others, as Bar Tzemach, take the sense to be, what is the sin I have committed, that such sore afflictions are laid upon me; that through the pain and distress I am in, I am ready to tear off my flesh with my teeth, and my life is in the utmost danger? and some think he was under a temptation to tear his own flesh, and destroy himself; and therefore argues why he should be thus hardly dealt with, as to be exposed to such a temptation, and thrown in such despair, which yet he laboured against; but rather the meaning is, in connection with the preceding verse, let whatsoever will come upon me, “at all events, I will take my flesh in my teeth, and I will put my life in my hand”<sup>f553</sup>; I will expose myself to the greatest dangers which is the sense of the last phrase in (<sup><QB3></sup>Judges 12:3) (<sup><QB5></sup>1 Samuel 19:5 28:21 <sup><QB30></sup>Psalms 119:109); come life, come death, I will not fear; I am determined to speak out my mind let what will be the consequence; and with this bold and heroic spirit agrees what follows.

**Ver. 15.** *Though he slay me, yet will I trust in him*, etc.] There is a double reading of these words; the “Keri”, or marginal reading, is **wl** , “in him”, which we follow; the “Cetib”, or textual reading, is **al** , “not”, which many follow, and render the words, “lo, he will slay me, I shall not hope”; or, “I have no hope”, or “do not expect”<sup>f554</sup> that is, any other than to be slain or die; and this agrees with various expressions of his elsewhere, that he had no hope of any long continuance of life, or of restoration to health and outward happiness again, but expected to die quickly; (see <sup><RB1></sup>Job 6:11 7:21 10:20 19:10);

*but I will maintain mine own ways before him*; or “to his face”<sup>f555</sup>; though I die on the spot instantly, I will stand by it, and make it appear that the

ways I have walked in are right, that I have behaved as a sincere upright man, a man fearing God, and eschewing evil; a character which God himself has given of me, and I have not forfeited it: “I will argue” or “prove”<sup>f556</sup> it before him, as it may be rendered; that my life and conversation has been agreeable to my profession of him; that my ways have been according to his revealed will, and my walk as becoming the character I bear; and this I will maintain and support as long as I live; I will never depart from this sentiment, or let go my integrity to my latest breath; (see ~~Job~~ Job 27:5,6); but the marginal reading seems best, “yet will I trust in him”<sup>f557</sup>? verily I will, though I am under cutting and slaying providences, under sore afflictions, which may be called killing and slaying, or death itself; though there is an addition of them, one affliction upon another, and sorrow upon sorrow; though I am killed continually, all the day long, or die by inches; yea, though in the article of death itself, yet even then “will I trust” and hope: God only is the object of trust and confidence, and not a creature, or any creature enjoyment, or creature act; and great encouragement there is to trust in him, seeing in him is everlasting strength, to fulfil his promises, to help in time of need, and to save with an everlasting salvation; he is to be trusted in at all times, in times of affliction, temptation, desertion, and death itself: it may be rendered<sup>f558</sup>, “I will hope in him”, since there is mercy and plenteous redemption with him, and he delights in those that hope in his mercy; his eye is upon them, and his heart is towards them: or “I will wait for him”, or “expect him”<sup>f559</sup>; wait for deliverance by him, wait all the days of his appointed time, till his change come; wait for the hope of righteousness by faith, expect all needful grace from him now, and eternal glory and happiness hereafter: “but” notwithstanding his trust was alone in God for time and eternity, yet, says he, “I will maintain mine own ways before him”; that I am not an hypocrite, or have behaved as a bad man; but have acted under the influence of grace, according to his mind and will revealed.

**Ver. 16.** *He also [shall be] my salvation*, etc.] Job, though he asserted the integrity of his heart and life, yet did not depend on his ways and works for salvation, but only on the Lord himself; this is to be understood not of temporal salvation, though God is the author of that, and it is only to be had of him, yet Job had no hope concerning that; but of spiritual and eternal salvation, which God the Father has contrived, determined, and resolved on, and sent his Son to effect; which Christ being sent is the author of by his obedience, sufferings, and death; and in him, and in his

name alone, is salvation; and every soul, sensible of the insufficiency of himself and others to save him, will resolve, as Job here, that he, and he only, shall be his Saviour, who is an able, willing, and complete one; (see <sup><314B></sup>Hosea 14:3); and the words are expressive of faith of interest in him. Job knew him to be his Saviour, and living Redeemer, and would acknowledge no other; but claim his interest in him, now and hereafter, and which was his greatest support under all his troubles; (see <sup><319D></sup>Job 19:26,27 <sup><327E></sup>Psalm 27:1);

