

CHAPTER 14

INTRODUCTION TO JOB 14

Job, having turned himself from his friends to God, continues his address to him in this chapter; wherein he discourses of the frailty of man, the shortness of his life, the troubles that are in it, the sinfulness of it, and its limited duration, beyond which it cannot continue; all which he makes use of with God, that he would not therefore deal rigorously with him, but have pity on him, and cease from severely afflicting him, till he came to the end of his days, which could not be long, (^{<1841>}Job 14:1-6); he observes of a tree, when it is cut down to the root, yea, when the root is become old, and the stock dies, it will, by means of being watered, bud and sprout again, and produce boughs and branches; but man, like the failing waters of the sea, and the decayed and dried up flood, when he dies, rises not, till the heavens be no more, (^{<1842>}Job 14:7-12); and then he wishes to be hid in the grave till that time, and expresses hope and belief of the resurrection of the dead, (^{<1843>}Job 14:13-15); and goes on to complain of the strict notice God took of his sins, of his severe dealings with men, destroying their hope in life, and removing them by death; so that they see and know not the case and circumstances of their children they leave behind, and while they live have continual pain and sorrow, (^{<1844>}Job 14:16-22).

Ver. 1. *Man [that is] born of a woman*, etc.] Man, Adam; not the first man, so called, for he was made and created out of the dust of the earth, and not born of a woman; the woman was made out of him, and not he of her; “earthly man”, as Mr. Broughton translates it, as every descendant of Adam is; as is the earth, such are they that are earthy, everyone of which is born of a woman; yet not as opposed unto and distinguished from the heavenly One, or the Lord from heaven, for he also as man was made and born of a woman: this, though a proper description of all mankind, there being none but what are born of a woman, (see ^{<1845>}Matthew 11:11); yet Job chiefly designs himself; for having spoken of his wasting circumstances in which he was, in (^{<1846>}Job 13:28), goes on in this to treat of his frailty and mortality, and to improve it into an argument with God for pity and mercy, as appears from (^{<1847>}Job 14:3); where he speaks of himself in the first

person, as here in the third, and all along: he may have respect in this clause to Eve, the mother of all living, from whom all descend, and of whom, in a sense, they may be said to be born; or else to his immediate parent, he and every man being born of a woman; no man, but the first, ever came into the world in any other way; there is one that came into the world without an earthly father, and that is our Lord Jesus Christ, but none without a mother; nor lie, who indeed was born of a virgin, and so in an extraordinary and miraculous manner; and this is observed, not so much on account of natural descent, or to denote that, as being reckoned from the mother, she having so great a concern in the production of man, conceiving, bearing, and bringing him forth; nor to remark the sinfulness of nature, though one born of a sinful woman must needs be so too, since this is expressed clearly in (~~3840~~) Job 14:4); but the weakness and frailty of man; as is the creature that generates, such is that that is generated; creatures born of strong ones are strong, and of weak ones weak; a creature born of a lion is a strong one; and man, born of a woman, must be weak and feeble, and no wonder he is short lived, as follows:

[is] of few days; or “short of days” ^{f572}; comes short of the days he might have lived, if man had never sinned, and comes short of the days the first man did live, and which those before the flood generally lived, who most of them lived upwards of nine hundred years; whereas now, and ever since the times of Moses, and about which Job lived, the days of the years of man are but threescore and ten; and such are shorter of days still, who live not more than half this time, who are cut off in the bloom and prime of life, the days of whose youth are shortened, who die in their youth, or in their childhood and infancy; and such especially are short of days who are carried from the womb to the grave, or die as soon as born; and those that live the longest, their days are but few, when compared with the days of eternity, or with those men shall live in another world, either good men in heaven, or wicked men in hell, which will be for ever; and especially with respect to God, with whom one day is as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day, and therefore the days and age of man are as nothing before him. Job has here also a respect to himself, whose days in his own apprehension were very few, and just at an end, and therefore craves pity and compassion, (see ~~3811~~) Job 10:20); and what aggravates the shortness of man’s days is, as it follows:

and full of trouble; man is born to it, being born in sin; sin and trouble go together, where there is sin there is trouble; sin entered into the world, and

death by it, with the numerous train of afflictions and miseries which issue in it: all men have their troubles, some of one sort, and some of another; wicked men are not indeed in trouble as other men, as good men are; they have not the same sort of trouble, yet are not exempt from all; they are “full of commotion”^{f573} disquietude and uneasiness, as the word signifies; they are restless, and ever in motion; they are like the troubled sea, that cannot rest, but is continually casting up mire and dirt; some are of such tempers and dispositions, that they cannot sleep unless they do mischief; and though they are many of them prosperous in their worldly circumstances, there are others that are reduced to poverty and distress, are attended with diseases and disorders, pains and sores, and blaspheme that God that has power over them; and these are of all men the most miserable, having no interest in God, in his loving kindness, nor any enjoyment of his presence, and so nothing to support them in, and carry them through their troubles; and though they are generally without any sense of sin or danger, have no remorse of conscience, and their hearts are hardened; yet at times they are “full of trembling”^{f574}, as some render the words; are seized with a panic through the judgments of God that are upon them, or are coming upon them, or when death is made the king of terrors to them: and good men they have their troubles; besides those in common with others, they have inward troubles arising from the vanity of their minds and thoughts, the impurity of their hearts, and the power of indwelling sin in them, and especially from the breaking forth of it in words and deeds; from the weakness of their graces, from the hidings of God’s face, and the temptations of Satan: in short, Job’s meaning is, that men in the ordinary course of things meet with so much trouble, that there is no need of any extraordinary afflictions to be laid on them, such as his were.

