

CHAPTER 20

INTRODUCTION TO JOB 20

Zophar and his friends, not satisfied with Job's confession of faith, he in his turn replies, and in his preface gives his reasons why he made any answer at all, and was so quick in it, (~~1810~~ Job 20:1-3); and appeals to Job for the truth of an old established maxim, that the prosperity of wicked men and hypocrites is very short lived, (~~1810~~ Job 20:4,5); and the short enjoyment of their happiness is described by several elegant figures and similes, (~~1816~~ Job 20:6-9); such a wicked man being obliged, in his lifetime, to restore his ill gotten goods, and at death to lie down with the sins of his youth, (~~1810~~ Job 20:10,11); his sin in getting riches, the disquietude of his mind in retaining them, and his being forced to make restitution, are very beautifully expressed by the simile of a sweet morsel kept in the mouth, and turned to the gall of asps in the bowels, and then vomited up, (~~1812~~ Job 20:12-16); the disappointment he shall have, the indigent and strait circumstances he shall be brought into, and the restitution he shall be obliged to make for the oppression of the poor, and the uneasiness he shall feel in his own breast, are set forth in a very strong light, (~~1817~~ Job 20:17-22); and it is suggested, that not only the hand of wicked men should be upon him, but the wrath of God also, which should seize on him suddenly and secretly, and would be inevitable, he not being able to make his escape from it, and which would issue in the utter destruction of him and his in this world, and that to come, (~~1813~~ Job 20:23-28). And the chapter is, concluded with this observation, that such as before described is the appointed portion and heritage of a wicked man from God, (~~1819~~ Job 20:29).

Ver. 1. *Then answered Zophar the Naamathite*, etc.] Notwithstanding the sad distressed condition Job was in, an account of which is given in the preceding chapter, enough to pierce a heart of stone, notwithstanding his earnest request to his friends to have pity on him, and notwithstanding the noble confession of his faith he had made, which showed him to be a good man, and the excellent advice he gave his friends to cease persecuting him, for their own good, as well as for his peace; yet, regardless of these things, Zophar starts up and makes a reply, and attacks him with as much heat and

passion, wrath and anger, as ever, harping upon the same string, and still representing Job as a wicked man and an hypocrite;

and said, as follows.

Ver. 2. *Therefore do my thoughts cause me to answer*, etc.] Or “to return”^{f766} and appear upon the stage again, and enter the lists once more with his antagonist; he suggests as if he had intended to have said no more in this controversy, but observing what Job had said last, could not forbear replying: “therefore” because he had represented him and his friends as cruel persecutors of him, as men devoid of all humanity, pity, and compassion, and endeavoured to terrify them with the punishments of the sword, and the judgment of God to come; these occasioned many “thoughts” in him, and those thoughts obliged him to give an answer; they came in so thick and fast upon him, that out of the abundance, his heart suggested to him he could not but speak, he was full of matter, and the spirit within him, the impulse upon his mind, constrained him to make a reply; and he seems desirous of having it understood that his answer proceeded from thought; that he did not speak without thinking, but had well weighed things in his mind; and what he was about to say was the fruit of close thinking and mature deliberation:

and for [this] I make haste; because his thoughts crowded in upon him, he had a fulness of matter, an impulse of mind, promptitude and readiness to speak on this occasion, and for fear of losing what was suggested to him, he made haste to give in his answer, perhaps observing some other of his friends rising up before him. The Targum is,

“because my sense is in me;”

and so other Jewish writers^{f767}; be apprehended he had a right sense of things, and understood the matter in controversy full well, and therefore thought it incumbent on him to speak once more in it: Gussetius^{f768} renders it, “because of my disquietude”; the uneasiness of his mind raised by what Job had said, that he would have them know and consider there was a judgment; and he intimates he had considered it, and was fearful that should he be silent, and make no reply, God would condemn him in judgment for his silence; and therefore he was in a hurry to make answer, and could not be easy without it; and for his reasons for so doing he further explains himself in (~~Job~~ Job 20:3).

Ver. 3. *I have heard the check of my reproach*, etc.] He took it that Job had reproached him and his friends, by representing them as hardhearted men, and persecuting him wrongly in a violent manner; and he had observed the “check” or reproof given for it, by bidding them beware of the sword, and lest the punishment of it should be inflicted on them; and if that should not be the case, yet there was a righteous judgment they could not escape. Now Zophar heard this, but could not hear it with patience; he could not bear that he and his friends should be insulted, as he thought, in this manner; and therefore it was he was in such haste to return an answer; though some ^{f769} think he here pretends to a divine oracle, like that which Eliphaz makes mention of in the beginning of this dispute, (~~Job~~ Job 4:12), etc. which he had from God, and from which he had heard the “correction [of his] reproach” ^{f770}, or a full confutation of the thing Job had reproached him with; and being thus divinely furnished, he thought it his duty to deliver it:

and the spirit of my understanding causeth me to answer; or his rational spirit, his natural understanding, furnished him at once with an answer; he had such a clear insight into the controversy on foot, and such a full view of it, that he thought himself capable of speaking very particularly to the matter in hand, and to the conviction and confusion of Job; nay, his conscience, or the spirit of his conscience, as Mr. Broughton renders it, not only readily dictated to him what he should say, but obliged him to it; though some think he meant the Holy Spirit of God, by which he would be thought to be inspired; that he “out [of his] understanding” ^{f771}, enlightened by him, caused him to answer, or would answer for him, or supply him with matter sufficient to qualify him for it; and this he might observe to Job, in order to raise his attention to what he was about to say.