*for an hypocrite shall not come before him*; a hypocrite may come into the house of God, and worship him externally, and seem to be very devout and religious; and he shall come before the tribunal of God, and stand at his bar, to be tried and judged; but he shall not continue in the presence of God, nor enjoy his favour, or he shall not be able to make his cause good before him; and indeed he does not care to have himself examined by him, nor shall he be saved everlastingly, but undergo the most severe punishment, (<sup><425B></sup>Matthew 24:51). Job here either has respect to his friends, whom he censures as hypocrites, and retorts the charge upon they brought on him; or he has reference to that charge, and by this means clears himself of it, since there was nothing he was more desirous of than to refer his case to the decision of the omniscient God, and righteous Judge; which if he was an hypocrite he would never have done, since such can never stand so strict and severe an examination.

**Ver. 17.** *Hear diligently my speech*, etc.] Or, “in hearing hear” <sup>f560</sup>; meaning, not only that his friends would attentively hear him, but continue to hear him; that they would hear him out what he had to say further: upon his expressing himself with so much faith and confidence in God, they might rise up from their seats and be preparing to be gone, as not having patience to hear a man talk so confidently, who they thought was a bad man and an hypocrite; or they might attempt to interrupt him while speaking, and therefore he desires they would be still, and patiently and diligently hear what he had more to say:

*and my declaration with your ears*; that is, that they would listen to it attentively, when he doubted not but he should make his case as clear as the sun, and set it in such a point of view, as that it would appear most plainly to be right, and he to be a just man.

**Ver. 18.** *Behold now, I have ordered [my] cause*, etc.] Or “judgment” <sup>f561</sup>; that is, he had looked over his cause afresh, had reviewed the state of his

case, had considered it in every light, had drawn a plan of it, had digested it in a proper manner, and had arranged his reasons and arguments in vindication of himself in a regular form; and had them at hand, and could readily and easily come at them on occasion, to vindicate himself; and upon the whole could say, in the strongest, manner, and could draw this conclusion,

*I know that I shall be justified*; which, though it may primarily respect the case in dispute between him and his friends, and the charge of wickedness and hypocrisy brought against him by them, from which he doubted not he should upon a fair hearing be acquitted by God himself, yet it may include his whole state of justification, God-ward, in which he was and should continue; and so may respect, not only the justification of his cause before men, as it was ordered and managed by him, but also the justification of his person before God, of which he had a full assurance; having ordered his cause aright, settled matters well, and proceeded upon a good plan and foundation; which to do is not to put justification upon the foot of purity of nature at first birth, and a sober life and conversation from youth upward, and a perfection of good works arrived unto, as imagined; nor upon a comparative righteousness with respect to other men, even profane and ungodly persons; nor, upon repentance, and sincere though imperfect obedience; nor upon an external belief of evangelic truths, and a submission to Gospel ordinances: but such order their cause well, and rightly conclude their justification, who see and own themselves to be transgressors of the law of God, behold and acknowledge their own righteousness to be insufficient to justify them, view the righteousness of Christ revealed in the Gospel, in its glory, excellency, and suitableness, and lay hold upon it as their justifying righteousness; and observing that the word of God declares, that those that believe in Christ are and shall be justified, and finding in themselves that they do with the heart believe in Christ for righteousness, hence they most comfortably and most sensibly conclude that they are justified persons; for this knowledge is of faith, and this faith the faith of assurance; it is not barely for a man to know that there is righteousness in Christ, and justification by it, but that there is righteousness in him for himself, and that he is the Lord his righteousness; for the words may be rendered, “I know that I am righteous”; or, “am justified”<sup>f562</sup>; justification is a past act in the mind of God; it is present, as it terminates on the conscience of a believer; it is future, as it will be notified at the day of judgment before angels and men; (see <sup><24625</sup> Isaiah 45:25).