Ver. 2. *He cometh forth like a flower, and is cut down*, etc.] As the flower comes from the earth, so does man; as it comes out of the stalk, so man out of his mother’s womb; as the flower flourishes for a while, and looks gay and beautiful, so man while in youth, in health and prosperity. Job, doubtless, has respect to his own case before his troubles came upon him, when he was possessed of all that substance, which made him the greatest man of the east; when his children were like olive plants around his table, and his servants at his command, and he in perfect health of body: and as a flower flourishes for a little while, and then withers; no sooner is it come to its full blow, but presently decays; such is the goodness of man, it fades away whenever God blows a blast upon it; yea, he is easily and quickly cut

down by death, like a beautiful flower cut with the knife, or cropped by the hand, or trampled upon by the foot, (see ^{<19A315>}Psalm 103:15 90:5,6) (^{<2416>}Isaiah 40:6,7);

he fleeth also as a shadow, and continueth not; either as the shadow of the evening, which is lost when night comes on; or the shadow on a dial plate, which is continually moving on; or, as the Jewish Rabbins say, as the shadow of a bird flying, which stays not, whereas the shadow of a wall, or of a tree, continues: a shadow is an empty thing, without substance, dark and obscure, variable and uncertain, declining, fleeting, and passing away; and so fitly resembles the life of a man, which is but a vapour, a bubble, yea, as nothing with God; is full of darkness, of ignorance, and of adversity, very fickle, changeable, and inconstant, and at most but of a short continuance.

Ver. 3. *And dost thou open thine eyes on such an one*, etc.] So frail and feeble, so short lived and sorrowful, so soon and easily cut down and destroyed: and by opening of his eyes is not meant his providential care of men; whose eyes indeed are everywhere, run to and fro throughout the earth, and are careful of and provident for all sorts of men, which is very wonderful, (^{<19B84>}Psalm 8:4); nor the displays of his special grace and favour towards his own peculiar people, on whom his eyes of love, grace, and mercy, are opened, and are never withdrawn from them, which is marvellous lovingkindness; but the exercise of rigorous justice in punishing, afflicting, and chastising with so much severity, as Job thought to be his own case; the eyes of God, as he thought, were set on him for evil, and not for good; he looked wistly on him, and in a very frowning manner; he sharpened his eye upon him, as the phrase is, (^{<18161>}Job 16:9); and as some render the word ^{f575} here, looked narrowly into all his ways, and watched every motion and every step he took, and pursued him with great eagerness, and used him with great strictness in a way of justice, which he, a poor, weak creature, was not able to bear; which sense is confirmed by what follows:

and bringeth me into judgment with thee? by this it appears Job has a view to himself all along, and to the procedure of God against him, which he took to be in strict justice, and that was what he was not able to bear; he was not a match for God, being such a frail, weak, sinful, mortal creature; nor was God a man as he was, that they should come together in judgment, or be fit persons to contend together upon the foot of strict justice; sinful

man can never be just with God upon this bottom, or be able to answer to one objection or charge of a thousand brought against him; and therefore, as every sensible man will deprecate God's entering into judgment with him, so Job here expostulates with God why he should bring him into judgment with him; when, as he fled to his grace and mercy, he should rather show that to him than in a rigorous manner deal with him.

Ver. 4. *Who can bring a clean [thing] out of an clean?* etc.] Either produce a clean person from an unclean one: it is not to be expected that one, perfectly free from sin, should be generated by, or brought out of, one that is defiled with it; which is the case of all men; the first man, though made upright, sinned, and by sinning defiled himself, and all human nature in him: and so those that immediately descended from him were polluted likewise, and so on in all generations, every man being conceived and shaped in iniquity; so that it is not possible that man that is born of a woman, sinful and unclean, should be clean himself, or be free from sin; by which it is manifest, that the sinfulness of human nature is unavoidable; it is natural and necessary, and cannot be otherwise, such being the case and circumstances of immediate parents, from whom men descend; and that this is the case of all men that come into the world by ordinary and natural generation; there is none righteous or pure from sin: no,

not one; and things being so, Job thought it hard that he should be singled out, and so severely chastised, when the sinfulness of nature was from and by his birth, and was natural and unavoidable, and when there was not a single person on earth free from it. There never was but one instance of one clean being brought out of an unclean person, and that was our Lord Jesus Christ of the Virgin Mary; which was not in the ordinary way of generation, but by a supernatural and extraordinary production of his human nature, through the power of the Holy Ghost, whereby it escaped the original contagion and pollution of mankind: or else, in consequence of this, the sense is, who can bring forth or produce a good work from an impure person? or how can it be expected that a man that is defiled with sin should do a good work perfectly pure? for there is not even a just and good man that doth good and sinneth not; and much less is it to be looked for, that men in a mere state of nature, that are as they come into the world, sinful and impure, should ever be able to perform good works; it may as well be thought that grapes are to be gathered of thorns, or figs of thistles; men must be born again, created in Christ Jesus, have faith in him, and the Spirit of God in them, before they can do that which is truly good

from right principles, and with right views; and man at most and best must be an imperfect creature, and deficient in his duty, and cannot bear to be strictly examined, and rigorously prosecuted: or the meaning is, “who can make” ^{f576} an unclean man a clean one? “no, not one”; a man cannot make himself clean by anything he can do, by his repentance and humiliation, by his good works, duties, and services; none can do this but God; and to this sense some render the words, “who can--is there one” ^{f577}? there is, that is, God, he can do it, and he only: though men are exhorted to cleanse themselves, this does not suppose a power in them to do it; this is only designed to convince them of the necessity of being cleansed, and to awaken a concern for it; and such as are made sensible thereof will apply to God to purge them, and make them clean, and create a clean heart within them: and this God has promised to do, and does do; he sprinkles the clean water of his grace, and purifies the heart by faith in the blood of Jesus, which cleanses from all sin, and is the fountain opened to wash in for sin and uncleanness; the Targum is,

“who can give a clean thing out of a man that is defiled with sins, except God who is one, and can forgive him?”

none can pardon sin but God, or justify a sinner besides him; and he can do both in a way of justice, upon the foot of the blood and righteousness of Christ.

