

# CHAPTER 37

## INTRODUCTION TO JOB 37

Elihu in this chapter proceeds to show the greatness of God as it appears in other of his works of nature, which greatly affected him, and to an attention to which he exhorts others, (<sup><1870></sup>Job 37:1,2); particularly thunder and lightning, the direction, extent, and order of which he observes, (<sup><1870></sup>Job 37:3,4); and then suggests that besides these there are other great things done by him, incomprehensible and unknown in various respects; as the snow, and rain, lesser and greater, which come on the earth at his command, and have such effect on men as to seal up their hands, and on the beasts of the field as to cause them to retire to their dens, and there remain, (<sup><1870></sup>Job 37:5-8); and then he goes on to take notice of wind, and frost, and the clouds, and dispersion of them; their use and ends, whether in judgment or mercy, (<sup><1870></sup>Job 37:9-13); and then calls on Job to consider these wondrous works of God, and remark how ignorant men are of the disposition of clouds for the rainbow; of the balancing of them; of the heat and quietness that come by the south wind, and of the firmness of the sky, (<sup><1870></sup>Job 37:14-21); and from all this he concludes the terrible majesty, unsearchable nature of God, the excellency of his power and justice; and that men therefore should and do fear him, who is no respecter of persons, (<sup><1870></sup>Job 37:21-23).

**Ver. 1.** *At this also my heart trembleth*, etc.] At the greatness and majesty of God, not only as displayed in those works of his before observed, but as displayed in those he was about to speak of: such terrible majesty is there with God, that all rational creatures tremble at it; the nations of the world, the kings and great men of the earth, and even the devils themselves, (<sup><2642></sup>Isaiah 64:2 <sup><2430></sup>Jeremiah 33:9 <sup><3029></sup>James 2:19). Good men tremble in the worship of God, and at the word of God; and even at the judgments of God on wicked men, and at the things that are coming on the churches of Christ. But Elihu has a particular respect to thunder and lightning, which are very terrible to many persons <sup>f1263</sup>, both good and bad <sup>f1264</sup>. At the giving of the law, there were such blazes of lightning and claps of thunder, that not only all the people of Israel in the camp trembled, but Moses

himself also exceedingly feared and quaked, (<sup><1296></sup>Exodus 19:16 <sup><8121></sup>Hebrews 12:21). It is very probable, that at this time Elihu saw a storm gathering, and a tempest rising; some flashes of lightning were seen, and some murmurs <sup>f1265</sup> of thunders heard, which began to affect him; since quickly after we read that God spoke out of the whirlwind or tempest, (<sup><8801></sup>Job 38:1);

*and is moved out of his place*; was ready to leap out of his body. Such an effect had this phenomenon of nature on him; as is sometimes the case with men at a sudden fright or unusual sound, and particularly thunder <sup>f1266</sup>.

**Ver. 2.** *Hear attentively the noise of his voice*, etc.] Of the voice of God in the clouds; and of thunder, which is his voice, (<sup><8409></sup>Job 40:9). Elihu being affected with it himself, exhorts the company about him to hearken and listen to it, and learn something from it;

*and the sound [that] goeth out of his mouth*: as the former clause may have respect to loud thunder, a more violent crack or clap of it; so this may intend some lesser whispers and murmurs of it at a distance; or a rumbling noise in the clouds before they burst; since the word is sometimes used for private meditation. Now the voice of God, whether in his works of nature, or in the dispensations of his providence, or in his word; whether in the thunder of the law, or in the still sound of the Gospel, is to be attentively hearkened to; because it is the voice of God, the voice of the God of glory, majestic and powerful, and is attended with various effects; of which (see <sup><1213></sup>Psalm 29:3-9).