**Ver. 19.** *Who [is] he [that] will plead with me*, etc.] Enter the lists with him; dispute the point, and try the strength of his arguments he had to plead for his own justification: thus Christ, the head of the church, and the surety of his people, is represented as speaking when he had by his obedience and sufferings made satisfaction for them, by bringing in an everlasting righteousness, and was, as their public and federal head, justified and acquitted, (<sup><2004></sup>Isaiah 1:4-9); and much the same words are put into the mouth of a believer in him, and are expressed by him, (<sup><4833></sup>Romans 8:33,34); who stands acquitted from all charges that men or devils, friends or foes, the law or justice of God, the devil and his own unbelieving heart, at any time, can bring against him. Job, well knowing the uprightness of his heart and life, the justness of his cause depending between him and his friends, boldly challenges them to come forth, and try it with him; or rather he seems desirous that God himself would take the case in hand, and plead with him; he was ready to engage with him, and in the presence of his friends, and in their hearing; and doubted not of being acquitted before God, and at his bar; so satisfied was he of his own innocence as to the things charged upon him:

*for now, if I hold my peace, I shall give up the ghost*; his sense seems to be, that if he was not allowed to speak for himself, and plead his cause, and have a hearing of it out, he could not live, he could not contain himself, he must burst and die; nor could he live under such charges and calumnies, he must die under the weight and pressure of them; though some think that this not only expresses his eagerness and impatience to have his cause tried fairly before God, but contains in it an argument to hasten it, taken from the near approach of his death: “for now”, in a little time, “I shall be silent”<sup>f563</sup>; be in the silent grave: “I shall expire”; or die; and then it will be too late; therefore if any will plead with me, let them do it immediately, or I shall be soon gone, and then it will be all over: or rather the sense is, I challenge anyone to reason the matter, and dispute the point with me; and I promise that, if the cause goes against me, “now will I be silent”; I will not say one word more in my vindication: “I will die”; or submit to any death, or any sort of punishment, that shall be pronounced upon me; I shall patiently endure it, and not complain of it, or object to the execution of it; so Saphorno.

**Ver. 20.** *Only do not two [things] unto me*, etc.] This is an address not to Zophar as in the place of God, as to me, but to God himself; by this it appears, that though in modesty he does not mention him, yet he it is he



has the chief, if not the sole regard unto in (~~3139~~ Job 13:19); for his desire was to speak to the Almighty, and reason with God, and have nothing more to do with his friends, (~~3135~~ Job 13:3-5); but before any pleadings begin on either side, he is desirous of settling and fixing the terms and conditions of the dispute; he requests that two things might be granted him, which are mentioned in (~~3130~~ Job 13:21):

*then will I not hide myself from thee*; through fear or shame, but boldly appear before God, and come up even to his seat, and plead with him face to face.

**Ver. 21.** *Withdraw thine hand far from me*, etc.] His afflicting hand, which pressed him; this he desires might be removed, or otherwise he could not have the command of himself, make use of his reasoning faculties, recollect his arguments, and give them in their due force and strength; for afflictions of body affect the soul and memory, understanding and judgment; this is one of the things he would have agreed unto before the dispute was entered on; the other follows:

*and let not thy dread make me afraid*; the terrors of his law, or the dreadful apprehensions of his wrath; he desires to be freed from all slavish fear of God, that now possessed his mind through the severity of his dispensations towards him, behaving as if he was his enemy; or he deprecates his appearance in any external visible way and manner, which might be frightening to him, and so hinder freedom of speech in his own defence; these two things are before requested, (~~3134~~ Job 9:34,35); which should they be granted, he proposes as follows.

**Ver. 22.** *Then call thou, and I will answer*, etc.] Either call him by name in open court, and he would answer to it; or arraign him at the bar, and exhibit charges against him, and he would make answer to them and clear himself; his sense is, that if God would take upon him to be plaintiff, and accuse and charge him with what he had to object to him, then he would be defendant, and plead his own cause, and show that they did not of right belong unto him:

*or let me speak, and answer thou me*: or he would be plaintiff, and put queries concerning the afflictions he was exercised with, or the severity of them, and the reason of such usage, and God be the defendant, and give him an answer to them, that he might be no longer at a loss as he was for such behaviour towards him: this is very boldly said indeed, and seems to

savour of irreverence towards God; and may be one of those speeches for which he was blamed by Elihu, and by the Lord himself; though no doubt he designed not to cast any contempt upon God, nor to behave ill towards him; but in the agonies of his spirit, and under the weight of his affliction, and to show the great sense he had of his innocence, and his assurance of it, he speaks in this manner; not doubting but, let him have what part he would in the debate, whether that of plaintiff or defendant, he should carry the cause, and it would go in his favour; and though he proposes it to God to be at his option to choose which he would take, Job stays not for an answer, but takes upon him to be plaintiff, as in the following words.

