

CHAPTER 39

INTRODUCTION TO JOB 39

This chapter treats of various creatures, beasts and birds, which Job had little knowledge of, had no concern in the making of them, and scarcely any power over them; as of the goats and hinds, (~~<890>~~ Job 39:1-4); of the wild ass, (~~<890>~~ Job 39:5-8); of the unicorn, (~~<890>~~ Job 39:9-12); of the peacock and ostrich, (~~<890>~~ Job 39:13-18); of the horse, (~~<890>~~ Job 39:19-25); and of the hawk and eagle, (~~<890>~~ Job 39:26-30).

Ver. 1. *Knowest thou the time when the wild goats of the rock bring forth?* etc.] Which creatures are so called, because they dwell among the rocks ^{f1345} and run upon them; and though their heads are loaded with a vast burden of horns upon them, yet can so poise themselves, as with the greatest swiftness, to leap from mountain to mountain, as Pliny says ^{f1346}: and if they bring forth their young in the rocks, as Olympiodorus asserts, and which is not improbable, it is not to be wondered, that the time of their bringing forth should not be known by men, to whom the rocks they run upon are inaccessible;

[or] canst thou mark the time when the hinds do calve? that is, precisely and exactly, and so as to direct, order, and manage, and bring it about, as the Lord does: and it is wonderful that they should calve, and not cast their young before their time, when they are continually in flight and fright, through men or wild beasts, and are almost always running and leaping about; and often scared with thunder, which hastens birth, (~~<890>~~ Psalm 29:9); otherwise the time of their bringing forth in general is known by men, as will be observed in (~~<890>~~ Job 39:2).

Ver. 2. *Canst thou number the months [that] they fulfil?* etc.] Which some understand both of wild goats and hinds. Common goats fulfil five months, they conceive in November, and bring forth in March, as Pliny ^{f1347} observes; but how many the wild goats of the rock fulfil is not said by him or any other I know of: the same writer says ^{f1348} of hinds, that they go eight months;

or knowest thou the time when they bring forth? naturalists^{f1349} tell us, that the hinds conceive after the rise of the star Arcturus, which rises eleven days before the autumnal equinox; so that they conceive in September; and as they go eight months, they bring forth in April; but then the exact time to a day and hour is not known. Besides, who has fixed the time for their bringing forth, and carries them in it through so many dangers and difficulties? None but the Lord himself. Now if such common things in nature were not known perfectly by Job, how should he be able to search into and find out the causes and reasons of God's providential dealings with men, or what is in the womb of Providence?

Ver. 3. *They bow themselves*, etc.] That they may bring forth their young with greater ease and more safety: for it seems the hinds bring forth their young with great difficulty; and there are provisions in nature made to lessen it; as thunder, before observed, which causes them to bring forth the sooner; and there is an herb called "seselis", which it is said^{f1350} they feed upon before birth, to make it the easier; as well as they use that, and another called "aros", after the birth, to ease them of their later pains;

they bring forth their young ones; rentng and cleaving asunder the membrane, as the word signifies, in which their young is wrapped;

they cast out their sorrows; either their young, which they bring forth in pains and which then cease; or the secundines, or afterbirth, in which the young is wrapped, and which the philosopher says^{f1351} they eat, and is supposed to be medical to them. None but a woman seems to bring forth with more pain than this creature; and a wife is compared to it, (³¹⁵⁹Proverbs 5:19).

Ver. 4. *Their young ones are in good liking*, etc.] Plump, fat, and sleek, as fawns are:

they grow up with corn; by which they grow, or without in the field, as the word also signifies; and their growth and increase is very quick, as Aristotle observes^{f1352};

they go forth, and return not unto them: they go forth into the fields, and shift and provide for themselves, and trouble their dams no more; and return not to them, nor are they known by them.