Ver. 4. *Knowest thou [not] this of old*, etc.] Or “from eternity” ^{f772}, from the beginning of time, ever since the world was; as if he should say, if you are the knowing man you pretend to be, you must know this I am about to observe; and if you do not know it, you must be an ignorant man, since it is an ancient truth, confirmed by all experience from the creation; not that Job could know it so early, he was not the first man that was born, nor was he made before the hills, but was of yesterday, and comparatively knew nothing; but the sense is, that this about to be delivered was an old established maxim, of which there had been numerous instances,

since man, or “Adam”,

was placed upon earth; referring to the putting of Adam in Eden to dress the garden, and keep it; and every man, ever since, is placed on earth by the ordination, and according to the will of God, where and for purposes he pleases: the instances Zophar might have in view are perhaps the expulsion of our first parents out of paradise, the vagabond state of Cain, the destruction of the old world by a flood, and of Sodom and Gomorrah by fire from heaven; which show that God, sooner or later, gives manifest tokens of his displeasure at sin and sinners, by his punishment of them for it. What he means is as follows.

Ver. 5. *That the triumphing of the wicked [is] short*, etc.] Their outward prosperity and felicity, of which they make their boast, and in which they glory and triumph for a while; at first Job's friends set out with this notion, that the wicked never flourished and prospered, but it always went ill with them in Providence; but being beat out of that, they own they may be for a small time in flourishing and prosperous circumstances, but it is but for a small time; which may be true in many instances, but it is not invariable and without exception the case: the sense is, it is but a little while that they are in so much mirth and jollity, and triumph over their neighbours, as being in more advantageous circumstances than they; this is said in the original text to be "from near"^{f773}; it is but a little while ago when it began; and; as the Targum paraphrases it, it will be quickly ended:

and the joy of the hypocrite [but] for a moment; the word "wicked", in the former clause, may signify the same person here called the "hypocrite"; but inasmuch as that signifies one restless and troublesome, one that is ungodly, and destitute of the fear of God, that has nothing in him but wickedness, who is continually committing it, and is abandoned to it; it might be thought not to apply to the character of Job, whom Zophar had in his view, and therefore this is added as descriptive of him: an hypocrite is one who seems to be that he is not, holy, righteous, good, and godly; who professes to have what he has not, the true grace of God, and pretends to worship God, but does not do it cordially, and from right principles; and who seeks himself in all he does, and not the glory of God: now there may be a joy in such sort of persons; they may hear ministers gladly, as Herod heard John, and receive the word with joy, as the stony ground hearers did, (~~416~~ Mark 6:20 4:16); they may seem to delight in the ways and ordinances of God, and even have some tastes of the powers of the world to come, and some pleasing thoughts and hopes of heaven and happiness; as well as they triumph in and boast of their profession of religion and performance of

duties, and rejoice in their boastings, which is evil; but then this is like the pleasures of sin, which are but for a season, or like the crackling of thorns under a pot, which make a great noise and blaze, but soon over, (^{<2106>}Ecclesiastes 7:6); and so their joy in civil as well as religious, things. It is possible Zophar might be so ill natured as to have reference to Job's triumph of faith, (^{<1825>}Job 19:25); and by this would suggest, that his faith in a living Redeemer, and the joy of it he professed, would be soon over and no more; which shows what spirit he was of.

Ver. 6. *Though his excellency mount up to the heavens*, etc.] Though, in worldly grandeur and glory, he should arrive to such a pitch as the Assyrian monarch was ambitious of, as to ascend into heaven, exalt his throne above the stars of God, and be like the Most High; or be comparable to such a tree, by which the greatness of Nebuchadnezzar's kingdom is expressed, the height whereof reached unto heaven, (^{<2342>}Isaiah 14:12,14 ^{<2041>}Daniel 4:11);

and his head reach unto the clouds; being lifted up with pride, because of his greatness, and looking with contempt and scorn on others; the Septuagint version is, "if his gifts ascend up to heaven", etc. which well agrees with an hypocrite possessed of great gifts, and proud of them; as Capernaum was highly favoured with external things, as the presence of Christ, his ministry and miracles, and so said to be exalted unto heaven, yet, because of its impenitence and unbelief, should be brought down to hell, (^{<4023>}Matthew 11:23).

Ver. 7. *[Yet] he shall perish for ever like his own dung*, etc.] Not only in this world, but in the world to come, both in his outward substance here, and in his body in the grave, and in his soul to all eternity, and that in the most shameful and disgraceful manner; he shall perish in his own corruption, and like his own dung inevitably, which is never returned to its place again: dead bodies were reckoned by the ancients as dung, and the carcasses of men are rather to be cast out than dung ^{f774}; and the Arabians used, to bury in dunghills even their kings ^{f775}; to which some ^{f776} think the allusion is:

they which have seen him shall say, where [is] he? such as formerly gazed at him, in his prosperity, with wonder and amazement at his grandeur and greatness, now being removed from his outward splendour, or from the world, by death, ask where he is, not being able to see him in his former lustre, nor in the land of the living; (see ^{<1840>}Job 14:10).

