

CHAPTER 18

INTRODUCTION TO JOB 18

In this chapter is Bildad's second reply to Job, in which he falls with great fury upon him, very sharply inveighs against him, and very highly charges him; the charges he brings against him are talkativeness and inattention to what was said to him, (~~18:1~~ Job 18:1,2); contempt of his friends, impatience under his affliction, and pride and arrogance, as if the whole world, the course of nature and providence, and God himself all must give way to him, (~~18:3~~ Job 18:3,4); nevertheless, he is assured of the miserable state of a wicked man, sooner or later, which is described by the extinction of his light of prosperity, (~~18:5~~ Job 18:5,6); by the defeat of his counsels, being ensnared in a net laid for him, (~~18:7~~ Job 18:7-10); by the terrible judgments of the sword, famine, and pestilence, by one or the other of which he is brought to death, the king of terrors, (~~18:11~~ Job 18:11-14); by the destruction of his habitation and of his posterity, so that he has none to hear his name, or perpetuate his memory, (~~18:15~~ Job 18:15-17); by his being driven out of the world, leaving no issue behind him, to the astonishment of all that knew him, (~~18:18~~ Job 18:18-20); and the chapter is closed with this observation, that this is the common case of wicked and irreligious persons, (~~18:21~~ Job 18:21).

Ver. 1. *Then answered Bildad the Shuhite, and said.*] Who, next to Eliphaz, spoke before, and now in his turn attacks Job a second time, and more roughly and severely than before; now he gives him no advice or counsel, nor any instructions and exhortations for his good, nor suggests that it might be better times with him again, as he had done before; but only heaps up charges against him, and describes the miserable circumstances of a wicked man, as near to Job's as he could; thereby endeavouring to confirm his former position, that wicked men are punished of God, and to have this conclusion drawn from it, that Job must needs be a wicked man, since he was so greatly afflicted.

Ver. 2. *How long [will it be] ere ye make an end of words?* etc.] Because these words are expressed the plural number, some think more persons than one are addressed, either Eliphaz and Job together, who are

complained of as taking up all the time, and having all the talk to themselves, that another could scarce put in a word; Bildad could say this with a better grace, because his discourses were but short; or else all his friends, whom he blames for not stopping Job's mouth at once, and for lengthening out the dispute with him; as if he should say, why are you so complaisant to him, to wait till he has done speaking, before you reply? why do not you, without any ceremony, interrupt him, and not suffer him to go on with his prate, a man that is so insufferably rude as to reckon us all as beasts? and to what purpose is it to talk to such a man, that is so hardened and incorrigible, so proud and conceited? it is all labour in vain, and mere beating the air; it is high time to have done talking, and to put an end to the dispute, when things are such a pass with him as they are: or else the words are directed to Job, and his friends that were with him, who might now and then speak a word in his behalf, though their words are not recorded; or, however, by their looks or gestures might show their approbation of Job's defences: that there were others present besides Job and his three friends, it is probable; yea, it is certain that Elihu was present all the while, but he was not altogether of Job's mind; nor does it appear that he had any to take his part, for his brethren, acquaintance, kinsfolk, and familiar friends, stood at a distance from him, and his maids and menservants used him ill; and even his own wife was not very kind to him, as he declares in the following chapter; wherefore it seems best of all to understand these words as spoken to Job alone, the plural being used for the singular, according to the idiom of the tongue in which they were spoken, and so are a charge of loquacity against him for talking too much, and too long, unless it had been to better purpose; and in like manner Bildad begins his first reply to Job, (~~xxx~~ Job 8:2); a late interpreter renders the words, "how long will you lay snares with words" ^{f683}? use cautious words, set snares with words to catch, lie upon the catch, and lay hold upon a word, and improve it to disadvantage, which is imprudently or inadvertently dropped:

mark, and afterwards we will speak; or "let us speak" ^{f684}; after we have well considered things, got a right understanding of them, and thoroughly digested them, and have well concerted things, and have thought very closely what reply to make to them; and so the words are a tacit reflection of Bildad's on his other two friends, that they spoke before they thought, and therefore some things impertinently, which Job took the advantage of against them; wherefore it would be right, for the future, to mark and

consider things well beforehand, and then speak, as they then would with greater propriety, and more to the purpose: public speakers especially, or such who are engaged in public service, or in a public dispute, should meditate beforehand what to say, lest they deliver what is crude and undigested, and may be turned against them. Our Lord indeed directed his disciples, when called before kings and, governors for his sake, not to premeditate what they should answer; but that was an extraordinary case, and they were promised to have extraordinary assistance, whereby some great ends were to be answered, the confusion of their enemies, and the confirmation of the Christian religion. But the words seem rather directed to Job, and to carry in them a charge of inattention to what was said to him by his friends; and therefore Bildad exhorts him to mark and observe what they said to him, to listen attentively to that, and well consider it, and then it would be an encouragement to them to proceed in discoursing with him. Job is represented like some hearers, that stop their ears to the voice of the charmer charming ever so wisely; or that are careless and inattentive to what they hear, and let it pass, and never think of it more; whereas hearers of the word should be swift to hear, and listen with attention, and take care that they let not slip what they have heard, and that they meditate upon it in order to get instruction by it, and when they hear in such a manner it is? a encouragement to speak; or else the sense is, “act wisely”^{f685}, like an honest man, and show yourself to be a wise man, a man of understanding, that well weighs and considers things, and rightly takes them in, and receives instruction by them, and talks like a sensible man: “then afterwards we will speak”; or otherwise, if you go on to talk in the foolish manner you do, it is to no purpose to carry on the dispute; the best way is to put an end to it at once.