**Ver. 3.** *He directeth it under the whole heaven*, etc.] His voice of thunder, which rolls from one end of the heaven to the other: he charges the clouds with it, and directs both it and them where they shall go and discharge; what tree, house, or man, it shall strike; and where the rain shall fall when the clouds burst: yet Pliny <sup>f1267</sup> atheistically calls thunder and lightning chance matters. Thus the ministers of the word, who are compared to clouds, (<sup><2386></sup>Isaiah 5:6), are charged with it by the Lord: they are directed by him what they shall say, where they shall go and declare it, and he directs where it shall fall with power and weight; yea, he directs it into the very hearts of men, where it pierces and penetrates, and is a discernor and discoverer of their thoughts and intents;

*and his lightning unto the ends of the earth*: it cometh out of the east, and shineth to the west, (<sup><1207></sup>Matthew 24:27); and swiftly move to the further

parts of the earth: and such a direction, motion, and extent, has the Gospel had; the glorious light of it, comparable to lightning, it first broke forth in the east, where Christ, his forerunner and his disciples, first preached it, and Christian churches were formed; and from thence it spread into the western parts of the world, and before the destruction of Jerusalem it was preached unto all nations; it had a free course, ran, and was glorified; the sound of the voice of it went into all the earth, and the words and doctrines of the apostles unto the ends of the world.

**Ver. 4.** *After it a voice roareth*, etc.] After the lightning comes a violent crack or clap of thunder, which is like the roaring of a lion. Such is the order of thunder and lightning, according to our sense and apprehension of them; otherwise in nature they are together: but the reasons given why the lightning is seen before, and so the same in the flash and report of a gun, are, because the sense of seeing is quicker than the sense of hearing <sup>f1268</sup>; and the motion of light is quicker than that of sound; which latter is the truest reason <sup>f1269</sup>. The roaring voice of thunder may be an emblem of the thunder of the law; its dreadful volleys of curses, vengeance, and wrath on the breakers of it, as delivered out by Boanergeses, sons of thunder, (~~4087~~Mark 3:17): or the loud proclamation of the Gospel, made by the ministers of it; and the alarming awakening sound of the word, when attended with the Spirit and power of God, to sinners asleep and dead in trespasses and sins; upon which they awake, hear, and live;

*he thundereth with the voice of his excellency*: that is, God thunders with such a voice, an excellent and majestic one; for his voice of thunder is full of majesty, (~~1204~~Psalm 29:4). So is the voice of Christ in the Gospel; he spake when on earth as one having authority, and he comes forth and appears in it now with majesty and glory; and speaks in it of the excellent things which he has done, of the excellent righteousness he has wrought out, of the excellent sacrifice he has offered up, and of the excellent salvation he is the author of;

*and he will not stay them when his voice is heard*; either the thunder and the lightning, as some; which he does not long defer after he has given out the decree concerning them, the order and disposition for them: or rather the rain and hail; these are not stayed, but quickly follow the flash of lightning and clap of thunder: “for when he utters his voice [of thunder], there is a multitude of waters in the heavens”; and these quickly come down and are not stopped, (~~2403~~Jeremiah 10:13). The word for “stay”

signifies “to supplant”, or “act deceitfully”; the name of Jacob is derived from this root, because he supplanted his brother, (<sup>(-01236)</sup>Genesis 25:26); and so it may be rendered here, “he will not supplant”, or “deceive them <sup>f1270</sup>”, when his voice is heard”: that is, either he does not subvert them, the heavens and earth, but preserves them; though he makes them to tremble with his voice of thunder <sup>f1271</sup>: or he does not act the part of a secret, subtle, and deceitful enemy, when he thunders; but shows himself openly as a King, executing his decrees with authority <sup>f1272</sup>: or rather he deceives none with his voice; none can mistake it; all know it to be the voice of thunder when it is heard: so Christ’s sheep know his voice in the Gospel, and cannot be deceived; the voice of a stranger they will not follow, (<sup>(-8104)</sup>John 10:4,5,27).

**Ver. 5.** *God thundereth marvellously with his voice*, etc.] Or “marvels” <sup>f1273</sup>, or marvellous things, which may respect the marvellous effects of thunder and lightning: such as rending rocks and mountains; throwing down high and strong towers; shattering to pieces high and mighty oaks and cedars, and other such like effects, mentioned in (<sup>(-02016)</sup>Psalms 29:5-9); and there are some things reported which seem almost incredible, were they not well attested facts; as that an egg should be consumed thereby, and the shell unhurt; a cask of liquor, the liquor in it spoiled, and the cask not touched; money melted in the purse, and the purse whole; the fetus in the womb killed, and the woman preserved; with other things of the like kind mentioned by various writers <sup>f1274</sup>; and which are to be accounted for only by the swift motion and piercing and penetrating nature of lightning. So the voice of God in the Gospel thunders out and declares many wonderful things; as the doctrines of the trinity of Persons in one God; of the everlasting love of the three Persons; of the Person of Christ, and the union of the two natures in him; of his incarnation, of redemption and salvation by him; of regeneration by the spirit of God; of union to Christ, and communion with him; and of the resurrection of the dead: and it produces marvellous effects, attended with a divine power; as quickening sinners dead in trespasses and sins; enlightening those who are darkness itself; bearing down all opposition before it; casting down the strong holds of sin and Satan, and reducing the most stubborn and obstinate to the obedience of Christ;