Ver. 8. *He shall fly away as a dream, and shall not be found*, etc.] Either as a dream which is forgotten, as Nebuchadnezzar's was, and cannot be recovered; or as the matter and substance of a dream, which, though remembered, is a mere illusion; as when a hungry or thirsty man dreams he eats or drinks, but, awaking, finds himself empty, and not at all refreshed; what he fancied is fled and gone^{f777}, and indeed never had any existence but in his imagination, (^{<2918>}Isaiah 29:8);

yea, he shall be chased away as a vision of the night; either the same as a nocturnal dream, or what a man fancies he sees in his dream; or like a mere spectre or apparition, which is a mere phantom, and, when followed and pursued, vanishes and disappears; so such a man before described is chased out of the world, and is seen in it no more, (see ^{<1818>}Job 18:18); the first clause, according to Saphorno, refers to the generation of the flood, and the second to the slaying of the firstborn of Egypt in the night.

Ver. 9. *The eye also [which] saw him shall [see him] no more*, etc.] In this world, concerned in the affairs of life, and busy in worldly employments, and especially in the grandeur he sometimes was, if not removed by death; but the former sense seems most agreeable by what follows,

neither shall his place any more behold him; the men of his place, as Ben Gersom, those that lived in the same place he did; or he shall not be seen, and known, and acknowledged any more as the master, owner, and proprietor of the house he formerly dwelt in; this seems to be taken from Job's own words in (^{<8170>}Job 7:10). The above Jewish commentator interprets this verse of Pharaoh and the Egyptians, whom Moses and the Israelites would see no more, (^{<1019>}Exodus 10:29 14:13).

Ver. 10. *His children shall seek to please the poor*, etc.] In this and some following verses the miserable state of a wicked man is described, and which begins with his children, who are often visited in wrath for their parents' sins, especially when they tread in their steps, and follow their example; and it is an affliction to parents to see their children in distress, and particularly on their account, and even to be threatened with it. According to our version, the sense of this clause is, that after a wicked man's death his children shall seek to gain the good will and favour of the poor who have been oppressed by him, that they may not reproach them, or take revenge on them, or apply to the civil magistrate to have justice done them; but Jarchi renders the words,

“the poor shall oppress or destroy his children;”

and so the margin of our Bible, who, being enraged with the ill usage of their parents, shall fall upon them in great wrath, and destroy them, (^{<108B>}Proverbs 28:3); and the same Jewish writer restrains the words to the men of Sodom, who were oppressive and cruel to the poor; or rather the sense is, that the children of the wicked man shall be reduced to such extreme poverty, that they shall even seek relief of the poor, and supplicate and entreat them to give them something out of their small pittance; with which others in a good measure agree, who render the words, “his children shall please, [being] poor”^{f778}; it shall be a pleasure and satisfaction to those they have been injurious to, to see their children begging their bread from door to door, (see ^{<109B>}Psalm 109:5,10);

and his hands shall restore their goods: or “for his hands”, etc.^{f779}; and so are a reason why his children shall be so reduced after his death as to need the relief of others, because their parent, in his lifetime, was obliged to make restitution of his ill gotten goods, so that in the end he had nothing to leave his children at his death; for this restitution spoken of is not voluntary, but forced. Saphorno thinks reference is had to the Egyptians lending jewels and other riches to the Israelites, whereby they were obliged to repay six hundred thousand men for their service.

Ver. 11. *His bones are full [of the sins] of his youth,* etc.] Man is born in sin, and is a transgressor from the womb; and the youthful age is addicted to many sins, as pride, passion, lust, luxury, intemperance, and uncleanness; and these are sometimes brought to mind, and men are convinced of them, and corrected for them, when more advanced in years; and if not stopped in them, and reformed from them, they are continued in an old age; and the effects of them are seen in bodily diseases, which a debauched life brings upon them, not only to the rottenness and consumption of their flesh, but to the putrefaction of their bones; though this may be understood of the whole body, the bones, the principal and stronger parts, being put for the whole, and denote that general decay and waste which gluttony, drunkenness, and uncleanness, bring into, (see ^{<115B>}Proverbs 5:11-14); Some interpret this of “secret” sins^{f780}, as the word is thought to signify, which, if not cleansed from and pardoned, will be found and charged on them, and be brought into judgment, and they punished for them, (^{<108B>}Psalm 90:8 ^{<112B>}Ecclesiastes 12:14);