Ver. 5. *Seeing his days [are] determined*, etc.] Or “cut out” ^{f578}, exactly and precisely, how many he shall live, and what shall befall him every day of his life; whose life, because of the shortness of it, is rather measured by days than vents:

the number of his months [are] with thee; before him, in his sight, in his account, and fixed and settled by him:

thou hast appointed his bounds that he cannot pass; the boundaries of his life the period of his days, beyond which he cannot go; the term of man’s life is so peremptorily fixed by God, that he cannot die sooner, nor live longer, than he has determined he should; as the time of a man’s birth, so the time of his death is according to the purpose of God; and all intervening moments and articles of time, and all things that befall a man throughout the whole course of his life, all fall under the appointment of God, and are according to his determinate will; and when God requires of man his soul, no one has power over his spirit to retain it one moment; yet

this hinders not the use of means for the preservation and comfort of life, since these are settled as well as the end, and are under the divine direction: the word for bounds signifies sometimes “statutes”^{f579}: though not to be understood of laws appointed by God, either of a moral or ceremonial nature; but here it signifies set, stated, appointed times^{f580} Seneca^{f581} says the same thing;

“there is a boundary fixed for every man, which always remains where it is set, nor can any move it forward by any means whatsoever.”

Ver. 6. *Turn from him, that he may rest,* etc.] From this short lived afflicted man, whose days are limited, and will soon be at an end, meaning himself; not that he desires he would withdraw his gracious presence, nothing is more agreeable than this to a good man, and there is nothing he more deprecates than the withdrawing of it; besides, this was Job’s case, and one part of his complaint, (~~1813b~~ Job 13:24); nor to withhold his supporting presence, or his providential care of him, without which he could not subsist, but must die and drop into the dust; though some think this is the sense, and render the words, “turn from him, that he may cease”^{f582}; to be, or to live, and so a wish for death, that he might have rest in the grave from all his labours, pains, and sorrows; but rather the meaning is, that he would turn away from afflicting him in this extraordinary, manner; since, according to the ordinary course of things, he would meet with many troubles and afflictions, and had but a little time to live, and therefore entreats he would take off his hand which pressed him sorely, and grant him a little respite; or “look off from him”^{f583}; not turn away his eye of love, grace, and mercy, that is not reasonable to suppose; that was what he wanted, that God would look upon him, and have compassion on him under his affliction, and abate it; but that he would turn away his angry frowning countenance from him, which he could not bear; he had opened his eyes upon him, (~~1814b~~ Job 14:3); and looked very sternly, and with great severity in his countenance, on him, and it was very distressing, and even intolerable to him; and therefore begs that he would take off his eye from him, that he might have rest from his adversity, that he might have some ease of body and mind, some intervals of peace and pleasure: or “that he might cease”^{f584} from murmuring, as Aben Ezra; or rather from affliction and trouble; not that he expected to be wholly free from it in this life, for man is born to it, as he full well knew; and the people of God have always their share of it, and which abides and waits for them while in this world;

but he desires he might be rid of that very sore and heavy affliction now upon him; or “that it might cease”^{f585}, the affliction he laboured under, which would be the case if God would turn himself, remove his hand, or look another way, and not so sharply upon him:

till he shall accomplish as an hireling his day; an hireling, as if he should say, that is hired for any certain time, for a year, or more or less, he has some relaxation from his labours, time for eating and sleeping to refresh nature; or he has some time allowed him as a respite from them, commonly called holy days; or if he is hired only for a day, he has time for his meals; and if his master’s eye is off of him, he slackens his hand, and gets some intermission from his labour; wherefore at least Job begs that God would let him have the advantage of an hireling. Moreover, to “accomplish his day”, is either to do the work of it, or to get to the end of it; every man has work to do while in this world, in things natural, civil, and religious, and is the work of his day or generation, and what must be done while it is day; and a good man is desirous of finishing it; to which the recompence of reward, though it is not of debt, but of grace, is a great encouragement, as it is to the hireling: or “till as an hireling he shall will”, or “desire with delight and pleasure”^{f586} his day”; that is, his day to be at an end, which he wishes and longs for; and when it comes is very acceptable to him, because he then enjoys his rest, and receives his hire; so as there is a fixed time for the hireling, there is for man on earth; and as that time is short and laborious, so is the life of man; and at the close of it, the good and faithful servant of the Lord, like the hireling, in some sense rests from his labours, and receives the reward of the inheritance, having served the Lord Christ; which makes this day a grateful and acceptable one to him, what he desires, and with pleasure waits for, being better than the day of his birth; and especially when his life is worn out with trouble, and he is weary of it through old age, and the infirmities thereof, those days being come in which he has no pleasure. Job therefore entreats that God would give him some intermission from his extraordinary troubles, till his appointed time came, which then would be as welcome to him as the close of the day is to an hireling, (see ~~800~~ Job 7:1,2).