*great things doth he, which we cannot comprehend*; or “know” <sup>f1275</sup>: great things in creation, the nature and causes of which lie greatly out of the reach of man; and which he rather guesses at than knows, and still less

comprehends. Great things in providence; in sustaining all creatures and providing for them; and in the government of the world, and in his dispensations in it; his judgments being unsearchable, and his ways past finding out: and great things in grace; as the salvation of sinners by Christ, and the conversion of their souls by his Spirit; and even what is known of them is known but in part and very imperfectly. This is a transition to other great things done by the Lord, besides those before mentioned, and particular instances follow.

**Ver. 6.** *For he saith to the snow, be thou [on] the earth,* etc.] In the original it is, be thou earth: hence one of the Rabbins formed a notion, that the earth was created from snow under the throne of glory, which is justly censured by Maimonides<sup>f1276</sup>; for there is a defect of the letter **b**, as in (~~4880~~ 2 Chronicles 34:30); as Aben Ezra observes; and therefore rightly supplied by us, on the earth. This is one of the great and incomprehensible things of God. What is the cause of it, how it is generated, what gives it its exceeding whiteness and its form, we rather guess at than certainly know; and there are some things relative to it not easy to be accounted for: as that it should be generated in the lower region of the air, so near us, and yet be so cold; and be so cold in its own nature, yet be like a blanket warming to the earth; and that being so cold, it should fall in hot countries, as in many parts of Africa, as Leo Africanus asserts<sup>f1277</sup>; and though so easily melted, yet lies continually upon the top of a burning mountain, Mount Etna, as observed by Pineda and others. God has his treasures of it, and he brings it forth from thence; it is at his command, it goes at a word speaking; it is one of the things that fulfil his word, (~~4888~~ Psalm 148:8). And if what Pliny<sup>f1278</sup> says is true, that snow never falls upon the high seas or main ocean, the expression here is, with great exactness and propriety, be thou on the earth. However, this is certain, that to the earth only it is useful, warming, refreshing, and fructifying; it has a wonderful virtue in it to fatten the earth. Olaus Magnus<sup>f1279</sup> reports, that in the northern countries, where it falls in great plenty, the fields are more fruitful than any others, and sooner put forth their fruits and increase than other fields prepared and cultivated with the greatest labour and diligence: and that they are often obliged to drive off the cattle from them, lest they should eat too much and burst, the fields and meadows becoming so luxurious by it; and frequently they mow off the tops of herbs and grass with their scythes, to prevent their growing too thick. The word of God, as for its purity, so for its warming, refreshing, and fructifying nature, is compared unto it, (~~2850~~ Isaiah 55:10,11);

*likewise to the small rain, and to the great rain of his strength:* that is, God says to these as to the snow, be upon the earth; and they presently are, whether lesser or larger showers: the lesser or more gentle, according to Seneca <sup>f1280</sup>, fall in, the winter, and the larger in spring; the former when the north wind blows, the latter when the south; but whenever they come, they fall by the direction of God, and at his command. He and he only gives rain, the vanities of the Gentiles cannot; and these are sent to water and refresh the earth, and make it fruitful; for which reason also the word of God is compared thereunto, (<sup>f1282</sup>Deuteronomy 32:12 <sup>f2850</sup>Isaiah 55:10,11). The Targum is,

“to the rain after rain in summer, to ripen the fruits; and to the rain after the rain, to cause the grass to bud in winter in his strength.”

So a shower of rain in the singular number signifies rain that falls in summer; and a shower of rain in the plural what falls in winter.