Ver. 3. *Wherefore are we counted as beasts*, etc.] This seems to refer to (^{<1817>}Job 12:7); where Job sends them to the beasts, to get knowledge and instruction; and therefore it was concluded he reckoned them as such, and put them on a level with them, yea, made them inferior to them; or to (^{<1817>}Job 17:4,10); where they are represented as destitute of wisdom and understanding, and therefore it is supposed were counted by Job no other than as beasts. Man, by the fall, is indeed become like them, and some are more brutish than they, and all are brutish as to spiritual knowledge and understanding; and those that are most sensible of themselves are ready to acknowledge their ignorance, that they are more brutish than any, and especially are as a beast before God; and particularly with respect to

knowledge of the methods of Providence, in regard to his dealings with the righteous and wicked; (see ^{<49732>}Psalm 73:22); and which was the case in controversy between Job and his friends; but yet self-sufficient persons do not care to have their understandings in anything called in question, but like the Pharisees say, “are we blind also?” (^{<4940>}John 9:40); and take it very hard that they should be reckoned like beasts, void of understanding, when they are the people, and wisdom will die with them:

[and] reputed vile in your sight? as wicked and profligate persons, the most abandoned of mankind, such as are justly despised by good men, (see ^{<4954>}Psalm 15:4 ^{<27121>}Daniel 11:21); or “unclean” ^{f686}, filthy, polluted, and defiled, as all men are by nature, and as they are in all the powers and faculties of their souls; nor can they make themselves clean, their hearts or their hands; nothing short of the grace of God, and blood of Christ, can cleanse from sin; yet self-righteous persons think themselves clean and pure when they are not washed from their sins, and take it ill of others to be reputed unclean persons: or “shut” ^{f687}, stopped up, as the hearts of men are from God and Christ, and the true knowledge of them, and divine things, until opened by him who has the key of the house of David, and opens, and no man shuts; or “hidden” ^{f688}, referring to (^{<3870>}Job 17:4); having a covering over their hearts, and a vail over the eyes of their understandings, so that the things of Providence were hid from them, as sometimes the things of grace are from the wise and prudent; but to be thought that this was their case is resented by Bildad.

Ver. 4. *He teareth himself in his anger*, etc.] Or “his soul” ^{f689}, meaning Job, and referring to what he had said in (^{<3860>}Job 16:9); Now, says Bildad, it is neither God nor man that tears you, it is you yourself; representing Job as a madman, rending his clothes, tearing his flesh, and even his very soul; for by his passion which he expressed, whether to God or his friends, it did himself the most hurt, he broke his peace, and spoiled his comfort, and ruined his health, and made himself the most unhappy of mankind, by giving vent to his passion, to his wrath and anger, which slays a man, (^{<3840>}Job 5:2); here a charge of impatience is suggested, contrary to the character even of Job, (^{<3051>}James 5:11);

shall the earth be forsaken for thee? through fear of thee, because of thy rage and fury; dost thou think that the inhabitants of the earth will flee before thee, at thy storming, rage, and wrath? before God none can stand when he is angry: there is no abiding his indignation when his fury is

poured out like fire, and persons of the greatest rank will flee to the rocks and mountains to hide them from his face and fury; but what dost thou think, or make thyself to be, to be as Deity, that the inhabitants of the earth should flee fore thee, and forsake it? or when thou diest, dost thou think that all the inhabitants of the earth will die with thee, and so it will be forsaken for thy sake? taking the hint from what Job had said, (^{<1876>}Job 17:16); or dost thou think thyself a man of so much importance and consequence in the earth that when thou diest there will not be a man left of any worth and notice, that all might as well die with thee? or will God drop the government of the world on thy account? will he no more employ his care and providence in concerning himself in the affairs of the world, but let all things go as they will, and so the earth, as to his providential regards to it, be forsaken for thy sake? will God neither do good to good men, nor punish bad men? which must be the case according to thy doctrine; but will God counteract this method of his providence, he has always taken in the earth, that thou mayest appear not to be an evil man, as might be concluded from thine afflictions, but a good man notwithstanding them?

and shall the rock be removed out of his place? which is not usual, nor can it be done by man; it may be done by God, who touches the mountains, and they smoke, and at whose presence they drop and move, as Sinai did, and as the mountains and hills will flee away at the presence of the Judge of all the earth, when he appears; but no such phenomenon can be expected upon the presence and sight of a man; much less can God himself, who is often called a Rock, and is immovable, unalterable, and unchangeable in his nature, perfections, purposes, and the counsels of his will, be made to act contrary to either of them, (^{<1531>}Deuteronomy 32:4,15,18,30,31 ^{<1028>}2 Samuel 23:3 ^{<1610>}1 Corinthians 10:4); nor will he do it for the sake of any man; he does all things after the counsel of his own will; he takes a constant course in Providence, in the government of the world, canst thou think that he will go out of his usual way for thy sake, in punishing wicked men, and rewarding good men? you may as soon imagine that a rock will be removed out of its place as the ordinary course of Providence will be altered on thy account; to suppose this is presumption, pride, and arrogance, which is what Bildad means to fasten upon Job.