Ver. 7. *For there is hope of a tree, if it be cut down, that it will sprout again*, etc.] That is, if it be cut down to the root, and only the stump of the root is left in the ground, as the tree in Nebuchadnezzar’s dream, (~~2045~~ Daniel 4:15), yet the owner of it may entertain a hope that it is not utterly destroyed, but will bud out again; or “change”^{f587} its state and

condition, and become flourishing again: or “renew”^{f588} itself; and its strength, and put out new shoots and branches; either it will rise up into a new body, as the laurel, as Pliny^{f589} relates, or produce new sprouts as the willow, alder tree, and others; for this is not true of every tree, though it may be of many; for it is^{f590} reported of the cypress tree, when cut down, it never sprouts out any more, unless in one place, in Aenaria; but since this is the case of some, it is sufficient to Job’s purpose:

and that the tender branch thereof will not cease; from shooting out; or “its suckers will not cease”^{f591}; which may be observed frequently to grow out of the roots of trees, even of those that are cut down, such as above mentioned.

Ver. 8. *Though the root thereof wax old in the earth*, etc.] Lies long there, and is become dry, and seems to be consumed, on which account there may be the less hope of its flourishing:

and the stock thereof die in the ground; which may make it still more improbable; for this is not to be understood with some interpreters^{f592} of the stock or trunk of the tree cut down, and lying along on the earth, and in the dust of it; though it may be observed, that even such a stock or trunk, separated from the root, and as it lies along, will sprout again, as particularly in elms: but it may rather mean, since it is said to be “in the ground”, that part of the stock or stump left in the ground, from whence the roots part and spread in the earth; and even though this dies, or at least so seems, yet there being still life and vigour in the roots, they send forth suckers.

Ver. 9. *[Yet] through the scent of water it will bud*, etc.] As soon as it smells it, or perceives it, is sensible of it, or partakes of its efficacy; denoting both how speedily, and how easily, at once as it were, it buds forth through the virtue either of rain water that descends upon it, or river water by which it is planted, or by any means conveyed unto it; particularly this is true of the willow, which delights in watery places; and, when it is in the circumstances before described, will by the benefit of water bud out again, even when its stock has been seemingly dead:

and bring forth boughs like a plant; as if it was a new plant, or just planted; so the Vulgate Latin version, as “when it was first planted”; or as a plant that sends forth many branches: the design of this simile is to show that man’s case is worse than that of trees, which when cut down sprout

out again, and are in the place where they were before; but man, when he is cut down by death, rises up no more in the same place; he is seen no more in it, and the place that knew him knows him no more; where he falls he lies until the general resurrection; he rises not before without a miracle, and such instances are very rare, and never either before or at the resurrection, but by the omnipotence of God; whereas a tree, in the above circumstances, sprouts out of itself, according to its nature, and in virtue of a natural power which God has put into it; not so man^{f593}.

Ver. 10. *But man dieth, and wasteth away*, etc.] All men, every man, “Geber”, the mighty man, the strong man; some die in their full strength; the wise man, notwithstanding all his wisdom and knowledge, and even skill in the art of medicine; the rich man, with all his riches, with which he cannot bribe death, nor keep it off; the great and the honourable, emperors, kings, princes, nobles, all die, and their honour is laid in the dust; yea, good men die, though Christ has died for them; even those that are the most useful and beneficial to men, the prophets of the Lord, and the ministers of his word; and it is no wonder that wicked men should die, though they put the evil day far from them, make an agreement with death, or bid it defiance, their wickedness shall not deliver from it; all men have sinned, and death passes on them, it is appointed for them to die; not their souls, which are immortal, but their bodies, which return to dust, and are only the mortal part; death is a disunion or separation of soul and body: and now when this is made, the body “wasteth away” in the grave, and becomes rottenness, dust, and worms, and does not by the strength of nature spring up again, as a tree does; though some understand, by an inversion of the phrases, a wasting before death through diseases, as if the words were to be read, “but man wasteth away and dieth”^{f594}; he is enervated by sickness, his strength is weakened in the way, and when he dies there is none left in him; he is cut off^{f595}, as some choose to render it, or cut down as a tree is; but then there is no force or natural strength in him to rise again, as in a tree:

yea, man giveth up the ghost, and where [is] he? not in the same place he was; not in his house and habitation where he lived; nor in his family, and among his friends, with whom he conversed, nor in the world, and on the earth where he did business; he is indeed somewhere, but where is he? his body is in the grave; his soul, where is that? if a good man, it is in the presence of God, where is fulness of joy; it is with Christ, which is far better than to be here; it is with the spirits of just men made perfect; it is in

Abraham's bosom, feasting with him and other saints; it is in heaven, in paradise, in a state of endless joy and happiness: if a wicked man, his soul is in hell, in the lake which burns with fire and brimstone, with the devil and his angels, and other damned spirits; in a prison, from whence there is no release, and in the uttermost misery and distress, banished from the divine Presence, and under a continual sense of the wrath of God.

Ver. 11. [*As*] *the waters fail from the sea*, etc.] the words may be rendered either without the *as*, and denote dissimilitude, and the sense be, that the waters go from the sea and return again, as with the tide:

and the flood decays and dries up; and yet is supplied again with water: "but man lieth down, and riseth not again", (^{<3842>}Job 14:12); or else with the *as*, and express likeness; as the waters when they fail from the sea, or get out of lakes, and into another channel, never return more; and as a flood, occasioned by the waters of a river overflowing its banks, never return into it more; so man, when he dies, never returns to this world any more. The Targum restrains this to the Red sea, and the parting of that and the river Jordan, and the drying up of that before the ark of the Lord, and the return of both to their places again.