**Ver. 7.** *He sealet up the hand of every man,* etc.] That is, by deep snows and heavy rains being on the earth; where, as travellers are stopped in their journeys, and cannot proceed, so various artificers are hindered from their work, and husbandmen especially from their employment in the fields; so that their hands are as it were shut up and sealed, that they cannot work with them. Saphorno interprets this of the fruits and increase of the earth being produced and brought to perfection by means of the snow and rain, and so gathered by and into the hands of men; whereby they are led to observe the work of God and his goodness herein, and so to love and fear him; which he takes to be the sense of the following clause,

*that all men may know his work;* either their own work; what they have to do at home when they cannot work abroad; or that they may have leisure to reflect upon their moral ways and works, and consider how deficient they are: or rather the work of God; that they may know and own the snow and rain are his work, and depend upon his will; or that they may have time and opportunity of considering and meditating on the works of God, in nature, providence, and grace. Some choose to read the words, “that all men of his work may know” <sup>f1281</sup>; may know him the author of their beings, and the God of their mercies. For all men are the work of his hands; he has made them, and not they themselves; and the end of all God’s dealings with them is, that they may know him, fear, serve, and glorify him.

**Ver. 8.** *Then the beasts go into dens*, etc.] When snow and rains are on the earth in great abundance, then the wild beasts of the field, not being able to prowl about, betake themselves to dens; where they lie in wait, lurking for any prey that may pass by, from whence they spring and seize it;

*and remain in their places*; until the snow and rains are finished. As for other beasts, Olaus Magnus <sup>f1282</sup> observes, that when such large snows fall, that trees are covered with them, and the tender branches bend under the weight of them, they will come and abide under them, as in shady places, in great security, sheltered from the cold wind. The former may put us in mind of great personages, comparable to beasts of prey for their savageness and cruelty, who, when the day of God's wrath and vengeance is come, will flee to rocks and mountains, dens and caverns, there to hide themselves from it; (<sup><665></sup>Revelation 6:15-17).

**Ver. 9.** *Out of the south cometh the whirlwind*, etc.] Or "from the chamber" <sup>f1283</sup>; from the chamber of the cloud, as Ben Gersom, from the inside of it; or from the treasury of God, who bringeth the wind out of his treasures; alluding to chambers where treasures are kept; or from the heavens, shut up and veiled around with clouds like a pavilion: but because we read of the chambers of the south, (<sup><800></sup>Job 9:9); and the southern pole was like a secret chamber, shut up, unseen, and unknown very much to the ancients; hence we render it, and others interpret it, of the south; from whence in these countries came whirlwinds. Hence we read of the whirlwinds of the south, (<sup><200></sup>Isaiah 21:1 <sup><3094></sup>Zechariah 9:14);

*and cold out of the north*; cold freezing winds from thence; or "from the scatterers" <sup>f1284</sup>: Aben Ezra interprets them of stars, the same with the "Mazzaroth", (<sup><882></sup>Job 38:32); stars scattered about the Arctic or northern pole, as some: or rather the northern winds are designed which scatter the clouds, drive away rain, (<sup><123></sup>Proverbs 25:23); and bring fair weather, (<sup><872></sup>Job 37:22). Wherefore Mr. Broughton renders the word,

"fair weather winds;"

and, in a marginal note,

"the scatterers of clouds" <sup>f1285</sup>."

**Ver. 10.** *By the breath of God frost is given*, etc.] By the word of God, as the Targum; at his command it is, at his word it comes, and at his word it goes, (<sup><475></sup>Psalms 147:15-18); or by his will, as Ben Gersom interprets it,

when it is his pleasure it should be, it appears; it may be understood of a freezing wind from the Lord, for a wind is sometimes expressed by the breath of his nostrils, (<sup><19815></sup>Psalm 18:15); and as the word “God” added to things increases the signification of them, as mountains of God are strong mountains; so the breath of God may signify a strong wind, as Saphorno notes, the north wind <sup>f1286</sup>;

*and the breadth of the waters is straitened*; by the frost they are reduced and brought into a narrower compass; or made hard, as Mr. Broughton renders it; so hard as to walk upon, to draw carriages on, and lay weights and burdens very great upon; or become compact or bound together, like metal melted, poured out, and consolidated; though some think it refers to the thawing of ice by the south winds <sup>f1287</sup>, when the waters return to their former breadth; which is done by the breath or commandment of God, as appears from the place before quoted from the psalmist, (<sup><19815></sup>Psalm 18:15); for it may be rendered, “and the breadth of the waters is pouring out”, so the Targum, when thawed; or through the pouring down of rain, so the Syriac and Arabic versions, “he sends forth plenty of water”.