Ver. 5. *Who hath sent out the wild ass free?* etc.] Into the wide waste, where it is, ranges at pleasure, and is not under the restraint of any; a

creature which, as it is naturally wild, is naturally averse to servitude, is desirous of liberty and maintains it: not but that it may be tamed, as Pliny ^{f1353} speaks of such as are; but it chooses to be free, and, agreeably to its nature, it is sent out into the wilderness as such: not that it is set free from bondage, for in that it never was until it is tamed; but its nature and inclination, and course it pursues, is to be free. And now the question is, who gave this creature such a nature, and desire after liberty? and such power to maintain it? and directs it to take such methods to secure it, and keep clear of bondage? It is of God;

or who hath loosed the bands of the wild ass? not that it has any naturally upon it, and is loosed from them; but because it is as clear of them as such creatures are, which have been in bands and are freed from them: therefore this mode of expression is used, and which signifies the same as before.

Ver. 6. *Whose house I have made the wilderness*, etc.] Appointed that to be his place of residence, as being agreeable to his nature, at a distance from men, and in the less danger of being brought into subjection by them. Such were the deserts of Arabia; where, as Xenophon ^{f1354} relates, were many of these creatures, and which he represents as very swift: and Leo Africanus ^{f1355} says, great numbers of them are found in deserts, and on the borders of deserts; hence said to be used to the wilderness (~~2424~~ Jeremiah 2:24);

and the barren land his dwellings; not entirely barren, for then it could not live there; but comparatively, with respect to land that is fruitful: or “salt land” ^{f1356}; for, as Pliny ^{f1357} says, every place where salt is, is barren.

Ver. 7. *He scorneth the multitude of the city*, etc.] Choosing rather to be alone in the wilderness and free than to be among a multitude of men in a city, and be a slave as the tame ass; or it despises and defies a multitude of men, that may come out of cities to take it, Leo Africanus says ^{f1358} it yields to none for swiftness but Barbary horses: according to Xenophon ^{f1359}, it exceeds the horse in swiftness; and when pursued by horsemen, it will outrun them, and stand still and rest till they come near it, and then start again; so that there is no taking it, unless many are employed. Aristotle ^{f1360} says it excels in swiftness; and, according to Bochart ^{f1361}, it has its name in Hebrew from the Chaldee word **adp**, “to run”. Or it may be rendered, “the noise of the city”, so Cocceius; the stir and bustle in it, through a multiplicity of men in business;

neither regardeth he the crying of the driver; or “hears”^{f1362}: he neither feels his blows, nor hears his words; urging him to move faster and make quicker dispatch, as the tame ass does; he being neither ridden nor driven, nor drawing in a cart or plough.

Ver. 8. *The range of the mountains [is] his pasture*, etc.] It ranges about the mountains for food; it looks about for it, as the word signifies, and tries first one place and then another to get some, it having short commons there;

and he searcheth after every green thing; herb or plant, be it what it will that is green, it seeks after; and which being scarce in deserts and mountains, it searches about for and feeds upon it, wherever it can find it; grass being the peculiar food of these creatures, (see ~~Job~~ Job 6:5); and which is observed by naturalists^{f1363}.

Ver. 9. *Will the unicorn be willing to serve thee*, etc.] Whether there is or ever was such a creature, as described under the name of an unicorn, is a question: it is thought the accounts of it are for the most part fabulous; though Vartomannus^{f1364} says he saw two at Mecca, which came from Ethiopia, the largest of which had a horn in his forehead three cubits long. There are indeed several creatures which may be called “monocerots”, who have but one horn; as the “rhinoceros”, and the Indian horses and asses^{f1365}. The Arabic geographer^{f1366} speaks of a beast in the Indies, called “carcaddan”, which is lesser than an elephant and bigger than a buffalo; having in the middle of the forehead an horn long and thick, as much as two hands can grasp: and not only on land, but in the sea are such, as the “nahr whal”, or Greenland whale^{f1367}; but then they do not answer to the creature so called in Scripture: and, besides, this must be a creature well known to Job, as it was to the Israelites; and must be a strong creature, from the account that gives of it, and not to be taken as here. And Solinus^{f1368} speaks of such “monocerots” or unicorns, which may be killed, but cannot be taken, and were never known to be in any man’s possession alive; and so Aelianus^{f1369} says of the like creature, that it never was remembered that anyone of them had been taken. Some think the “rhinoceros” is meant; but that, though a very strong creature, and so may be thought fit for the uses after mentioned, yet may be tamed; whereas the creature here is represented as untamable, and not to be subdued, and brought under a yoke and managed; and besides, it is not very probable that it was known by Job. Bochart^{f1370} takes it to be the “oryx”, a creature