Ver. 12. *So man lieth down*, etc.] Or "and", or "but man lieth down"^{f596}; in the grave when he dies, as on a bed, and takes his rest from all his labours, toil and troubles, and lies asleep, and continues so till the resurrection morn:

and riseth not; from off his bed, or comes not out of his grave into this world, to the place where he was, and to be engaged in the affairs of life he was before, and never by his own power; and whenever he will rise, it will be by the power of God, and this not till the last day, when Christ shall appear in person to judge the world; and then the dead in Christ will rise first, at the beginning of the thousand years, and the wicked at the end of them:

till the heavens [be] no more, they shall not awake, nor be raised out of their sleep; for so the words are to be read, not in connection with those that go before, but with the last clauses; though the sense is much the same either way, which is, that those who are fallen asleep by death, and lie sleeping in their graves, and on their beds, these shall neither awake of themselves, nor be awaked by others, "till the heavens be no more"; that is, never, so as to awake and arise of themselves, and to this natural life, and

to be concerned in the business of it; which sometimes seems to be the sense of this phrase, (see ^{<4382>}Psalm 89:29) (^{<4158>}Matthew 5:18); or, as some render it, “till the heavens are wore out”, or “waxen old” ^{f597}; as they will like a garment, and be folded up, and laid aside, as to their present use, (^{<4926>}Psalm 102:26); or till they shall vanish away, and be no more, as to their present form, quality, and use, though they may exist as to substance; and when this will be the case, as it will be when the Judge shall appear, when Christ shall come a second time to judge the world; then the earth and heaven will flee away from his face, the earth and its works shall be burnt up, and the heavens shall pass away with great noise; and then, and not till then, will the dead, or those that are asleep in their graves, be awaked by the voice of the archangel, and the trump of God, and they shall be raised from their sleepy beds, awake and arise, some to everlasting life, and some to shame and everlasting contempt.

Ver. 13. *And that thou wouldst hide me in the grave*, etc.] The house appointed for all living, which some understand by the “chambers” in (^{<2350>}Isaiah 26:20); The cemeteries or dormitories of the saints, where they lie and sleep until the indignation of God against a wicked world is over and past; or in Hades, the state of the dead, where they are insensible of what is done in this world, what calamities and judgments are on the inhabitants of it, and so are not affected and grieved with these things; or in some cavern of the earth, in the utmost recesses of it, in the very centre thereof, if possible; his wish is, to be buried alive, or to live in some subterraneous place, free from his present afflictions and misery, than to be upon earth with them:

that thou wouldst keep me secret; so that no eye should see him, that is, no human eye; for he did not expect to be hid from the sight of God, be he where he would, before whom hell and destruction, or the grave, are and have no covering; and not only be secret, but safe from all trials and troubles, oppressions and oppressors; especially as he may mean the grave where the wicked cease from troubling and the weary are at rest; the keys of which Christ keeps in his hands, and locks and unlocks, and none but him; and where he has laid up his jewels, the precious dust of his saints and where they and that will be preserved as hidden treasure:

until thy wrath be past; either with respect to others, an ungodly world, to punish whom God sometimes comes out of his place in great wrath and indignation; and to prevent his dear children and people from being

involved in common and public calamities, he takes them away beforehand, and hides them in his chambers, (^{<2316>}Isaiah 26:19,20 57:1); or with respect to himself, as to his own apprehension of things, who imagined that the wrath of God was upon him, being severely afflicted by him; all the effects of which he supposed would not be removed until he was brought to the dust, from whence he came, and until his body was changed at the resurrection; till that time there are some appearances of the displeasure of against sin: and then follows another petition,

that thou wouldest appoint me a set time, and remember me; either for his going down to the grave, and being hid there, for which there is an appointed time; for as that is the place appointed for man, it is appointed for man to go unto it, and the time when, as appears from (^{<18145>}Job 14:5); or his coming out of the grave, for his resurrection from thence, which also is fixed, even the last day, the day God has appointed to judge the world in righteousness by Christ at which time the dead will be raised; though of that day and hour no man knows: unless he should mean a time for deliverance from his afflictions which also is set; for God, as he settles the bounds of an affliction, how far it should go, and no farther, so likewise the time when it should end; and either of these Job might call a remembering of him, who thought himself in his present case, as a dead man, out of mind, as those that lie in the grave, remembered no more.

Ver. 14. *If a man die*, etc.] This is said not as if it was a matter of doubt, he had before asserted it; as sure as men have sinned, so sure shall they die; nothing is more certain than death, it is appointed by God, and is sure; but taking it for granted, the experience of all men, and the instances of persons of every age, rank, and condition, testifying to it; the Targum restrains it to wicked men,

“if a wicked man die:”

shall he live [again]? no, he shall not live in this earth, and in the place where he was, doing the same business he once did; that is, he shall not live here; ordinarily speaking, the instances are very rare and few; two or three instances there have been under the Old Testament, and a few under the New; but this is far from being a general and usual case, and never through the strength of nature, or of a man’s self, but by the mighty power of God: or it may be answered to affirmatively, he shall live again at the general resurrection, at the last day, when all shall come out of their graves, and there will be a general resurrection of the just, and of the unjust; some will

live miserably, in inexpressible and eternal torments, and wish to die, but cannot, their life will be a kind of death, even the second death; others will live comfortably and happily an endless life of joy and pleasure with God; Father, Son and Spirit, angels and glorified saints: hence, in the faith of this is the following resolution,