**Ver. 11.** *Also by watering he wearieth the thick cloud*, etc.] By filling it with a multitude of water, it is as it were loaded and made weary with it; and especially by sending it about thus loaded from place to place before discharged, when it becomes as a weary traveller; and then by letting down the water in it, whereby it spends itself like one that is weary; an emblem of ministers that spend and are spent for the good of men: some render it by serenity or fair weather, and so Mr. Broughton,

“by clearness he wearieth the thick vapours;”

by causing a clear sky he dispels them;

*he scattereth his bright cloud*; thin light clouds that have nothing in them, and are soon dispersed and come to nothing, and are seen no more; all emblem of such as are clouds without water, (<sup><6112></sup>Jude 1:12); (see <sup><3117></sup>Zechariah 11:17); or “he scatters the cloud by his light” <sup>f1288</sup>; by the sun, which dispels clouds and makes a clear sky; an emblem of the blotting out and forgiveness of sins, and of restoring the manifestations of divine love, and the joys of salvation; (see <sup><342></sup>Isaiah 44:22).

**Ver. 12.** *And it is turned round about by his counsels*, etc.] The cloud is, and that by the wind, which is turned about to all points of the compass, according to the will of God; by the counsels of him who sits at the helm,



as the word signifies, and orders all things according to the counsel of his own will: to which owing every shifting of the wind, and the various motions of the clouds;

*that they may do whatsoever he commandeth them upon the face of the world in the earth*; as all his creatures do; the several meteors in the air, clouds, stormy wind, fire, hail, snow, and vapour, all fulfilling his word; and which they do everywhere in the several parts of the world whither they are sent, (<sup><19475></sup>Psalm 107:25-29 148:1-14). So ministers of the word drop down or withhold the rain of Gospel doctrine, and carry it into the several places of the world, as the Lord directs them; (see <sup><2316></sup>Isaiah 5:6 <sup><4136></sup>Acts 13:46 <sup><4189></sup>Matthew 28:19,20).

**Ver. 13.** *He causeth it to come*, etc.] The cloud, and rain by it;

*whether for correction*; for the reproof and chastisement of men for their sins, by suffering such quantities to fall as wash away, or corrupt and destroy, the fruits of the earth: or “for a tribe” <sup>f1289</sup>, as the word sometimes signifies; the rain is sent, and comes only to a particular part or spot of ground, to one city and not to another, (<sup><3007></sup>Amos 4:7);

*or for his land*; some particular land he has a favour for, as the land of Canaan he cared for from one end of the year to another, and therefore sent on it rain in due season, though as yet it did not appear to be the object of his peculiar regard; or for the whole earth, which is his; and wherever rain comes seasonably and in proper quantity, it is for the benefit of it; though some think the land which no man has a property in but the Lord is meant, even the wilderness where no man is, (<sup><1838></sup>Job 38:26,27);

*or for mercy*; to some particular spot, and to some particular persons; and indeed it is a kindness and benefit both to good and bad men; hereby the earth is watered and made fertile and fruitful, to bring forth seed to the sower and bread to the eater, (see <sup><4155></sup>Matthew 5:45 <sup><4147></sup>Acts 14:17); the word of God is for the correction of some, and for the comfort of others, (<sup><3116></sup>2 Timothy 3:16); yea, the savour of death unto death to some, and the savour of life unto life to others, (<sup><4016></sup>2 Corinthians 2:16). The Targum paraphrases the words,

“either a rain of vengeance on the seas and deserts, or an impetuous rain on the trees of the mountains and hills, or a still rain of mercy on the fruitful fields and vineyards.”