which shall lie down with him in the dust: to be in the dust is to be in the state of the dead, to lie in the grave, where men lie down and sleep as on a bed; and this is common to good and bad men, all sleep in the dust of the earth, but with this difference, the sins of wicked men lie down with them; as they live in sin, they die in their sins; not that their sins die with them, and are no more, but they continue on them, and with them, and will rise with them, and will follow them to judgment, and remain with them after, and the guilt and remorse of which will be always on their consciences, and is that worm that never dies: of such it is said, that they “are gone down to hell with their weapons of war”; with the same enmity against God, against Christ, and his people, and all that is good, they had in their lifetime: and “they have laid their swords under their heads”; in the grave, and shall rise with the same revengeful spirit they ever had against the saints, (see ~~618~~ Revelation 20:8,9); “but their iniquities shall be upon their bones”; both them, and the punishment of them, (~~2322~~ Ezekiel 32:27). The Jewish commentator last mentioned interprets the whole verse of Balaam, who died at the age of thirty three, and whose prosperity died with him, he leaving nothing to his children; and so he interprets the following verses of the curse he was forced to hide, which he would gladly have pronounced, and of the riches he received from Balak falling into the hands of the Israelites.

Ver. 12. *Though wickedness be sweet in his mouth,* etc.] Which may respect some particular sin, and by the context it seems to be the sin of covetousness, or of getting riches in an unlawful way, which is very sweet and pleasing to wicked men, while they are in such pursuits that succeed; and so Mr. Broughton renders it by “wrong”; though it may be applied to sin in general, which is “wickedness”, or an evil ^{f781}, being contrary to the pure and holy nature, will, and law of God; and it is evil in its effects on men, it having deprived them of the image and glory of God, and exposed them to his wrath, to the curses of his law, and to eternal deaths. Now this is “sweet” to an unregenerate man, who minds and savours the things of the flesh, whose taste is not changed, but is as it was from his birth, and who calls sweet bitter, and bitter sweet; such a man has the same delight in sin as a man has in his food, drinks up iniquity like water, and commits sin with greediness; for it is natural to him, he is conceived, born, and brought up in it; besides, some sins are what are more particularly called constitution sins, which some are peculiarly addicted to, and in which they

take a peculiar delight and pleasure; these are like the right hand or right eye, and they cannot be persuaded, at any rate, to part with them:

[though] he hide it under his tongue; not for the sake of concealing it, nor by denying, dissembling, or excusing it, but for the sake of enjoying more pleasure in it; as a gluttonous man, when he has got a sweet morsel in his mouth, do not let it go down his throat immediately, but rolls it under his tongue, that he may have all the pleasure of it he can; so a wicked man devises sin in his heart, keeps it on his mind, revolves it in his thoughts, and his meditation on it is sweet; and he is so far from hiding it from others, that he openly declares it, freely tells of it, and takes pleasure in so doing: “fools make a mock at sin”; it is their diversion and recreation.

Ver. 13. *[Though] he spare it*, etc.] Not that he feeds sparingly on it, for he eats of it freely and plentifully, with great eagerness and greediness; it designs the gratefulness of it to him; he does not spit it out as loathsome, having tasted of it, but retains it as sweet and pleasant; he spares it as Saul did Agag, and as a man spares his only son; sin being a child, a brat of a wicked man, and therefore it is dear unto him:

and forsake it not: as he never will, until he is fully convinced of the evil of it, and it becomes exceeding sinful to him, and so loathsome and disagreeable; and he is restrained from it by the grace of God, and enabled by it to desert it, for such an one only finds mercy, (¹⁰⁸³Proverbs 28:13);

but keep it still within his mouth; like an epicure, that will not suffer his food quickly to go down his throat into his stomach, that he may have the greater pleasure in tasting, palating, and relishing it; as Philoxenus, who wished his throat as long as a crane’s, that he might be the longer in tasting the sweetness of what he ate and drank; so the wicked man keeps sin within his mouth, not by restraining his mouth from speaking evil, rather by a non-confession of it, but chiefly by continuing and persisting in it, that he might have all the pleasure and satisfaction he has promised himself in it.

Ver. 14. *[Yet] his meat in his bowels is turned*, etc.] Or “his bread”¹⁷⁸², to which sin is compared, being what the sinner lives in, and lives upon; what he strengthens himself in and with, and by which he is nourished unto the day of slaughter, and by means of which he grows and proceeds to more ungodliness, though in the issue he comes into starving and famishing circumstances; for this is bread of deceit, and proves to be ashes and gravel stones; it promises pleasure, profit, liberty, and impunity, but is all the

reverse; as meat turns in a man's stomach when it does not digest in him, or rather his stomach turns against that, and instead of its being pleasant and agreeable to him, it distresses him and makes him uneasy; sin being compared to meat in the bowels, denotes the finishing of in after it has been conceived in the mind, and completed in the act:

[it is] the gall of asps within him; which is bitter, though not poison; which yet Pliny^{f783} suggests, but it seems^{f784} it is not fact. Sin is an evil and bitter thing, and produces bitter sorrow, and makes bitter work for repentance in good men, (⁴¹²⁹Jeremiah 2:19 ⁴¹⁶⁵Matthew 26:75); and fills with distress inexpressible and intolerable in wicked men, as in Cain and Judas in this world, and with black despair, weeping, and gnashing of teeth, and dreadful horrors of conscience, in the world to come, to all eternity; the effect of it is eternal death, the second death, inevitable and everlasting ruin and destruction.