all the days of my appointed time will I wait, till my change come; there is an appointed time for man on earth when he shall be born, how long he shall live, and when he shall die, (see ^{<3800>}Job 7:1 14:5); or “of my warfare” ^{f598} for the life of man, especially of a good man, is a state of warfare with many enemies, sin, Satan, and the world; at the end of which there will be a “change”; for not a change of outward circumstances in this life is meant; for though there was such a change befell Job, yet he was, especially at this time, in no expectation of it; and though his friends suggested it to him, upon his repentance and reformation, he had no hope of it, but often expresses the contrary: but either a change at death is meant; the Targum calls it a change of life, a change of this life for another; death makes a great change in the body of a man, in his place here, in his relations and connections with men, in his company, condition, and circumstances: or else the change at the resurrection, when this vile body will be changed, and made like unto Christ’s; when it will become an incorruptible, glorious, powerful, and spiritual body, which is now corruptible, dishonourable, weak, and natural; and, till one or other of these should come, Job is determined to wait, to live in the constant expectation of death, and to be in a readiness and preparation for it; in the mean while to bear afflictions patiently, and not show such marks of impatience as he had done, nor desire to die before God’s time, but, whenever that should come, quietly and cheerfully resign himself into the hands of God; or this may respect the frame and business of the soul in a separate state after death, and before the resurrection, believing, hoping, and waiting for the resurrection of the body, and its union to it, (see ^{<3960>}Psalm 16:10).

Ver. 15. *Thou shalt call, and I will answer thee*, etc.] Either at death, when the soul of than is required of him, and he is summoned out of time into eternity, and has sometimes previous notice of it; though not by a prophet, or express messenger from the Lord, as Hezekiah had, yet by some disease and distemper or another, which has a voice, a call in it to expect a remove shortly; and a good man that is prepared for it, he answers to this call readily and cheerfully; death is no king of terrors to him, he is not reluctant to it, yea, desirous of it; entreats his dismissal in peace, and

even longs for it, and rejoices and triumphs in the views of it: or else at the resurrection, when Christ shall call to the dead, as he did to Lazarus, and say, Come forth; and when they shall hear his voice, even the voice of the archangel, and shall answer to it, and come forth out of their graves, the sea, death, and the grave, being obliged to deliver up the dead that are therein; though some think this refers to God's call unto him in a judicial way, and his answers to it by way of defence, as in (~~18132~~ Job 13:22); but the other sense seems more agreeable to the context:

thou wilt have a desire to the work of thine hands; meaning his body, which is the workmanship of God, and a curious piece of workmanship it is, wonderfully and fearfully made, (~~18134~~ Psalm 139:14), and curiously wrought; and though it may seem to be marred and spoiled by death, yet God will have a desire to the restoration of it at the resurrection to a better condition; even the bodies of his people, and that because they are vessels chosen by him, given to his Son, redeemed by his blood, united to his person, and sanctified by his Spirit, whose temples they are, and in whom he dwells: wherefore upon these considerations it may be reasonably supposed that Father, Son, and Spirit, have a desire to the resurrection of the bodies of the saints, and in which they will have a concern; and from which it may be concluded it will be certainly effected, since God is a rock, and his work is perfect, or will be, both upon the bodies and souls of his people; and the work of sanctification will not be properly completed on them until their vile bodies are changed, and made like to the glorious body of Christ; which must be very desirable to him, who has such a special love for them, and delight in them. Some render the words with an interrogation, "wilt thou desire [to destroy] the work of thine hands" ^{f599}? surely thou wilt not; or, as Ben Gersom,

"is it fit that thou shouldst desire to destroy the work of thine hands?"

surely it is not becoming, it cannot be thought that thou wilt do it; but the former sense is best.

Ver. 16. *For now thou numberest my steps*, etc.] Or "but now" ^{f600}, at this present time thou seemest to have no desire to me, or affection for me, but the reverse. Job was in a pretty good frame of mind a little before, having in view his last change, and the glorious resurrection; but on a sudden he returns to his former complaints of God, and here of the rigour and strictness of his justice in marking his steps, and correcting him for his sin;

so very uncertain are the best of frames: the outward conversation of men, whether good or bad, is often in Scripture expressed by walking, and the actions of men, good or evil, are the steps taken therein; here they signify evil ones, irregular steps, steps out of the way of God's commandments, aberrations, strayings from thence, false steps; these Job supposed God not only had knowledge of, as he has of all the ways, paths, and goings of men, but took very exact notice of his wrong steps; looked very narrowly to his paths, as in (~~28127~~ Job 13:27); and strictly marked them; yea, told them one by one, that he might miss none, and make up a large account, which he put down in his book, in order to produce against him; in which Job was mistaken: he thought God dealt with him as he does with wicked men, whose evil actions are not only known and observed, but are counted and put down in the book of his remembrance, which will be opened at the last day, and produced against them; but God has blotted out of his book the sins of his people, and will remember them no more; he has a book of remembrance for their good works, words, and thoughts, but none for their evil ones:

dost thou not watch over my sin? of error, infirmity, and weakness; observe it, mark it in a strict and rigorous way, which, when God does, who can stand before him? or “watch for my sin?” (~~2794~~ Daniel 9:14 ~~2800~~ Jeremiah 20:10) as Jeremiah's enemies watched for his halting; so Job here represents God very wrongly, as if he watched for an opportunity against him, to take the advantage of it, and severely chastise him: or “thou dost not wait for my sin” ^{f601}; that is, the punishment of it as many of the Jewish writers ^{f602} carry the sense; which is, that God did not defer the punishment of sin, or give him any respite or breathing time, but as soon as ever he committed any offence, immediately, at once, he was rough with him, and used him with great severity. Aben Ezra inserts the word “only”, as explanative of the meaning of the words, thus, “thou watchest only over my sin”, or dost not mark and observe anything but my sins; not my good deeds, only my evil ones; which is a wrong charge, for God takes notice of the good works of his people, and rewards them in a way of grace, though not of debt, as well as of their evil works, and chastises for them in a fatherly way: others render the words to this sense, what is not, or of no moment or consequence, thou keepest for me in mind and memory, as sin ^{f603}; that which is not sin, or at least not known to me to be sin, or however something very trifling, scarce to be called a sin, yet I am dealt with for it as if a very heinous one; or I am afflicted for I know not what, or, which is

all one, for what is not known to me. Some take the words to be a petition, “do not observe my sin”^{f604}; or mark it strictly, or keep it in mind, or reserve it against another time, but hide thy face from it, and remember it no more, nor never against me.