Ver. 5. *Yea, the light of the wicked shall be put out,* etc.] Or “nevertheless” ^{f690}; notwithstanding all this disregard and inattention to us, and contempt of us, and all the rage, and wrath, and pride, and haughtiness

discovered, as if the laws of nature, and stated methods of Providence, must all give way to justify a man in such circumstances as show him to be wicked; this will certainly be his case, his “light shall be put out”; meaning not the light of his eyes, or his corporeal light, which sometimes has been the case of wicked men, as was of the Sodomites, since this, through accident, or old age, is common to good and bad then; but rather moral light, the light of nature, with which every man is enlightened that comes into the world; by which he can discern things natural and civil, and in some degree things moral and religious, though in a very dim manner; and which, when it is abused, may be taken away, and men be given up to judicial blindness, and to a reprobate mind, a mind void of sense and judgment. Cocceius thinks light of doctrine may be intended, speculative and notional light and knowledge of divine things, as of God, and his perfections, which may be more clearly discerned by revelation than by the light of nature; and of Christ, his person, offices, and grace; and of the Gospel, and each of the doctrines of it, which men may be enlightened into, and yet be wicked men, as Balsam, and others; which knowledge may be lost, and light put out, as in the man that had but one talent, and neglected it, and in the idle shepherd, (^{<4059>}Matthew 25:29 ^{<3817>}Zechariah 11:17); to which may be added the light of joy, or a flash of natural affections that sometimes is to be observed in hypocritical persons, or notional professors, which in time is lost, and comes to nothing, as in Herod and the stony ground hearers, (^{<4060>}Mark 6:20 ^{<4030>}Matthew 13:20); but as for the true spiritual light, and experimental knowledge, that can never be lost or put out, but shines more and more unto the perfect day: but it seems best by “light” here to understand outward prosperity, for as darkness is often put for adversity, so light for prosperity in civil things, (see ^{<4786>}Esther 8:16); but then, though this in wicked men is often put out, and they are reduced to distressed circumstances, yet not always; and it sometimes is the case of good men, and was the case of Job, which Bildad had his eye upon, (see ^{<4892>}Job 29:2,3);

and the spark of his fire shall not shine; all his carnal reasonings, the effects of the light of nature, and all his schemes, especially religious ones built upon them, shall all come to nothing, and be of no effect or use unto him, (see ^{<2301>}Isaiah 50:11); or the sense is, that he shall be reduced to so low a condition in things civil, that he shall have no light nor heat, nor joy and comfort, in this sense; no, not so much as a spark of outward happiness shall be left him.

Ver. 6. *The light shall the dark in his tabernacle*, etc.] Not the light of the eye, in the tabernacle of his body, rather the light of nature and reason in him; and when that “light [that is] in [a man becomes] darkness”, as our Lord says, “how great [is] that darkness!” (^{<4162>}Matthew 6:23); but best of all it designs the light of prosperity in his house and family, which should be quite obscured:

and his candle shall be put out with him; which sometimes signifies the spirit of man, his rational soul, called “the candle of the Lord”, (^{<3117>}Proverbs 20:27); which, though it dies not when man dies, yet its light is extinct with respect to the things of this life, and all its thoughts and reasonings are no more about civil matters, and the affairs of this world; in that sense this light is put out, and those thoughts perish with him, (^{<1464>}Psalms 146:4); but more frequently it is used for outward prosperity, which if it continues with a man as long as he lives, as it often does, yet, when he dies, it ceases and is no more; it does not descend with him into the grave, and he cannot carry it into another world, but it is put out in “obscure darkness”; (see ^{<8217>}Job 21:17) (^{<3117>}Proverbs 20:20).

Ver. 7. *The steps of his strength shall be straitened*, etc.] As a man in health can take large and strong steps, and travel in the greatness of his strength; so in prosperity he can and does take large steps in obtaining fame and reputation among men, in amassing substance to himself, and towards settling his family in the world; he is like one in a large place, and walks at liberty, goes in and out at pleasure, and none can control him; he walks in pride, and with an high and lifted up head, and with contempt of others, and his will is his law, and he does as he pleases; but in adversity, as his strength is weakened in the way, he cannot take the strides he did, his way is hedged up with thorns, he is pressed on every side, and surrounded with troubles, so that, let him turn himself which way he will, he can find no way to escape:

and his own counsel shall cast him down; as Ahithophel’s and Haman’s did, which issued in their ruin, (^{<1073>}2 Samuel 17:23 ^{<1710>}Esther 7:10); what wicked men sometimes plot and devise, with a view to their own good, and the injury of others, proves the destruction of themselves; when they have contrived to raise themselves upon the ruins of others, it has been the means of casting them down from the state and condition they were in, instead of raising to an higher, even down to desolation, and into the most miserable circumstances.