Ver. 15. *He hath swallowed down riches*, etc.] Not his own, but another's, which he has spoiled him of and devoured, with as much eagerness, pleasure, and delight, as a hungry man swallows down his food; having an excessive and immoderate love of riches, and an insatiable desire after them, which make him stop at nothing, though ever so illicit, to obtain them; and when he has got them into his possession, thinks them as safe as the food in his belly, and never once dreams of refunding them, which yet he must do, as follows:

and he shall vomit them up again; that is, make restoration of them, not freely, but forcedly, with great reluctance, much pain of mind, and gripes of conscience:

God shall cast them out of his belly; he shall oblige him to cast them up again, by working upon his heart, making his mind uneasy, loading his conscience with guilt, so that he shall have no rest nor peace until he has done it; though they are as meat in his belly within him, they shall not remain with him; though they are in his house, in his coffers, or in his barns, they shall be fetched out from thence.

Ver. 16. *He shall suck the poison of asps*, etc.] Or "the head of asps"^{f785}; for their poison lies in their heads, particularly in their "teeth"^{f786}; or rather is a liquor in the gums, yellow like oil^{f787}; according to Pliny^{f788}, in copulation the male puts his head into the mouth of the female, which she sucks and gnaws off through the sweetness of the pleasure, then conceives

her young, which eat out her belly; this is to be understood not of the man's sin, then it would have been expressed either in the past or present tense, as if that was sweet unto him in the commission of it, sucked in like milk from the breast, or honey from the honeycomb; such were his contrivances and artful methods, and the success of them in getting riches, but in the issue proved like the poison of asps, pernicious and deadly to him, which caused him to vomit them up again; for poison excites vomiting: but of the punishment of his sin; for putting men to death by the poison of asps was a punishment inflicted by some people upon malefactors; and however, it is certain death, and immediately and quickly dispatches, and without sense; so the wages of sin is death, and there is no avoiding it, and it comes insensibly on carnal men; they are not aware of it, and in no pain about it, until in hell they lift up their eyes as the rich man did:

the viper's tongue shall slay him; though it is with its teeth it bites, yet, when it is about to bite, it puts out its tongue, and to it its poison is sometimes ascribed; though it is said ^{f789} to be quite harmless, and therefore not to be understood in a literal sense, but figuratively of the tongue of a detractor, a calumniator and false accuser, such an one as Doeg; but cannot be the sense here, since the fall of the person here described would not be by any such means; but the phrase, as before, denotes the certain and immediate death of such a wicked man; for the bite of a viper was always reckoned incurable, and issued in sudden death, (see ~~408B~~ Acts 28:3-6).

Ver. 17. *He shall not see the rivers*, etc.] Of water, or meet with any to assuage his thirst, which poison excites, and so makes a man wish for water, and desire large quantities; but this shall not be granted the wicked man; this might be illustrated in the case of the rich man in hell, who desired a drop of cold water to cool his tongue, but could not have it, (~~406B~~ Luke 16:24); though rather plenty of good things is here intended, (see ~~238B~~ Isaiah 48:18); as also the following expressions:

the floods, the brooks of honey and butter; or “cream”; which are hyperbolical expressions, denoting the great profusion and abundance of temporal blessings, which either the covetous rich man was ambitious of obtaining, and hoped to enjoy, seeking and promising great things to himself, which yet he should never attain unto; or else the sense is, though he had enjoyed such plenty, and been in such great prosperity as to have honey and butter, or all temporal good things, flowing about him like

rivers, and floods, and brooks; yet he should “see [them] no more”, so Broughton reads the words; and perhaps Zophar may have respect to the abundance Job once possessed, but should no more, and which is by himself expressed by such like metaphors, (^{<3820>}Job 29:6); yea, even spiritual and eternal good things may be designed, and the plenty of them, as they often are in Scripture, by wine, and milk, and honey; such as the means of grace, the word and ordinances, the blessings of grace dispensed and communicated through them; spiritual peace and joy, called the rivers of pleasure; the love of God, and the streams of it, which make glad his people; yea, eternal glory and happiness, signified by new wine in the kingdom of God, and by a river of water of life, and a tree of life by it, (see ^{<3821>}Isaiah 55:1 66:12 ^{<3822>}Joel 3:18 ^{<3823>}Psalm 36:8 46:4) (^{<3824>}Revelation 22:1,2); which are what carnal men and hypocrites shall never see or enjoy; and whereas Zophar took Job to be such a man, he may have a principal view to him, and object this to the beatific vision of God, and the enjoyment of eternal happiness he promised himself, (^{<3825>}Job 19:26,27). Bar Tzemach observes, that these words are to be read by a transposition thus, “he shall not see rivers [of water], floods of honey, and brooks of butter”.