**Ver. 23.** *How many [are] mine iniquities and sins?*] Whether of ignorance or presumption, through mistake or wilfulness, voluntary or involuntary, sins of omission or commission, secret or open, or of heart, lip, or life; for by this heap of words he uses in this and the next clause he means all sorts of sins, be they what they would; he desires to know what they were, both with respect to quality and quantity, how great <sup>f564</sup> they were, what heinous and capital crimes he had been guilty of, that such sore afflictions were laid upon him; and how many they were, as they were suggested to be by his friends, and who indeed call them infinite, (~~48215~~ Job 22:5); and as they might seem to be from the many afflictions endured by him, which were supposed to be for sins; though, as Schultens observes, such an interrogation as the force of a diminution and negation, as that of the Psalmist; “how many are the days of thy servant?” (~~43384~~ Psalm 119:84); that is, how few are they? or rather none at all; namely, of light and joy, of pleasure and comfort; so Job represents by this his sins to be but few <sup>f565</sup> in comparison of what his friends surmised, or might be concluded from his afflictions; and indeed none at all of a capital nature, and such as were of a deep die, atrocious and enormous crimes; only such as were common to good men, who all have their frailties, infirmities, and imperfections, there being not a just man that does good and sins not: Job did not pretend to be without sin, but he was not sensible of any notorious sin he could be charged with, nor was he conscious of allowing himself in any known sin, or of living and walking therein, which is inconsistent with the grace of God; moreover, as he knew his interest in his living Redeemer and surety, to whom, and not to himself, his sins and transgressions were imputed; he might ask, “how many iniquities and sins are to me” <sup>f566?</sup> as the words may be literally rendered; that is, which are to be reckoned to me, to be placed to my account? none at all; (see ~~47659~~ 2 Corinthians 5:19 ~~49201~~ Psalm 32:1,2);

*make me to know my transgression and my sin*; not that he was ignorant of sin, of the nature and demerit of it, as unregenerate men are, who know not the plague of their own hearts, indwelling sin, internal lusts, nor the exceeding sinfulness of sinful actions, nor the effect and consequences of sin, pollution, guilt, the wrath of God, the curse of the law, and eternal death; at least do not know it as to be affected with a sense of it, to have a godly sorrow for it, repent of it, confess it, and forsake it; such knowledge as this is from the spirit of God, and which Job had; but his meaning is, that if he could not be charged with many sins, as might seem to be the case, yet if there was but one that could be produced, and was the reason of his being afflicted after this manner, he desires to know what that was, that he might, upon conviction of it, acknowledge it, repent of it, relinquish it, and guard against it; he desires to have a copy of his indictment, that he might know what he stood charged with, for what he was arraigned, condemned, and punished, as it was thought he was; this he judged a reasonable request, and necessary to be granted, that he might answer for himself.

**Ver. 24.** *Wherefore hidest thou thy face*, etc.] Not from his cry, because of his sore and grievous afflictions, as Bar Tzemach; nor from helping and saving him from his troubles, as Sephorno; nor from looking on his right ways, as Jarchi; but from his person, withdrawing the manifestation of his face and favour; withholding the discoveries of his love; and denying him the light of his countenance, and sensible communion with him, and enjoyment of him, he had been indulged with; Job formerly had seen the face of God, enjoyed his presence, and walked in fellowship with him; but now he had withdrawn himself from him, and he knew not where to find him; (see <sup><1823P></sup>Job 23:2,8,9); a greater blessing cannot be had than the gracious presence of God; nothing gives more pleasure when enjoyed, and nothing more grievous to good men when it is withheld; oftentimes sin is the cause of it, but not always, as in this instance of Job; the end of the Lord in all his afflictions, both inward and outward, was to try his patience, his integrity, and faithfulness; but as Job was for the present ignorant of it, he desires to know the reason of this the Lord's behaviour towards him; as it is what all good men should do in the like circumstances, nothing being more afflicting and distressing to them, and even intolerable; (see <sup><9101></sup>Psalms 10:11 13:1 88:14); some think here is an allusion to the behaviour of judges towards such as were condemned by them, they were prejudiced against, and would neither hear nor see them; or to a rite and custom in former times, as Pineda observes, when judges, at the time of pronouncing

sentence on a malefactor, used to draw a curtain between them; or to the covering of the face of the criminal, (see <sup><812></sup>Job 9:24);