Ver. 8. *For he is cast into a net by his own feet*, etc.] He goes into it of himself, incautious and imprudent; the counsels, schemes, and methods he takes to hurt others, issue in his own ruin; the pit he digs for them, he falls and sinks into himself; and the net which he has spread and hid for others, in it is his own foot taken; and the ways and means he takes to do himself good, to amass riches and advance his family, being illicit ones, prove snares and nets unto him, those leading him into many foolish and hurtful lusts, which bring him to perdition, (^{<4905>}Psalm 9:15 ^{<5109>}1 Timothy 6:9); even the various sins and transgressions he commits are snares unto him, by which he is enticed and drawn in: for in “the transgression of an evil man there is a snare”, (^{<1916>}Proverbs 29:6); these promise him peace, and pleasure, and liberty, but give neither; they are nets in which he is entangled, and cords by which he is held, (^{<4915>}Psalm 9:15,16); into which his own feet carry him: some render it, “he goes with a net at his feet”^{f691}, or with his feet in a net; he cannot go where he would, or do as he pleases; he is restrained by the providence of God; as the devils are held in chains, so the feet of wicked men are entangled in a net, that they cannot move and act as they are desirous of:

and he walketh upon a snare: laid for him, and hidden to him, and therefore walks on boldly and unconcerned, not being apprehensive of any danger, though greatly exposed to it; he walks on as on firm and good ground, and in a broad road, but destruction and misery are in his ways; yet he walks on of himself willingly, and with all his strength, pleasing himself in the path he treads, not dreaming of the mischief that awaits him; or “upon a thicket”^{f692} of thorns and briars, his sins and iniquities with which he is entangled, and out of which he cannot extricate himself, or afflictive providences with which his way is hedged up; though the former sense seems best; Mr. Broughton renders it, “a platted gin”.

Ver. 9. *The gin shall take [him] by the heel*, etc.] And hold him fast, so that he shall not be able to get away, especially out of such as are set by God himself; for God has his nets, and snares, and gins for wicked men, and such plenty of them, that he even is said to rain them on them; yea, he himself is a gin and a snare unto them, and out of his hands there is no escaping, wherefore it is a terrible thing to fall into them, (see ^{<3123>}Ezekiel 12:13 32:3 ^{<9116>}Psalm 11:6 ^{<3884>}Isaiah 8:14,15);

[and] the robber shall prevail against him; either robbers literally taken, such as the Sabeans and Chaldeans, to whom Bildad may have reference,

who prevailed against Job, and plundered him of his substance; and such as these, as the word signifies, are “thirsty ones” ^{f693}, who thirst after the wealth and riches of men, and after their blood for the sake thereof, bloodthirsty ones; Mr. Broughton renders it, “the savage”, barbarous, wild, and uncivilized, that lived in desert places, and were like wild beasts, let their hair grow long, to make them look more terrible and formidable, which some take to be the signification of the word, and render it “horrid” ^{f694} or terrible, (see Gill on “~~<RB>~~Job 5:5”); or else the devil may be meant, who is like a roaring lion, terrible and frightful, and who, as he was a murderer from the beginning, so a thief and robber, that comes to kill and destroy, and whom God suffers to prevail over the children of disobedience, and in whom he works powerfully, being the strong man armed, that has possession of them and their goods, and keeps them in peace; and who has his snares, which he lays suited to the tempers and dispositions of men, and in which they are taken alive, as beasts of prey, and are detained by him at his pleasure, (~~<RB>~~2 Timothy 2:26).

Ver. 10. *The snare [is] laid for him in the ground*, etc.] Or “hidden” ^{f695} there; for, as Solomon says, “in vain the net is spread in sight of any bird”, (~~<RB>~~Proverbs 1:17); and in vain it is to lay a snare publicly in the sight or creature, it will not then come near it, but shun and avoid it; and therefore it is laid underground, or hid in the earth, or in some private place, where the creature it is designed for may be thought to come, or into which it is decoyed; or “the cord” ^{f696}, that which is fastened to the snare or net, and which the fowler holds in his hand, and pulls with; as he finds occasion and opportunity offers; but this is hid as much as possible, that it may not be seen:

and a trap for him in the way; in which he is used to walk, by the roadside, or in it; Mr. Broughton renders it, “a pitfall on the wayside”, such as is dug for beasts to fall into and be taken. The whole of this is designed to show how suddenly and secretly wicked men are taken in nets, and snares, and gins, either of their own or others laying, and, while they are crying “Peace, peace, sudden destruction comes upon them”; (see ~~<RB>~~Ecclesiastes 9:12 ~~<RB>~~1 Thessalonians 5:3).