Ver. 18. *That which he laboured for shall he restore*, etc.] This explains what was before figuratively expressed by vomiting, (^{<3826>}Job 20:15); and is to be interpreted either of that which another laboured for; so the Targum paraphrases it,

“another’s labour;”

and Mr. Broughton renders it, “he shall restore what man’s pain get”: and then the sense is, that that which another got by his labour, coming by some means or another into the hand of this rapacious, covetous, wicked man, he shall be obliged to restore to him again; or the hire of the labourer being detained in his hands, he shall be forced to give it to him, as the Egyptians, by lending the Israelites their jewels of gold and silver, restored to them the wages due to them for all their labour among them for many years; or else this is to be understood of what the wicked man himself had laboured for, who with much toil and labour, as well as trick and artifice, had got the wealth of others into his hands; but should be obliged to make restoration of it again, and along with that also what he had laboured for, and had got even in an honest and lawful way, the marathon of unrighteousness corrupting and marring his whole substance:

and shall not swallow [it] down; or “not have time to devour it”, as Mr. Broughton; he shall be obliged so soon to restore it, that it shall be as if he had never had it; he shall have no enjoyment of it, at least no comfort, pleasure, and satisfaction in it:

according to [his] substance [shall] the restitution [be]; the law of Moses required, in some cases, fourfold, in others fivefold, and sometimes sevenfold was exacted; and if a man had not sufficient to pay, all his substance was to go towards payment, and by this means what he lawfully got went along with that which was obtained in an illicit way, as before, (see ^{<1020>}Exodus 22:1 ^{<1061>}Proverbs 6:31);

and he shall not rejoice [therein]; not in the restitution he is forced to make, it being greatly against his will; nor in his ill-gotten substance, at least but for a little while, as in (^{<1810>}Job 20:5); he shall neither enjoy it nor have delight and pleasure in it, nor glory of it, as men are apt to do; Mr. Broughton reads this in connection with the preceding clause thus,

“and never rejoice in the wealth for which he must make recompense.”

Ver. 19. *Because he hath oppressed [and] hath forsaken the poor*, etc.] Having oppressed, crushed, and broken the poor to pieces, he leaves them so without pity and compassion for them, and without giving them any relief; he first by oppression makes them poor, or however poorer still, and then leaves them in such circumstances; for this does not suppose that he once was a favourer of them, and afforded them assistance in their necessities, and afterwards forsook them; but rather, as Ben Gersom gives the sense, he does not leave the poor until he has oppressed and crushed them, and then he does; Mr. Broughton’s reading of the words agrees with the former sense, “he oppresseth and leaveth poor”:

[because] he hath violently taken away an house which he built not; an house which did not belong to him, he had no property in or right unto, which, as he had not bought, he had not built; and therefore could lay no rightful claim unto it, and yet this he took in a violent manner from the right owner of it, (see ^{<3112>}Micah 2:2); or “and”, or “but shall not build it” ^{f790}, or “buildeth it not”; he took it away with an intention to pull it down, and build a stately palace in the room of it; but either his substance was taken from him, or he taken away by death before he could finish it, and so

either through neglect, or want of opportunity, or of money, did not what he thought to have done.

Ver. 20. *Surely he shall not feel quietness in his belly*, etc.] Or happiness in his children, so some in Bar Tzemach; rather shall have no satisfaction in his substance; though his belly is filled with hid treasure, it shall give him no contentment; he shall be a stranger to that divine art, but ever have a restless craving after more, which is his sin; but rather punishment is here meant, and the sense is, that he shall have no quiet in his conscience, no peace of mind, because of his sin in getting riches in an unlawful way:

he shall not save of that which he desired; of his desirable things, his goods, his wealth, his riches, and even his children, all being gone, and none saved; respect may be had particularly to Job's case, who was stripped of everything, of all his substance and his children.

Ver. 21. *There shall none of his meat be left*, etc.] Not in his belly, all shall be cast up; none of his substance left for himself or others; none of his riches for his children or heirs, all being consumed: or this may respect either the profuseness or niggardliness of his living, that he should live in great luxury himself, but take no care of the poor; or else keep so mean a table, that there would be nothing left for the poor, not so much as a few crumbs to fall from it; but the first sense seems best; though some render the words, "there shall be none left for his meat"^{f791}, or his substance; he shall leave no children, have no heirs, all his family shall be cut off, (see ~~1888~~ Job 18:19);

therefore shall no man look for his goods; for there shall be none to look for them; or rather there shall be none to look for, all being gone: a man in good circumstances of life, his heirs expect to enjoy much at his death, but when he is stripped of all, as Job was, his relations and friends are in no expectation of having anything at his death; and therefore do not think it worth their while to look out, or make an inquiry whether there is anything for them or not, (see ~~1818~~ Job 20:28).

Ver. 22. *In the fulness of his sufficiency he shall be in straits*, etc.] For though he may not only have a sufficient competency to live upon, but even a fulness of temporal blessings, have as much as heart can wish, or more, even good things, and plenty of them laid up for many years; yet amidst it all shall be reduced to the utmost straits and difficulties, either through fear of losing what he has, insomuch that his abundance will not

suffer him to sleep in the night, nor to enjoy an hour's pleasure in the day; or being so narrow spirited, notwithstanding his fulness, that he cannot allow himself to eat of the fruit of his labours, and rejoice therein; or fearing, notwithstanding all his plenty, that he shall come to want and poverty; or rather while he is in the most flourishing circumstances, and in the height of his prosperity, he is suddenly, as Nebuchadnezzar was, dispossessed of all, and reduced to the utmost extremity, (^{270B1}Daniel 4:31-33); the Targum is,

“when his measure is filled, he shall take vengeance on him:”

every hand of the wicked shall come upon him: or of the labourer, as the Targum, the hire of whose labour he has detained, or has taken away from him that which he laboured for; and so Broughton,

“the hand of the injured or grieved;”

such as he had been injurious to, and had grieved by his oppressions of them; or rather every troublesome wicked man, the hand of every thief or robber; respect seems to be had to the hand of the Sabeans and Chaldeans, that had been on Job and his substance.