of the goat kind; but to me it seems more likely to be of the ox kind, to be similar to them, and so might be thought to do the business of one; and the rather, because of its great strength, and yet could not be brought to do it, nor be trusted with it: for the questions concerning it relate to the work of oxen; and as the wild ass is opposed to the tame one in the preceding paragraph, so here the wild ox to a tame one. And both Strabo^{f1371} and Diodorus Siculus^{f1372} relate, that among the Troglodytes, a people that dwelt near the Red sea, and not far from Arabia, where Job lived, were abundance of wild oxen or bulls, and which far exceeded the common ones in size and swiftness; and the creature called the seem in the original, has its name from height. Now the question is, could Job take one of these wild bulls or oxen, and tame it, and make it willing to do any work or service he should choose to put it to? No, he could not;

or abide by thy crib? manger or stall, as the tame or common ox will; who, when it has done its labour, is glad to be led to its stall and feed, and then lie down and rest, and there abide; (see ^{<200B>}Isaiah 1:3); but not so the wild ox.

Ver. 10. *Canst thou bind the unicorn with his band in the furrow?* etc.] Put the yoke and harness upon him, and fasten it to the plough to draw it, that he may make furrows with it in the field, or plough up the ground as the tame ox does? thou canst not;

or will he harrow the valleys after thee? draw the harrow which is used after ploughing to break the clods, and make the land smooth and even? he will not: valleys are particularly mentioned, because arable land is usually in them; (see ^{<1513>}Psalms 65:13).

Ver. 11. *Wilt thou trust him, because his strength [is] great?* etc.] No; tame oxen are employed because they are strong to labour, (^{<1514>}Psalms 144:14); and they are to be trusted, in ploughing or treading out the corn, under direction, because they are manageable, and will attend to business with constancy; but the wild ox, though stronger, and so fitter for labour, is yet not to be trusted, because unruly and unmanageable: if that sort of wild oxen called “uri” could be thought to be meant, for which Bootius^{f1373} contends, Caesar’s account of them would agree with this character of the “reem”, as to his great strength: he says of them^{f1374}, they are in size a little smaller than elephants, of the kind, colour, and shape of a bull; they are of great strength and of great swiftness, and not to be tamed;

or wilt thou leave thy labour to him? to plough thy fields, to harrow thy lands, and to bring home the ripe corn? as in (^{<38912>}Job 39:12); thou wilt not.

Ver. 12. *Wilt thou believe him that he will bring home thy seed?* etc.]

Draw in the cart, and bring home the ripe sheaves of corn, as the tame ox does? no; thou knowest him too well to believe he will bring it home in safety;

and gather [it into] thy barn; to be trodden out, which used to be done by oxen in those times: if therefore Job could not manage such unruly creatures as the wild ass and the wild ox, and make them serviceable to him, how unfit must he be to govern the world, or to direct in the affairs of Providence?

Ver. 13. [*Gavest thou the goodly wings unto the peacocks?* etc.] Rather “ostriches”, as the Vulgate Latin and Tigurine versions render it; some render it, “the wing of those that exult is joyful”, so Montanus; that is, of the ostriches; who, in confidence of their wings, exult and glory over the horse and his rider, (^{<38918>}Job 39:18); for peacocks are not remarkable for their wings, but for their tails; whereas the wings of the ostrich are as sails unto them, as several writers observe ^{f1375}; and with which they rather run, or row, than fly: hence it is called by Plautus ^{f1376} “passer marinus”, the sea sparrow: and the feathers of it are more goodly than those of the wings of the peacock; and besides, it is a question whether the peacock was where Job lived, and in his times; since it is originally from the Indies, and from thence it was brought to Judea in the times of Solomon; and was not known in Greece and Rome ^{f1377} until later ages. Alexander the Great, when he first saw them in India, was surprised at them; and yet Solon ^{f1378} speaks of them in his time as seen by him, which was at least two hundred years before Alexander; though at Rome not common in the times of Horace ^{f1379}, who calls a peacock “rara avis”; and speaks of them as sold for a great price; but ostriches were well known in Arabia, where Job lived, as is testified by Xenophon ^{f1380}, Strabo ^{f1381}, and Diodorus Siculus ^{f1382}. Moreover, what is said in the following verses is only true of the ostrich, and that only is spoken of here and there, as it follows;