Ver. 11. *Terrors shall make him afraid on every side*, etc.] Make him a “Magormissabib”, or “terror on every side”, as Pashur was a terror to himself, (~~<RB>~~Jeremiah 20:3), and all his friends about him; these terrors may be either the terrors of the judges of the earth upon wicked men, who are,

or should be, a terror to evildoers, and of whom wicked men are afraid, lest they should be taken and punished by them; to this sense is the note of Sephorno: or else the terrors of a guilty conscience, which drive a man to his wits' end, that he knows not what to do, nor whither to go; these terrify him night and day, and make an hell upon earth unto him; or the terrors of the righteous law of God broken by him, its menaces and curses threatening him with death and everlasting damnation; or the terrors of the judgments of God on earth, which by their forerunners appear to be coming on it, by reason of which men's hearts fail for fear of them; or terrible apprehensions of the wrath of God for sin, here and hereafter, together with the terrors of death, which fall upon them, and of an awful judgment yet to come. Now Bildad had observed, that Job had said some things concerning the terrors he was sometimes possessed of, (~~1806~~ Job 6:4 7:14 9:28); and therefore would suggest from hence that he must be a wicked man, since this is the case of such; but it is easy to observe that good men are sometimes surrounded with terrors as well as others, so that this is no proof of a man's character and state, (see ~~1885~~ Psalm 88:15,16 ~~1922~~ Lamentations 2:22);

and shall drive him to his feet; to take to his feet and run, in order to get rid of his terrors if possible, but in vain; these cause him not to run to God, to his feet, to the throne and footstool of his grace, but from him, to the rocks and mountains to hide him from his wrath, though there is no going from his spirit, nor fleeing from his presence; and terrors will also have such an effect upon wielded men as to cause them to flee from men, as in Cain, who not only went, from the presence of the Lord, but from the society of men, and became a fugitive and vagabond, and afraid of everyone he met with, lest he should kill him; and sometimes wicked men flee when none pursue, and even at the sound of shaking leaf, (~~1881~~ Proverbs 28:1 ~~1836~~ Leviticus 26:36); or "shall scatter him at his feet"^{f697}, either at the feet of the robber, or cause him to fall to the ground, in the place where his feet stood. Mr. Broughton renders it, "shall press him at his feet", shall follow at his heels, and keep close to him wherever he goes, and overtake and seize him.

Ver. 12. *His strength shall be hungerbitten*, etc.] Or "shall be famine"^{f698}, or hunger, that is, shall be weakened by it; famine is a sore evil, and greatly weakens thee natural strength of men; want of food will soon bring down the strength of the strongest man, when the stay and the staff, the sustenance and support of man's nature is taken from him: many of the

Jewish writers, by “his strength”, understand his children, who are, as Jacob said of Reuben, his might, and the beginning of his strength, (^{<0403>}Genesis 49:3); and when grown up are his protection and defence; and for these to be distressed with hunger, or destroyed by famine, is a sore judgment; so the Targum paraphrases it, his firstborn son; Jarchi interprets it, his son; and Ben Gersom, his seed or offspring:

and destruction [shall be] ready at his side; or “to his rib”^{f699}; that is, his wife, as the Targum and Jarchi explain it, the Jews calling a man’s wife his rib, because the woman was originally made out of one of the ribs of man; and if this could be thought to be the sense of the word here, and what is given by them of the former clause, both make up a complete account of the destruction of a wicked man’s family, his wife and children: but rather it signifies some calamity, distress, and trouble at hand, ready prepared for wicked men, just going to be inflicted on them; for God has stores of vengeance for them, and has made ready his bow, and prepared instruments and arrows of death and destruction for them, as well as there is everlasting fire prepared, and blackness of darkness reserved for them in the world to come; for it can hardly be thought that this should be understood literally of any disease in the side, as the pleurisy, etc. which is threatening, or any mortal wound or stab there, such as Joab gave Amass under the fifth rib.

Ver. 13. *It shall devour the strength of his skin*, etc.] Or “the bars of his skin”^{f700}, the strength and support of his body, for which his skin may be put, as the bones; or “the branches of his skin”^{f701}, the veins, which like so many branches run under, and may be seen through the skin: now these, it, famine, or want of food, devours, and destroys the strength and beauty of the skin, cause it to be black like an oven, (^{<2048>}Lamentations 4:8 5:10); bring a man to a mere skeleton, to skin and bones, waste and consume the members of his body, his flesh, and blood, and bones; the Targum, Jarchi, and Aben Ezra, by “his bars” or “branches” understand his children, which are his bars, the strength of him, and are to him as branches to a tree, proceeding from him; and if we render it, as some do, he “shall devour”^{f702}, or “eat”, that is, the wicked man, it points to us the most horrible scene in a famine, which is shocking and shuddering, and yet what has been, as in the sieges of Samaria and Jerusalem, a parent’s eating and devouring his own children, (^{<0168>}2 Kings 6:28,29 ^{<2040>}Lamentations 4:10); but rather the “it [is] the firstborn of death”, in the next clause, which is to be supplied from thence here:

[even] the firstborn of death shall devour his strength; and so Mr. Broughton translates the whole verse,