Ver. 23. [*When he is about to fill his belly*, etc.] Either in a literal sense, when he is about to take an ordinary meal to satisfy nature; or in a figurative sense, when he is seeking to increase his worldly riches, and his barns and coffers, and endeavouring to get satisfaction therein:

[God] shall cast the fury of his wrath upon him; or “send it out on him” ¹⁷⁹²; out of the treasures of it, which are laid up with him, (⁶⁵²³⁴Deuteronomy 32:34,35); into his conscience, and fill him with a dreadful sense and apprehension of it, and that with great force and violence, and cast it, and pour it on him like fire, or any scalding liquor, which is very terrible and intolerable. This intends the indignation of God against sin, and his just punishment of it, according to the rigour of his justice; sometimes it is only a little wrath and displeasure he shows, he does not stir up all his wrath; but here it is threatened he will cast it, and pour it in great plenty, even “the fury” of it, in the most awful and terrible manner:

and shall rain it upon him while he is eating; signifying, that the wrath of God shall be revealed from heaven against him, from whence rain comes; that it shall fall on him from above, unseen, suddenly, and at an unawares, and come with a force and violence not to be resisted, and in great

abundance and profusion. The allusion seems to be to the raining of fire and brimstone on Sodom and Gomorrah, the inhabitants of which were indulging themselves in gratifying the flesh, when that judgment came upon them, (^{<4173>}Luke 17:28,29); and so it was with the Israelites, when they sinned against God in the wilderness, (^{<4983>}Psalm 78:30,31); perhaps Zophar may glance at Job's children being slain while they were eating and drinking in their elder brother's house, (^{<3018>}Job 1:18,19). Some render it, "upon his food"^{f793}; his meat, a curse going along with it, while he is eating it, his table becoming a snare unto him; or upon his wealth and riches, he is endeavouring to fill his belly or satisfy himself with; and others, "upon his flesh", as the Targum; or "into his flesh"; as Broughton, and so many of the Jewish commentators^{f794} meaning his body, filling it with diseases, so that there is no soundness in it, but is in pain, and wasting, and consuming; and Job's case may be referred to, his body being full of boils and ulcers.

Ver. 24. *He shall flee from the iron weapon*, etc.] The sword, for fear of being thrust through with it; the flaming sword of justice God sometimes threatens to take, and whet, and make use of against ungodly men; the sword of God, as Bar Tzemach observes, is hereby figuratively expressed; fleeing from it, or an attempt to flee from it, shows guilt in the conscience, danger, and a sense of it, and a fear of falling into it, and yet there is no escaping the hand of God, or fleeing from his presence:

[and] the bow of steel shall strike him through; that is, an arrow out of a bow, made of steel or brass, of which bows were formerly made, and reckoned the strongest and most forcible, (see ^{<4984>}Psalm 18:34); signifying, that if he should escape the dint of a weapon, a sword or spear used near at hand, yet, as he fled, he would be reached by one that strikes at a distance, an arrow shot from a bow; the sense is, that, if a wicked man escapes one judgment, another will be sure to follow him, and overtake him and destroy him, (see ^{<2247>}Isaiah 24:17,18 ^{<3169>}Amos 5:19).

Ver. 25. *It is drawn, and cometh out of the body*, etc.] That is, the arrow with which a wicked man is stricken through; either it is drawn, and comes out of the quiver, as Broughton; or rather is drawn out of the body of a wicked man, being shot into it, and that in order that he may be cured of his wound if possible, but to no purpose, since it follows:

yea, the glittering sword cometh out of his gall; being thrust into it, which being pierced and poured out, is certain and immediate death, (see ^{<3863>}Job 16:13). Some render it, yea, "the glittering [sword] out of his gall, he shall

go away”, or “is gone”^{f795}; that is, he shall die, or is a dead man, there is no hope of him, when the arrow has transfixed his body, and the sword has penetrated into his gall, and divided that:

terrors [are] upon him; the terrors of death, the plain symptoms of it being upon him; the terrors of an awful judgment, which follows after it; the terrors of the dreadful sentence of condemnation that will then be pronounced, “go, ye cursed”, etc. and the terrors of hell and eternal death, signified by utter darkness, unquenchable fire, and the never ceasing torments of it. Some by them understand devils, those terrible spirits which haunt wicked men in their dying moments, and are ready to carry them to the lake which burns with fire and brimstone, where they are to be companions with them for ever. The word is sometimes used of gigantic persons, who are sometimes terrible to others; and since these are mentioned along with weapons of war, Bar Tzemach interprets them of men of strength and power, men of war or soldiers, whose fear falls on others.