**Ver. 14.** *Hearken unto this, O Job*, etc.] Either to the present clap of thunder then heard; or rather to what Elihu had last said concerning clouds of rain coming for correction or mercy; and improve it and apply it to his own case, and consider whether the afflictions he was under were for the reproof and correction of him for sin, or in mercy and love to his soul and for his good, as both might be the case; or to what he had further to say to him, which was but little more, and he should conclude;

*stand still*; stand up, in order to hear better, and in reverence of what might be said; and with silence, that it might be the better received and understood:

*and consider the wondrous works of God*; not prodigies and extraordinary things, which are out of the common course of nature, such as the wonders in Egypt, at the Red sea, in the wilderness, and in the land of Canaan, but common things; such as come more or less under daily observation, for of such only he had been speaking, and continued to speak; such as winds, clouds, thunder, lightning, hail, rain, and snow; these he would have him consider and reflect upon, that though they were so common and obvious to view, yet there were some things in them marvellous and beyond the full comprehension of men; and therefore much more must be the works of Providence, and the hidden causes and reasons of them.

**Ver. 15.** *Dost thou know when God disposed them?* etc.] The clouds, that part of the wondrous works of God he was speaking of; when he decreed concerning them that they should be, when he put into them and stored them with rain, hail, snow, etc. disposed of them here and there in the heavens, and gave them orders to fall on this and the other spot of ground; wast thou present at all this, and knew what God was doing secretly in the clouds, and before heard what would break out of them, or fall from them? and if thou art ignorant of these things, canst thou imagine that thou shouldst be made acquainted with the secret springs of God's providential dealings with the children of men?

*and caused the light of his cloud to shine*; either the lightning to break through the cloud, or rather the light of the sun to shine upon his cloud, prepared to receive the light reflected on it, and form the rainbow; which, as it is called his bow, the cloud in which it is may be called his cloud; which is one of the wondrous works of God, and is called by the Heathens the daughter of wonder<sup>f1290</sup>; formed in a semicircle, with various colours, and as a token that God will drown the earth no more; an emblem of the

covenant of peace, and of Jesus Christ, said to be clothed with a cloud, and with a rainbow about his head, (<sup><6600></sup>Revelation 10:1).

**Ver. 16.** *Dost thou know the balancings of the clouds?* etc.] How those ponderous bodies, as some of them are very weighty, full of water, are poised, and hang in the air, without turning this way or the other, or falling on the earth;

*the wondrous works of him which is perfect in knowledge;* of God, who is a God of knowledge, of knowledges, (<sup><0018></sup>1 Samuel 2:3); who knows himself and all his works, all creatures and things whatever, (see <sup><8304></sup>Job 36:4); and this is another of his wondrous works, which none but he, whose knowledge is perfect, and is the author and giver of knowledge, can know, even the poising and balancing of the clouds in the air; we see they are balanced, but we know not how it is done.

**Ver. 17.** *How thy garments [are] warm, when he quieteth the earth by the south [wind]?*] One should think there is no great difficulty in accounting for this, that a man's clothes should be warm, and he so hot as not to be able to bear them, but obliged to put them off in the summer season, when only the south wind blows, which brings heat, a serene sky, and fine weather, (<sup><0125></sup>Luke 12:55); and yet there is something in the concourse of divine Providence attending these natural causes, and his blessing with them, without which the garment of a man will not be warm, or at least not warming to him, (<sup><3006></sup>Haggai 1:6); or

“how thy garments are warm when the land is still from the south,”

as Mr. Broughton renders the words; that is, how it is when the earth is still from the whirlwinds of the south; or when that wind does not blow which brings heat, but northerly winds in the winter time; that then a man's garments should be warm, and keep him warm.

**Ver. 18.** *Hast thou with him spread out the sky?* etc.] Wast thou concerned with him at the first spreading out of the sky? wast thou an assistant to him in it? did he not spread it as a curtain or canopy about himself, without the help of another? verily he did; (see <sup><8308></sup>Job 9:8) (<sup><2342></sup>Isaiah 44:24);

*[which] is strong:* for though it seems a fluid and thin, is very firm and strong, as appears by what it bears, and are contained in it; and therefore is called “the firmament of his power”, (<sup><8701></sup>Psalms 150:1);

*[and] as a molten looking glass*; clear and transparent, like the looking glasses of the women, made of molten brass, (<sup>4238</sup>Exodus 38:8); and firm and permanent <sup>f1291</sup>; and a glass this is in which the glory of God, and his divine perfections, is to be seen; and is one of the wondrous works of God, made for the display of his own glory, and the benefit of men, (<sup>4901</sup>Psalm 19:1). Or this may respect the spreading out a clear serene sky, and smoothing it after it has been covered and ruffled with storms and tempests; which is such a wonderful work of God, that man has no hand in.