“a strange death shall eat all the branches of his body, all its branches shall it eat;”

which the Targum interprets of the angel of death, him which has the power of death: but rather it signifies not what presides over death, but what death first produces, which are corruption and rottenness, dust and worms; these are the firstborn of death, or the firstfruits and effects of it, and which devour and destroy not the skin only, but the whole body and all its members: or “the firstborn death”^{f703}; death, which is a firstborn, it is the firstborn of sin; sin is its parent, last conceives sin, and that brings forth death; death is the child of sin, and is its firstborn, and sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and this is what devours and destroys the strength of men. Some understand by firstborn death a premature one, death before the usual time or common course of nature; wicked men do not live out half their days; and when they are taken off in their youth, in the prime of their days and strength, and amidst all their wealth, riches, and pleasures, this is the first, or firstborn death, as that is a secondary one which is late, in the time of old age. This is the ingenious thought of Pineda; but, perhaps, rather, as the firstborn is the chief and principal, so here may be meant the chiefest of deaths, the most hard, cruel, and severe; the first of those, that death has under it, which are principally the sword, famine, pestilence, and the noisome beast, (see ~~611B~~ Revelation 6:8); it is commonly thought that famine is intended, spoken of in the context; but why not rather some thing distinct from it, and particularly the pestilence? since that is emphatically called death by the Jews, and in the passage last referred to, and is the terror by night, and the arrow that flies by day, even the pestilence that walks in darkness, and the destruction that wastes at noonday; by means of which thousands and ten thousands of wicked men fall at the sides of good men, when it does not affect them: and so may be the evil particularly threatened to a wicked man here, (see ~~591B~~ Psalm 91:5-7).

Ver. 14. *His confidence shall be rooted out of his tabernacle,* etc.] That which his confidence was placed in, his wealth and riches, his family, particularly his children, in all which he placed his confidence of future prosperity and happiness; these should be all taken away from him, and his house cleared of them all; or his good, sound, and healthful constitution, on

account of which he promised himself long life, this he should be deprived of, and it should be taken out of the tabernacle of his body; or his hope and confidence of eternal happiness in another world, this should perish, and be as the giving up of the ghost: or the words may be rendered, “he shall be rooted out of his tabernacle [which was] his confidence”^{f704}; that is, his soul shall be taken out of his body by death, in which it dwelt as in a tabernacle, and where he hoped to have had a long continuance; death is a rooting of a man out of it, and even out of the world, (see ^{f705} Psalm 52:5);

and it shall bring him to the king of terrors; either famine, by which his strength is weakened, or destruction that is at his side, or the firstborn of death, or his vain confidence: or this may be the sense, “thou (O God) wilt bring him”, or “cause him to go to the king of terrors”^{f705}; to death; all men are brought unto it, but not all unto it as a king of terrors; as good men, such as Simeon, the Apostle Paul, and others, but wicked men. Death is a king: it reigns, it has a large empire, even the whole world; its subjects are numerous, all, high and low, rich and poor, great and small; and the duration of its reign is long, it reigned from Adam to Moses, from Moses to the coming of Christ, and from thence to this day, and will to the end of the world, and it reigns with an irresistible power: and this king is a king of terrors to wicked men; it is, as Aristotle^{f706} calls it, the most terrible of terribles; it is terrible to nature, being a dissolution of it; and it must be terrible to mere natural men, who have nothing to support them under it, and no views beyond the grave to comfort them, and cause them to go cheerful through it; but, on the other hand, have not only the bitterness of death to endure, but have terrible apprehensions of a future judgment that comes after it. Some render it, “the king of darkness”^{f707}, extreme darkness, blackness of darkness, utter darkness, which wicked men at death are brought unto. Jarchi interprets it of the king of demons, the devil; and to be brought to him is to be brought to hell and eternal damnation: so some render it, “terrors shall bring him to his king”^{f708}, the devil; or rather “terrors shall come upon him like a king”^{f709}, in a very grand, powerful, and formidable manner.

Ver. 15. *It shall dwell in his tabernacle*, etc.] What shall dwell in it is not said; there are various conjectures about it, and different supplements are made; the Targum is,

“his wife shall dwell in a tabernacle not his;”

and to the same purpose Jarchi; as if it was one part of the punishment of a wicked man, that he should leave a widow behind him, and no house of his own for her to dwell in; but this is the case of the widows of many good men, who themselves, in their lifetime, have no houses of their own, and some no certain dwelling places, yea, have lived in caves and dens of the earth; the mother of our Lord, who seems to have been a widow at his death, was taken by one of his disciples to his own home, which shows she had none of her own. The Vulgate Latin version is,

“his neighbours shall dwell in his tabernacle;”

which some understand of their coming into it after his death, to mourn and bewail him; but as such a visit of his family upon his decease cannot be called dwelling, so this is rather a benefit and favour to his family, than a distress: rather it may signify, that such neighbours whom he had oppressed, and who hated him for his tyranny and cruelty, now should dwell in his house; what he had built, strangers should inhabit, which is a punishment of sin and sinners, (^{<6280>}Deuteronomy 28:30). Aben Ezra supplies it thus, a strange or evil beast shall dwell in it, as they do in desolate places; and it is frequently given as a sign and token of desolation in countries, cities, and palaces, that they are become the habitations of wild and savage creatures, (see ^{<2139>}Isaiah 13:19-22 24:11 ^{<3124>}Zephaniah 2:14); but it seems best to supply it from the context, either thus, famine, hunger, want of food, shall dwell in it; poverty and want shall come like an armed man into it, and take possession; there shall appear all the marks and signs of penury and distress; or destruction ready at his side shall take up its abode in it, and it shall be called the house of destruction, as a certain city is called the city of destruction, because devoted to it, (^{<2198>}Isaiah 19:18); or the firstborn of death, some deadly disease, as the pestilence; or death itself, the king of terrors, who is sometimes represented as a person coming up into the windows of a palace, and entering it, and cutting off great numbers; so that it goes ill with him that is left in a tabernacle, where he has his habitation, (^{<2192>}Jeremiah 9:21 ^{<3105>}Job 20:26); or terror, as Ben Gersom; everyone of the terrors before mentioned, so that no body will care to dwell in it, but forsake it as an haunted house: in short, from the whole it may be gathered, that the curse of God should alight upon it, and remain in it, as it does in the house of the wicked; the same with the flying roll in the vision of Zechariah, the curse of God’s righteous law, which enters into the house of the thief and perjurer, and consumes it, (^{<1183>}Proverbs 3:33 ^{<3104>}Zechariah 5:4); the reason follows,