or wings and feathers unto the ostrich; or whose wings and feathers are like the storks; and so Bochart renders the words, truly they have “the wing and feather of the stork”; the colours of which are black and white, from whence it has its name *πελαγρος* ^{f1383} in Greek; and so Leo Africanus ^{f1384} says of the ostriches, that they have in their wings large feathers of a

black and white colour; and this was a creature well known in Arabia ^{f1385}, in which Job lived.

Ver. 14. *Which leaveth her eggs in the earth*, etc.] Lays them and leaves them there. Aelianus, agreeably to this, says ^{f1386}, that it builds a low nest in the ground, making a hollow in the sand with its feet; though he seems to be mistaken as to the number of its eggs, which he makes to be more than eighty; more truly Leo Africanus ^{f1387}, who reckons them ten or twelve; which, he says, it lays in the sand, and each of them are of the size of a cannon ball, and weigh fifteen pounds, more or less. Hence, with the Arabs, it is called

“the mother of eggs,”

because of the large eggs it lays; and with them it is a proverb,

“meaner, or of a lesser account, than the eggs of an ostrich,”

because its eggs are neglected by it ^{f1388};

and warmeth them in the dust; not that she leaves them to be warmed by the hot sand, or by the heat of the sun upon them, by which they are hatched, as has been commonly said, for thereby they would rather be corrupted and become rotten; but she herself warms them and hatches them, by sitting upon them in the dust and sand: and for this the above historian is express, who says ^{f1389}, the female lighting on these eggs, whether her own or another’s, sits on them and heats them. Concerning the ostrich hatching its eggs, Vansleb ^{f1390}, from an Arabic manuscript, relates what is incredible, that they are hatched by the male and female with their eye only; that one or other of them keep continually looking at them until they are all hatched; and this I observe is asserted also by another writer ^{f1391}.

Ver. 15. *And forgetteth that the foot may crush them*, etc.] The foot of the traveller, they being laid in the ground, where he may walk, or on the sand of the seashore, where he may tread and trample upon them unawares, and crush them to pieces; to prevent which this creature has no foresight;

or that the wild beast may break them; supposing they may be, though not where men walk, yet where wild beasts frequent, they may be as easily broken by the one as the other; against which it guards not, having no

instinct in nature, as some creatures have, to direct to the preservation of them.

Ver. 16. *She is hardened against her young ones, as though [they were] not hers*, etc.] Hence said to be cruel, (^{280B}Lamentations 4:3); not against the young ones she hatches, for Aelianus ^{f1392} reports her as very tender of her young, and exposing herself to danger for the preservation of them; but being a very forgetful creature, having laid its eggs in the sand, where it leaves them, forgets where it has laid them; and finding other eggs sits on them and hatches them, and regards the young as its own, and is hardened against its true and real young, as not belonging to her;

her labour is in vain without fear; in laying her eggs and leaving them in the dust, without fear of their being crushed and broken, which yet they are, and so her labour is in vain; or her labour in hatching the eggs of others, without any fear or care of their belonging to others, which yet they do, and so she labours in vain.