Ver. 17. *My transgression [is] sealed up in a bag*, etc.] Denoting either the concealment of it, as in (²⁸³¹²Hosea 13:12); not from God; nor in such sense sealed up as sin is by the sacrifice and satisfaction of Christ, who has thereby removed it out of the sight of divine justice; so that when it is sought for it shall not be found, nor any more seen, which is the sense of the phrase in (²⁷⁰²⁴Daniel 9:24); where the words, “to make an end of sin”, may be rendered, to “seal [them] up”; but this Job would not have complained of; he means it was hid as in a bag from himself, or he knew not what it was; the transgression was sealed up from him, he was entirely ignorant of and unacquainted with what it was for which he was severely afflicted: or else his sense is, that God had taken strict notice of his transgressions, and had, as it were, put them up in a bag, and set a seal upon it, that none might be lost, but might be ready to be produced against him another day; in allusion, as it is thought, to bills of indictment put up in bags sealed, to be brought into courts of judicature at a proper time, for which they are reserved:

and thou sewest up mine iniquity; in the bag in which it is sealed; not only did he seal up the bag, but sewed a cloth over it thus sealed, for greater security: or “thou sewest to mine iniquity”^{f605}, or adds iniquity to iniquity, as in (¹⁹²⁷Psalm 69:27); as arithmeticians do, who add one number to another until it becomes a great sum; thus God, according to Job, tacked and joined one sin to another, till it became one large heap and pile, reaching to the heavens, and calling for vengeance; or, as Sefhorn interprets it, joined sins of ignorance to sins of presumption; or rather sewed or added the punishment of sin to sin, or punishment to punishment; the Targum is,

“my transgression is sealed up in a book of remembrances, and thou hast joined it to my iniquities.”

Ver. 18. *And surely the mountain falling cometh to nought*, etc.] Job here returns to his former subject of the irreparable state of man at death, which he illustrates by various other similes, as before; and first by a “mountain falling”, which may be supposed, and has been fact, and when it does, it “comes to nought”; it crumbles into dust, and where it falls there it lies,

and never rises up to a mountain, or to the height it had, any more; or it “withers”^{f606}, as some render it, the plants, herbs, and trees that grow upon it, wither away, (see Na 1:4); or “it is dissolved”, or “flows”^{f607}, and spreads itself over the face of the green earth it covers, and destroys with its dust and sand, which is never more gathered up to form a mountain again; so man, like unto a mountain, as kingdoms and states, and kings and princes, and great men are; the Targum instances in Lot; as a man may be said to be, that is in good health of body, and in prosperous circumstances in his family; when he falls, as he does by death, which is expressed by falling, (^{<1038>}2 Samuel 3:38); he comes to nought, he is not any more in the land of the living, nor in the place and circumstances in which he was before:

and the rock is removed out of his place; from the mountain, of which it was a part; or elsewhere, by earthquakes, by force of winds, or strength of waters; and which, when once removed, is never returned to its place any more; so man, who in his full strength seems like a rock immovable, when death comes, it shakes and moves him out of his place, and that never knows him any more.

Ver. 19. *The waters wear the stones*, etc.] Either by continual running in them, or constant dropping upon them^{f608}; and the excavations or hollow places they: make are never filled up again, these impressions are never effaced, nor the stones reduced to their ancient form; so man, though he may have the strength of stones, yet the waters of afflictions will gradually wear him away, and bring him to the dust of death, and where he must lie till the heavens be no more:

thou washest away the things which grow [out] of the dust of the earth; herbs, plants, and trees, which a violent inundation of water tears up by the roots, and carries away, and they are never restored to their places any more. The word **hyj yps**, which we render “the things which grow out”, the spontaneous productions of the earth, as in (^{<1035>}Leviticus 25:5). Aben Ezra interprets of floods of water; and so Schultens, from the use of the word^{f609} in the Arabic language, translates it, “their effusions”; that is, the effusions of waters before mentioned, the floods and inundations of them overflow, “and wash away the dust of the earth”; not only that which is on the surface of it, the soil of it; but, as the same learned man observes, they plough and tear up the earth itself, and carry it away, and it is never

repaired; so men at death are carried away as with a flood, and are no more, (see ^{<1905>}Psalm 90:5);

and or “so” ^{f610}

thou destroyest the hope of man, not the hope of a good man about his eternal state, and of enjoying eternal happiness; which is the gift of God’s grace, which is without repentance, never revoked, called in, or taken away or destroyed; it is built upon the promise of God, who cannot lie; it is founded on the person, blood, and righteousness of Christ; and though it may be brought low, it is never lost; the hope of carnal men in an arm of flesh, in the creature and creature enjoyments, is indeed destroyed; and so is the hope of external professors of religion, that is formed on their own works of righteousness, and profession of religion; but of this Job is not speaking, but of the hope of man of living again in this world after death; for this is a reddition or application of the above similes used to illustrate this point, the irreparable state of man at death, so as that he shall never return to this life again, and to the same state and circumstances of things as before; and next follows a description of death, and the state of the dead.