because [it is] none of his; not by right, being bought or built with mammon of unrighteousness, with money not honestly got, and therefore shall not prosper; or because it is no longer his, he being taken from it by death, the king of terrors, and that not knowing or owning him any more as its master or proprietor, and therefore strangers shall dwell in it; or because there is none that shall be after him, because he shall have none left, or he shall have no survivor^{f710}, all his family being taken away by death; and therefore nothing but desolation and destruction shall be seen in it, (see <30B>Amos 6:9,10);

brimstone shall be scattered upon his habitation; that is, his house should be burnt down by lightning, which is often sulphurous, and sometimes very sensibly has the smell of brimstone in it^{f711}. Bildad may refer either to the fire of heaven that destroyed Job's sheep, which was of this kind; or rather to the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah, by a shower of fire and brimstone from heaven, a fact well known in those times. Moreover, brimstone scattered upon the wicked man's dwelling place may denote the desolation of it, that it should lie in ruins, and be unfit to be inhabited; and the desolation of places is sometimes signified by their being salt, brimstone and burning pitch, (<623>Deuteronomy 29:23 <2340>Isaiah 34:9); yea, this may be carried further, and denote the eternal damnation of all in his house, seeing the burning of Sodom with brimstone was an example to ungodly men suffering the vengeance of eternal fire, (<610>Jude 1:7); and which is sometimes expressed by brimstone, and a lake burning with fire and brimstone, (<6200>Revelation 20:10 21:8 14:10,11). Some^{f712} think respect is had to the purifying of houses with sulphur, to drive away demons, and remove impurity, to make them fit to dwell in^{f713}; and others think it refers to the burning of sulphur in houses at funerals, to testify and exaggerate mourning^{f714}.

Ver. 16. *His roots shall be dried up beneath*, etc.] Wicked men are sometimes compared to trees; to trees of the wood, barren, and unfruitful; to trees without fruit, twice dead, plucked up by the roots; and sometimes to green bay trees, very flourishing for a while, and which on a sudden perish, and come to nothing, (see <210B>Song of Solomon 2:3) (<6112>Jude 1:12 <4375>Psalm 37:35, 36); and such a simile is here used; and by his roots may be meant his family, from whence he sprung, which now should be extinct with him, (see <2100>Isaiah 11:1 <27107>Daniel 11:7); or his substance, which being greatly increased, he seemed to take root in the earth, and not only to be in a prosperous, but in a stable settled condition; but now, like Ephraim,

he should be smitten, and his root dried up; all his wealth, and all the resources of it, should be exhausted, be no more, (see ^{<3417>}Jeremiah 12:2 ^{<3096>}Hosea 9:16);

and above shall his branch be cut off; his children that sprung from him, as branches from a tree, and were his glory and beauty, these should be cut off; referring no doubt in both clauses to Job's present circumstances, whose root in the time of his prosperity was spread out by the waters, but now dried up, and on whose branches the dew lay all night, but now cut off, (^{<3299>}Job 29:19); so the Targum,

“his children shall be cut off out of the earth, and from heaven his destruction shall be decreed;”

both clauses signify the utter destruction of the family of the wicked man, root and branch, (see ^{<3001>}Malachi 4:1). It is a beautiful description of a tree struck with thunder and lightning, and burnt and shattered to pieces, and agrees with (^{<3185>}Job 18:15).

Ver. 17. *His remembrance shall perish from the earth*, etc.] Not only are the wicked forgotten of God in heaven, and are as the slain he remembers no more, unless it be to pour out his wrath upon them, and punish them for their sins, for which great Babylon will come up in remembrance before him; but of men on earth, and in the very places where they were born, and lived all their days, (^{<2180>}Ecclesiastes 8:10 9:5); yea, those places, houses and palaces, towns and cities, which they have built to perpetuate their memory among men, perish and come to nought, and their memorial with them, (^{<3095>}Psalms 9:5,6 49:11);

and he shall have no name in the street; much less in the house of God, still less in heaven, in the Lamb's book of life; so far from it, that he shall have none on earth, no good name among men; if ever his name is mentioned after his death, it is with some brand of infamy upon him; he is not spoken of in public, in a court of judicature, nor in any place of commerce and trade, nor in any concourse of people, or public assembly of any note, especially with any credit or commendation; such is the difference between a good man and a wicked man, (see ^{<3107>}Proverbs 11:7).