**Ver. 19.** *Teach us what we shall say unto him*, etc.] To this wonder working God, of whose common works of nature we know so little; how we should reason with him about his works of Providence, when we know so little of these:

*[for] we cannot order [our speech] by reason of darkness*; by reason of darkness in themselves, which is in all men naturally, and even in the saints in this state of imperfection; and by reason of the clouds and darkness which are about the Lord himself, who is incomprehensible in his nature and perfections; and by reason of the darkness cast about his providential dealings with men, so that they are unsearchable and past finding out; and the best of men are at a loss how to order their speech, or discourse with God concerning these things.

**Ver. 20.** *Shall it be told him that I speak?* etc.] And what I speak? there is no need of it, since he is omniscient, and knows every word that is spoken by men; or is anything I have said concerning him, his ways, and his works, worthy relating, or worthy of his hearing, being so very imperfect? nor can the things I have spoken of, though common things, be fully explained to any; or should it be told him, the Lord, that he, Elihu, had spoke as Job had done, and arraigned his justice, and complained of his dealings? God forbid; he would not have it said they were spoken by him for all the world: or “shall it be recorded unto him what I speak?” as Mr. Broughton, or that I speak; shall it be recorded in a book, and that sent to God; that I will speak in thy cause, and be an advocate for thee, and endeavour to justify thee in all thou hast said? no, by no means;

*if a man speak, surely he shall be swallowed up*; if he speaks of the being and perfections of God, he is soon lost; his essence, and many of his attributes, are beyond his comprehension; if he speaks of his works of nature and providence, he is presently out of his depth; there is a bathos, a depth in them he cannot fathom: if he speaks of his love, and grace, and

mercy, in the salvation of man, he is swallowed up with admiration; he is obliged to say, what manner of love is this? it has heights he cannot reach, depths he cannot get to the bottom of, lengths and breadths immeasurable: or should he undertake to dispute with God, to litigate a point with him concerning his works, he could not answer him in one thing of a thousand; and particularly Elihu suggests, was he to undertake Job's cause, it would soon be lost and all over with him; so Mr. Broughton renders the words, "would any plead, when he should be undone?" who would engage in a cause he is sure would be lost, and prove his utter undoing?

**Ver. 21.** *And now men see not the bright light which [is] in the clouds,* etc.] Here Elihu returns to his subject, it may be, occasioned by black clouds gathering in the heavens, as a preparation for the whirlwind, storm, and tempest, out of which the Lord is said to speak in the next chapter. And this is to be understood, not of the lightning in the cloud, which is not to be seen until it breaks out of it; nor the rainbow in the cloud, formed by the rays of light from the sun, which disappears when the wind passes and clears the sky of the cloud in which it is; nor of the Galaxy, or Milky Way, as Sephorno, which is not to be seen in a cloudy night; but of the sun, which is the great light and a bright one, and shines brightly; yet sometimes not to be seen by men, because of interposing clouds, until they are cleared away by winds. Though rather this respects the sun shining in its brightness, and in its full strength, in the skies or ethereal regions, in a clear day, when men are not able to look full at it: and how much less then are they able to behold him who is light itself, and in whom is no darkness at all, nor shadow of turning; who dwells in light, which no mortal can approach unto; into whose nature and perfections none can fully look, or behold the secret springs of his actions, and the reasons of his dispensations towards men?

*but the wind passeth and cleanseth them;* the clouds, and clears the air of them, which obstruct the light of the sun: or "when a wind passeth and cleareth it"; the air, as Mr. Broughton, then the sun shines so brightly that it dazzles the eye to look at it.