Ver. 26. *All darkness [shall be] hid in his secret places*, etc.] In such places of secrecy, where he may promise himself safety, he shall find more calamities of all sorts; or every kind of judgments shall find him out, and come upon him, sometimes signified by darkness, (see ^{<A282>}Isaiah 8:22); or utter darkness, the blackness of darkness; everlasting wrath, ruin, and destruction, are laid up and reserved in God’s secret places for him, and lie hid among his treasures of vengeance, which he in due time will bring forth from thence, and punish the guilty sinner with, (^{<A013>}Jude 1:13 ^{<A524>}Deuteronomy 32:34,35); or all this shall be because of secret sins, as Ben Gersom interprets it; and so Mr. Broughton renders the words, “for his store”; that is, for the store of his sins, as he explains it, which, however privately and secretly committed, shall be brought into judgment; and there the hidden things of darkness will be brought to light, and sentence pass upon men for them:

a fire not blown shall consume him; not blown by man, but by God himself; which some understand of thunder and lightning, such as fell on Job’s sheep and servants, and consumed them, and which may be glanced at; and others of some fiery distemper, a burning fever, hot ulcers, carbuncles, etc. such as were at this time on Job’s body; but the Targum, better, of the fire of hell; and so many of the Jewish commentators^{f796}, as well as Christian; the Septuagint version renders it, “unquenchable fire”;

and so Mr. Broughton; and such the fire of hell is said to be, (^{<0182>}Matthew 3:12 ^{<0196>}Mark 9:43), etc. and which is a fire kindled by the breath of the Lord, like a stream of brimstone, (^{<233>}Isaiah 30:33);

it shall go ill with him that is left in his tabernacle; not only it shall go ill with the wicked man himself, but with those he leaves behind him, that dwell in the house he formerly lived in, with his posterity; God sometimes punishing the iniquities of the fathers upon the children.

Ver. 27. *The heaven shall reveal his iniquity*, etc.] Either God the Maker and Possessor of heaven, who dwells there, and is sometimes so called, (^{<2025>}Daniel 4:25 ^{<2158>}Luke 15:18); who sees and knows all things, even those that are most secret, as well as more openly committed, and will make all manifest, sooner or later; or else the angels of heaven, the inhabitants of it, so the Targum; who in the last day will be employed in gathering out of Christ's kingdom all that offend, and do iniquity, (^{<0134>}Matthew 13:41,42); or the judgments of God descending from heaven, or appear there, and are owing to it; such as drowning the old world by opening the windows of heaven, (^{<0071>}Genesis 7:11); the burning of Sodom and Gomorrah by fire and brimstone from thence, (^{<0124>}Genesis 19:24); and the destruction of persons by thunder, (^{<0215>}2 Samuel 22:15 ^{<0306>}Psalms 144:6), and lightning, (^{<0020>}1 Samuel 2:10 7:10 ^{<2396>}Isaiah 29:6), and the like; which judgments falling upon men, show them to be guilty of crimes deserving of the wrath of God, (see ^{<0018>}Romans 1:18);

and the earth shall rise up against him; when that becomes barren for the sins of men, and nothing but things hurtful to man rise up out of it; when it discloses the blood of murdered persons, and will at last give up the wicked dead that are buried in it; the Targum is,

“the inhabitants of the earth;”

and may be interpreted of their enmity, opposition, and hostility.

Ver. 28. *The increase of his house shall depart*, etc.] Either his children or his substance. Some interpret it, as Kimchi ^{f797} observes, of the walls of his house, because of what follows, “they shall flow away”, etc. as if he should say, the stones of his house shall fall down, and his habitation shall be destroyed, according to (^{<3001>}Micah 1:6); where a dilapidation is expressed by a flow, or pouring down of stones:

[and his goods] shall flow away in the day of his wrath; in the day of the wrath of God upon him, which will come upon him like water split on the ground, of no more use and service to him; the Targum interprets it of oil and wine, which shall flow away and cease, and so Mr. Broughton renders it, “fruits for his house”; all desirable and useful ones, (see ^{<6684}Revelation 18:14).

Ver. 29. *This [is] the portion of a wicked man from God*, etc.] All before related, and which is very different from the portion of a good man, which is God himself, both here and hereafter; the wicked man has indeed his portion from God, which he has assigned him, but his portion is not himself; nor is it with him, nor with his people, but it is at most and best in this life, and but a worldly one, and hereafter will be with devils and damned spirits; and a dreadful portion it is to be banished from the presence of God to all eternity, and take up an everlasting abode with such company:

and the heritage appointed unto him by God; it is not only a portion allotted to him, but an inheritance to abide continually with him; and this by the irreversible decree and appointment of God, who has foreordained ungodly men to condemnation, and made, appointed, and reserved them to the day of wrath and destruction. Some choose to render the clause, “and the inheritance of his word or words ^{f798} is unto him by God”; that is, punishment shall be inflicted upon him, and continue with him as an inheritance, because of his words, his indecent words, hard speeches and blasphemies uttered by him; referring, as it is thought, to the words which had dropped from the lips of Job.