Ver. 18. *He shall be driven from light into darkness*, etc.] Either from the light of outward prosperity, formerly enjoyed by him, into the darkness of adversity; or rather from the light of the living, the light of the present life, to the darkness of death, and the grave, the land of darkness, and of the

shadow of death, (^{<18102>}Job 10:21,22); and even into utter darkness, blackness of darkness, the darkness of hell, eternal darkness; opposed to the light of the divine Presence, and the inheritance of the saints in light, possessed by them to all eternity; which the wicked man is deprived of, and will have no share in, but shall be driven from the presence of God, and by him; for so the words may be rendered, “they shall drive him”^{f715}, God, Father, Son, and Spirit; God by the east wind and storm of his wrath shall carry him away, and hurl him out of his place, and shall cast the fury of his wrath on him, and not spare, nor shall he flee out of his hands, though he fain would, (^{<18721>}Job 27:21,22); or the angels, good or bad, shall drive him into endless torments, or shall, by the divine order, take him and cast him into outward darkness, where are weeping, wailing, and gnashing of teeth; thus are the wicked driven against their will, and must go whether they will or not, and, like beasts to the slaughter, are driven in their wickedness, in order to suffer the punishment due unto it, when the righteous hath hope in his death, (^{<11443>}Proverbs 14:32);

and chased out of the world; or cast out of it, as an unclean or excommunicated person, of which the word here is sometimes used^{f716}; and not only chased out of his own place, out of his own house, and out of his own country, but even out of the world, so as to have no place any more in it, (see ^{<18118>}Job 20:8,9).

Ver. 19. *He shall neither have son nor nephew among his people*, etc.] Neither son, nor son’s son, or grandson; so the Targum, Jarchi, and Bar Tzemach; that is, he shall be childless, and have no heirs, successors, or survivors, to inherit his estate, bear and perpetuate his name among the people of his country, city, or neighbourhood. Bildad respects no doubt the present case of Job, who had lost all his children; but he was mistaken if he thought he should die so, for he had after this as many children as he had before:

nor any remaining in his dwellings; being all dead, or fled from them, through the terror, desolation, and destruction in them. Aben Ezra and Bar Tzemach interpret them places in which he was a sojourner or stranger; and Mr. Broughton, nor remnant in his pilgrimage.

Ver. 20. *They that come after [him] shall be astonished at his day*, etc.] At the day of his calamity and distress, ruin and destruction, (see ^{<185713>}Psalms 37:13 Obidiah 1:12); it would be extremely amazing to them how it should be, that a man who was in such flourishing and prosperous circumstances,

should be brought at once, he and his family, into such extreme poverty, and into such a distressed and forlorn condition; they should be, as it were, thunderstruck at it, not being able to account for it: by these are meant such as are younger than the wicked man, and that continue longer than he, yet upon the spot when his calamity befell; or else posterity in later times, who would be made acquainted with the whole affair, and be surprised at the relation of it:

as they that went before were affrighted; not that lived before the times of the wicked man, for they could not see his day, or be spectators of his ruin, and so be frightened at it; but his contemporaries, who are said to be those that went before, not with respect to the wicked man, but with respect to younger persons or posterity that were after; so Bar Tzemach interprets it, which were in his time, or his contemporaries; and Mr. Broughton,

“the present took an horror;”

a late learned commentator^{f717} renders the words, western and eastern; as if all people in the world, east and west, would be amazed and astonished at the sudden and utter destruction of this wicked man.

Ver. 21. *Surely such [are] the dwellings of the wicked*, etc.] As before described; as that the light should be dark in them; a wicked man’s confidence should be rooted out of them; everything shocking and dreadful should dwell in them; brimstone should be scattered on them, they should be utterly consumed, and none remaining in them, (~~Job~~ Job 18:6,14,15,19). The Targum represents these as the words of the persons astonished and frightened, who at the sight of such a dismal spectacle should utter them, prefacing them thus,

“and they shall say, but these are the dwellings, etc.”

and this [is] the place [of him that] knoweth not God; the place that he shall be driven to when chased out of the world, even a place of darkness and misery, (~~Job~~ Job 18:18); or “this is the case of him that knoweth not the Omnipotent”, as Mr. Broughton translates the words; that is, which is above described in the several particulars of it; this is sooner or later the case of every wicked man, as Bildad supposed it now was Job’s case, at least in part, or would be hereafter: one “that knows not God”, is the periphrasis of a wicked man, that has no knowledge of God, at least no practical knowledge of him, that lives without God in the world, or like an atheist; such shall be punished with everlasting destruction by him, (see

<3008>2 Thessalonians 1:8,9); either one whom “God knows not”^{f718}, so some render the words; for though God by the perfection of his omniscience knows all men, good and bad, yet there are some he knows not so as to approve of, love, and delight in, (see <4072>Matthew 7:23); or rather that have no knowledge of God, who though they may know there is a God, yet do not worship and glorify him as God; and though they may profess to know him, yet in works they deny him, and however have no spiritual and experimental knowledge of him; do not know him in Christ, as the God of all grace, and as their God in him; they do not know him, so as to love him, fear, worship, and obey him.