**Ver. 22.** *Fair weather cometh out of the north,* etc.] Or "gold"<sup>f1292</sup>, which some understand literally; this being found in northern climates as well as southern, as Pliny relates<sup>f1293</sup>; particularly in Colchis and Scythia, which lay to the north of Palestine and Arabia; and is thought by a learned man<sup>f1294</sup> to be here intended: though to understand it figuratively of the serenity of

the air, bright and pure as gold, or of fair weather, which is golden weather, as Mr. Broughton renders it,

“through the north the golden cometh,”

seems best to agree with the subject Elihu is upon; and such weather comes from the north, through the north winds, which drive away rain, (<sup><1953></sup>Proverbs 25:23);

*with God [is] terrible majesty*; majesty belongs to him as he is King of kings, whose the kingdom of nature and providence is; and he is the Governor among and over the nations of the world. His throne is prepared in the heavens; that is his throne, and his kingdom ruleth over all: and this majesty of his is “terrible”, commanding awe and reverence among all men, who are his subjects; and especially among his saints and peculiar people; and strikes a terror to others, even to great personages, the kings and princes of the earth; to whom the Lord is sometimes terrible now, and will be hereafter; (see <sup><1982></sup>Psalm 76:12) (<sup><1615></sup>Revelation 6:15-17); and to all Christless sinners, especially when he comes to judgment; (see <sup><2119></sup>Isaiah 2:19 <sup><1781></sup>2 Corinthians 5:11). Or “terrible praise”, <sup>f1295</sup>; for God is “fearful in praises”, (<sup><1511></sup>Exodus 15:11); which may respect the subject of praise, terrible things, and the manner of praising him with fear and reverence, (<sup><1962></sup>Psalm 106:22 2:11).

**Ver. 23.** [*Touching the Almighty*, etc.] Or with respect to God, who is almighty; with whom nothing is impossible; who can do and does do all things he pleases, and more than we can ask or think; and who is all sufficient, as this word is by some rendered; has enough of every thing in himself and of himself to make him happy; and needs not any of his creatures, nor anything they can do or give him, but has a sufficiency for himself and them;

*we cannot find him out*; found he may be in his works, and especially in his Son, the express image of his person; in whom he makes himself known as the God of grace: but he is not to be found out to perfection; neither by the light of nature, which is very dim, and by which men grope after him, if haply they may find him; nor even by the light of grace in the present state: and there are many things in God quite out of the reach of man, and ever will be, fully to comprehend; as the modes of the subsistence of the three Persons in the Godhead; the eternity and immensity of God; with all secret things, which belong not to us to inquire curiously into;

*[he is] excellent in power*; or great and much in it; which is displayed in the works of creation and sustentation of the world; in the redemption and conversion of his people; in the support, protection, and preservation of them; and in the destruction of his and their enemies;

*and in judgment*; in the government of the world in so righteous a manner; in the judgments he executes on wicked men; and as he will appear to be in the general judgment of the world, at the great day, which will be a righteous one;

*and in plenty of justice*; being most just, righteous in all his ways, and holy in all his works; distributing justice to all, acting according to the rules of it, in all things and towards all persons; so that though he is great in power, he does not abuse that power, to do things that are not just;

*he will not afflict*; without a just cause and reason for it; nor willingly, but with reluctance; nor never beyond deserts, nor more than he gives strength to bear; and only for the good of his people, and in love to them. Some render it, “he will not answer”<sup>f1296</sup>; or give an account of his matters, or the reason of his dealings with men.

**Ver. 24.** *Men do therefore fear him*, etc.] Or should, because of his greatness in power, judgment, and justice; and because of his goodness, in not afflicting for his pleasure’s sake, but for the profit of men; and therefore they should reverence and adore him, submit to his will, patiently bear afflictions, serve him internally and externally, with reverence and godly fear;

*he respecteth not any [that are] wise of heart*; that are wise in a natural sense: these are not always regarded by God, or are his favourites; neither temporal blessings, nor special grace, or the knowledge of spiritual things, are always given to the wise and prudent, (<sup><2091></sup>Ecclesiastes 9:11 <sup><0125></sup>Matthew 11:25). Or that are wise in their own conceit; there is a woe to such; and there is more hope of a fool than of him, (<sup><2381></sup>Isaiah 5:21 <sup><0182></sup>Proverbs 26:12). Or he is not “afraid” of them<sup>f1297</sup>, as some choose to render the word; he fears not to reprove them and correct them for their faults, or the schemes they form to counterwork him; for he can take them in their craftiness, and carry their counsel headlong. Or “every wise in heart shall not see him”<sup>f1298</sup>: the world by wisdom knows him not; nor can any look into his heart, his thoughts, purposes, and designs, and into the causes

and reasons of his actions; nor have those that are truly wise perfect vision and knowledge of him now, (~~4630~~ 1 Corinthians 13:9,12).