Ver. 20. *Thou prevailest for ever against him*, etc.] God is a more than a match for man, in anything, in everything; there is no contending with him, or standing against him, he is stronger than he, and always prevails; there is no withstanding any disease, and the force of it, when he sends it; it is a messenger and servant of his, it goes at his command, and does what he bids it do; and all the art and power of man cannot resist it, or hinder what God would have done by it; and so death itself is irresistible; what is stronger than death? it is a king that reigns with a despotic power; it reigns irresistibly, victoriously, and triumphantly; it prevails over all men, in all ages, and will do to the end of the world; no man has power over his spirit to retain it one moment, when death comes to separate it from the body: and this prevalence of God by death over men will be for ever; the grave is man’s long home, to which he is brought by death, and he will never return from it more, to come again into this world, and be about the business of it as now;

and he passeth; out of the world, and is seen no more in it; death is a going the way of all flesh, a departure out of this life, and to it man never usually returns more; he goes to Hades, to the invisible place, and makes his appearance no more here; (see ^{<1975>}Psalm 37:35,36);

thou changest his countenance; at death; the forerunners of death will change a man's countenance, pains, and diseases of body; by these God makes man's beauty to consume like the moth; the fear of death will change a man's countenance, as the handwriting on the wall did Belshazzar's, (^(278B)Daniel 5:9); even such who have out-braved death, and pretended to have made a covenant and agreement with it, yet when the king of terrors is presented to them, they are seized with a panic, their hearts ache, and their countenances turn pale; but oh! what a change is made by death itself, which for this reason is represented as riding on a pale horse; (^(688B)Revelation 6:8); when the rosy florid looks of man are gone, his comeliness turned into corruption, his countenance pale and meagre, his eyes hollow and sunk, his nose sharp pointed, his ears contracted, and jaws fallen, and his complexion altered, and still more when laid in the grave, and he is turned to rottenness, dust, and worms:

and sendeth him away; giveth him a dismissal from this world; sendeth him out of it, from his house, his family, friends, and acquaintance: his birth is expressed often by his coming into the world, and his death by going out of it; for here he has no continuance, no abiding, no rest; and yet there is no departure till God gives him dismissal by death, then he sends him away from hence; some in wrath, whom he sends to take up their abode with devils and damned spirits; others in love, to prevent their being involved in evils coming upon the earth, and to be in better company, with God and Christ, with angels, and the spirits of just men made perfect: Maimonides interprets this of Adam ^{f611}, who, when he changed the object of his countenance, and looked on the forbidden fruit, was sent out of paradise.

Ver. 21. *His sons come to honour*, etc.] Or "are multiplied", ^{f612}, (see Na 3:15); their families increase like a flock, become very numerous, which was reckoned a great blessing; or "become heavy" ^{f613}, being loaded with gold and silver, with riches and honour, raised to great grandeur and dignity, and possessed of much wealth and large estates:

and he knoweth [it] not; the man whose countenance is changed and sent away into another world; for the dead know nothing of the affairs of this life; a good man indeed after death knows more of God and Christ, of the doctrines of grace, and mysteries of Providence; but he knows nothing of the affairs of his family he has left behind: some understand this of a man on his death bed while alive, who, when he is told of the promotion of his

sons to honour, or of the increase of their worldly substance, takes no notice of it; either being deprived of his senses by the disease upon him; or through the greatness of his pains and agonies, or the intenseness of his thoughts about a future state, does not notice what is told him, nor rejoice at it; which in the time of health would have been pleasing to him: but the first sense seems best:

and they are brought low, that is, his sons; or “are diminished” ^{f614}; lessened in their numbers, one taken off after another, and so his family decreases; or they come into low circumstances of life, are reduced in the world, and brought to straits and difficulties, to want and poverty:

but he perceiveth [it] not of them; he is not sensible of their troubles, and so not grieved at them; (see ^{<23616>}Isaiah 63:16); or when he is told of them on his death bed, he does not take notice of them, or regard them, having enough to grapple with himself, and his mind intent on his everlasting state, or carried above them in the views of the love, grace, and covenant of God; (see ^{<1026>}2 Samuel 23:5).

Ver. 22. *But his flesh upon him shall have pain*, etc.] Either he shall be chastened with strong pains on his sick and dying bed; which is the reason why he neither rejoices at the happiness of his family, nor is distressed at their misfortunes; having so much pain in his flesh and bones to endure himself; or, as Gussetius ^{f615} renders it, “for this” his flesh and soul shall have pain and grief while he lives, because he cannot know how it will be with his family when he is dead; but rather this is to be understood of a man when dead; and so it is a continuation of the description of death, or of the state of the dead; thus Aben Ezra interprets it of his flesh upon him, that is, his body shall melt away, rot and corrupt, meaning in the grave; so the word is used of marring and destroying, in (^{<1188>}2 Kings 3:19), to which the Targum inclines,

“but his flesh, because of worms upon him, shall grieve;”

and so Jarchi, troublesome is the worm to a dead man as a needle in quick flesh; pain and grief are by a prosopopoeia or personification attributed to a dead body; signifying, that could it be sensible of its case, it would be painful and grievous to it:

and his soul within him shall mourn; either while he lives, because of his afflictions and terrors, the days being come in which he has no pleasure, and the time of death drawing nigh; or his dead body, as the word is used

in (~~9160~~ Psalm 16:10); said to mourn by the same figure; or his soul, because of his body being dead; or rather his breath, which at death fails and pines away^{f616}.