*and holdest me for thine enemy?* Job had been an enemy to God, as all men are in a state of nature, yea, enmity itself, as is shown by their wicked works; but he was now reconciled unto God, the enmity of his heart was slain, and he had laid down his weapons of rebellion, and ceased committing hostilities against God, and was become subject to him and to his law, through the power of efficacious grace; a principle of love, which is the fruit of the spirit in regeneration, was implanted in him; and he was a true and sincere lover of God, one that feared him, and trusted in him; whose faith worked by love, and so appeared to be of the right kind; and therefore, since he was conscious to himself that he loved God with all his heart, loved his word, his ways, and worship, his people and all that belonged to him, it was cutting and grievous to him to be thought and accounted, or deal with, as an enemy to him; for so he interpreted his conduct towards him; as he afflicted him, he took it to be in anger and fury, and hot displeasure; and as he hid his face from him, he supposed it was in great wrath, viewing him in this light as his enemy.

**Ver. 25.** *Wilt thou break a leaf driven to and fro?* etc.] A leaf that falls from a tree in autumn, and withers and is rolled up, and driven about by the wind, which it cannot resist, to which Job here compares himself; but it is not to be understood of him with respect to his spiritual estate; for being a good man, and one that trusted in the Lord, and made him his hope, he was, as every good man is, like to a tree planted by rivers of water, whose leaf withers not, but is always green, and does not fall off, as is the case of carnal professors, who are compared to trees in autumn, which cast their leaves and rotten fruit; (see <sup><908></sup>Psalm 1:3 <sup><2470></sup>Jeremiah 17:7,8 <sup><6112></sup>Jude 1:12); but in respect to his outward estate, his frailty, weakness, and feebleness, especially as now under the afflicting hand of God; (see <sup><2606></sup>Isaiah 64:6); so John the Baptist, on account of his being a frail mortal man, a weak feeble creature, compares himself to a reed shaken with the wind, (<sup><4110></sup>Matthew 11:7); now to break such an one was to add affliction to affliction, and which could not well be borne; and the like is signified by the next clause,

*and wilt thou pursue the dry stubble?* which cannot stand before the wind, or the force of devouring fire; this also respects not Job in his spiritual estate, with regard to which he was not like to dry stubble or chaff, to

which wicked men are compared, (<sup><1904></sup>Psalm 1:4); but to standing corn and wheat in the full ear; and not only to green grass, which is flourishing, but to palm trees, and cedar trees of the Lord, which are full of sap, to which good men are like; but he describes him in his weak and afflicted state, tossed to and fro like dry stubble; and no more able to contend and grapple with an incensed God than dry stubble can withstand devouring flames; this he says, partly to suggest that it was below the Divine Being to set his strength against his weakness; as David said to Saul, “after whom is the king of Israel come out? after a dead dog, after a flea?” (<sup><1944></sup>1 Samuel 24:14); which words Bar Tzemach compares with these; and partly to move the divine pity and commiseration towards him, who uses not to “break the bruised reed, nor quench the smoking flax”, (<sup><2303></sup>Isaiah 42:3 <sup><1021></sup>Matthew 12:20).

**Ver. 26.** *For thou writest bitter things against me*, etc.] Meaning not sins and rebellions, taken notice of by him, when his good deeds were omitted, as Jarchi; sin is indeed an evil and a bitter thing in its own nature, being exceeding sinful and abominable, and its effects and consequences; being what provokes God to anger most bitterly, and makes bitter work for repentance; as it did in Peter, who, when made sensible of it, wept bitterly, (<sup><1055></sup>Matthew 26:75 <sup><1262></sup>Luke 22:62); sooner or later, sin, though it is a sweet morsel rolled about in the mouth for a while, yet in the issue proves the gall of asps within, (<sup><1804></sup>Job 20:14), bitter and distressing; and this God also puts down in the book of his remembrance, yea, writes it as with a pen of iron, and with the point of a diamond, (<sup><2470></sup>Jeremiah 17:1); but that cannot be meant here, since Job was inquiring after his sins, asking what and how many they were, and would not allow of any being committed by him that were heinous and notorious; wherefore afflictions are rather here intended, which are bitter and grievous, and not joyous, and especially such as Job was afflicted with; (see <sup><1001></sup>Ruth 1:20,21); and these were written by the Lord in the book of his eternal purposes and decrees, and were the things he performed, which were appointed for Job, as he full well knew, and as all the afflictions of God’s people are; and besides they were written in a judiciary way, and so against him; they were, as he apprehended, the sentence of a judge written down, and read, and pronounced, and according to it inflicted, and that with great deliberation as things are written, and in order to continue, as what is written does; and so denotes that a severe decree was gone forth against him, with design, and was and would be continued:

*and makest me to possess the iniquities of my youth*; which had been committed through weakness and ignorance; and which, it might have been thought, would not have been taken notice of and animadverted on; or rather which Job concluded had been forgiven and forgotten, according to the tenor of the covenant of grace, and would never have been brought into account any more; and yet these were not only remembered by the Lord, at least seemingly, by the afflictions that were endured; but they were by him brought to Job's remembrance, and the guilt of them charged upon him, and stared him in the face, and loaded his conscience, and filled him with reproach, and shame, as Ephraim, (<sup>-23119</sup>Jeremiah 31:19); and which is deprecated by the Psalmist, (<sup>-13217</sup>Psalm 25:7); and what aggravated this case and made it the more distressing was, that in Job's apprehension it was to continue with him as an inheritance, as the word <sup>f567</sup> signifies, which abides with men in their families for ever; and some respect may be had to the corruption of nature, which is hereditary, and remains with men from their youth upwards.

**Ver. 27.** *Thou puttest my feet also in the stocks*, etc.] Which is one kind of punishment of offenders, and a preservation of them from making their escape; and is a security and reservation of them for further punishment sometimes; and so Job looked upon his afflictions as a punishment for he knew not what, and with which he was so surrounded and enclosed, that there was no getting out of them any more than a man can whose feet are set fast in the stocks; and that he was here kept for greater afflictions still, which he dreaded. Aben Ezra interprets it, "thou puttest my feet in lime"; and this is followed by others <sup>f568</sup>, suggesting, as a man's steps in lime are marked and easily discerned, so were his by the Lord; but this seems to be foreign from the mind of Job, who would not make such a concession as this, as if his steps taken amiss were so visible:

*and lookest narrowly into all my paths*; so that there was no possibility of escaping out of his troubles and afflictions; so strict a watch was kept over him; (see <sup>-13179</sup>Job 7:19); according to Ben Gersom, this refers to the stocks, "it keeps all my ways", kept him within from going abroad about the business of life, and so may refer to the disease of his body, his boils and ulcers, which kept him at home, and suffered him not to stir out of doors; but the former sense is best:

*thou settest a print upon the heels of my feet*; either it, the stocks, made a mark upon his heels, with which they were pressed hard, as Gersom; or

rather God set one upon them, afflicting him very sorely and putting him to an excruciating pain, such as is felt by criminals when heavy blows are laid upon the soles of their feet, to which the allusion may be; or else the sense is, that he followed him closely by the heels, that whenever he took a step, it was immediately marked, and observed by the Lord, as if he trod in his steps, and set his own foot in the mark that was left.

**Ver. 28.** *And he as a rotten thing consumeth*, etc.] This by some Jewish writers <sup>f569</sup> is referred to and connected with the driven leaf and dry stubble Job compares himself to, (~~f565~~ Job 13:25); and so the sense is, that his body, which, for its frailty and weakness, is compared to such things, is like any rotten thing, a rotten tree, as Ben Melech; or any thing else that is rotten, that is consuming and wasting away, as Job's body was, being clothed with worms and clods of dust:

*as a garment that is moth eaten*; a woollen garment, which gathers dust, out of which motifs arise; for dust, in wool and woollen garments produces moths, as Aristotle <sup>f570</sup> and Pliny <sup>f571</sup> observe; and a garment eaten by them, slowly, gradually, and insensibly, yet certainly, decays, falls to pieces, becomes useless, and not to be recovered; such was Job's body, labouring under the diseases it did, and was every day more and more decaying, crumbling into dust, and just ready to drop into the grave; so that there was no need, and it might seem cruel, to lay greater and heavier afflictions on it: some interpreters make this "he" to be God himself who sometimes is as rottenness and a moth to men, in their persons, families, and estates; (see ~~f562~~ Hosea 5:12).