Ver. 17. *Because God hath deprived her of wisdom*, etc.] Or “made her to forget” ^{f1393} what she had; an instance of her forgetfulness is mentioned (¹³⁹⁵Job 39:15); and so Leo Africanus ^{f1394} says of it, that it is of a very short memory, and presently forgets the place where its eggs are laid;

neither hath he imparted to her understanding; many instances are given of its stupidity by historians, as that it will take anything that is offered to it to eat, stones, iron, etc. ^{f1395}; that it will thrust its head and neck into a thicket, fancying: it is hid and covered, and that none can see it; which Pliny ^{f1396} remarks as an instance of its foolishness; though Diodorus Siculus ^{f1397} takes this to be a point of prudence, for the preservation of those parts of it which are weakest. Strabo gives ^{f1398} another instance of its stupidity, its being so easily deceived by sportsmen, who, by putting the skin of an ostrich on their hands, and reaching out fruits or seeds to it, it will receive them of them, and be taken. Others observe the smallness of their heads, and so of their brains, as an argument of their want of understanding; and it has been remarked, as a proof of their having but few brains, that Heliogabalus, the Roman emperor, had six hundred heads of ostriches dressed at once for his supper, for the sake of their brains ^{f1399}.

Ver. 18. *What time she lifted up herself on high*, etc.] It is sometimes eight foot high ^{f1400}; when alarmed with approaching danger she raises up herself,

being sitting on the ground, and erects her wings for flight, or rather running;

she scorneth the horse and his rider; being then, as Pliny^{f1401} says, higher than a man on horseback, and superior to a horse in swiftness; and though horsemen have been able to take wild asses and goats, very swift creatures, yet never ostriches, as Xenophon relates^{f1402} of those in Arabia; and this creature has another method, when pursued, by which it defies and despises, as well as hurts and incommodes its pursuers, which is by casting stones backward at them with its feet as out of a sling^{f1403}.

Ver. 19. *Hast thou given the horse strength?* etc.] Not only to bear burdens and draw carriages, but for war; for it is the war horse that is here spoken of, as what follows shows, and his strength denotes; not strength of body only, but fortitude and courage; for which, as well as the other, the horse is eminent, and both are the gift of God, and not of men;

hast thou clothed his neck with thunder? or with strength, as the Targum; the horse having particularly great strength in its neck, as well as in other parts; or with strength of voice, as Ben Gersom explains it; and it has been generally understood of the neighing of horses, which comes through and out of their neck, and makes a vehement sound: some render it, “with a mane”^{f1404}; and could it be made to appear that the word is so used in any other place, or in any other writings, or in any of the dialects, it would afford a very good sense, since a fine large mane to a horse is a great ornament and recommendation: the Septuagint render it by “fear”, and Jarchi interprets it of “terror”; and refers to the sense of, he word in (³²⁷⁸Ezekiel 27:35); and it may signify such a tremor as thunder makes, from whence that has its name; and it may be observed that between the neck and shoulder bone of an horse there is a tremulous and quavering motion; and which is more vehement in battle, not from any fearfulness of it, but rather through eagerness to engage in it; and therefore Schultens translates the words, “hast thou clothed his neck with a cheerful tremor?”

Ver. 20. *Canst thou make him afraid as a grasshopper?* etc.] Which is frightened at every noise, and at any approach of men; but not so the horse; or canst thou move him, or cause him to skip and jump, or rather leap like a grasshopper? that is, hast thou given, or canst thou give him the faculty of leaping over hedges and ditches, for which the horse is famous? so Neptune’s war horses are said^{f1405} to be *ευσκαρψμοι*, good leapers;

the glory of his nostrils [is] terrible: which may be understood of his sneezing, snorting, pawing, and neighing, when his nostrils are broad, spread, and enlarged; and especially when enraged and in battle, when he foams and fumes, and his breath comes out of his nostrils like smoke ^{f1406}, and is very terrible.

Ver. 21. *He paweth in the valley*, etc.] Where armies are usually pitched and set in battle army, and especially the cavalry, for which the valley is most convenient; and here the horse is impatient of engaging, cannot stand still, but rises up with his fore feet and paws and prances, and, as the word signifies, digs the earth and makes it hollow, by a continual striking upon it; so generally horses are commonly described in this manner ^{f1407};

and rejoiceth in [his] strength; of which he is sensible, and glories in it; marches to the battle with pride and stateliness, defying, as it were, the enemy, and as if sure of victory, of which he has knowledge when obtained; for Lactantius says ^{f1408} of horses, when conquerors they exult, when conquered they grieve; it has its name in the Hebrew language from rejoicing ^{f1409};

he goeth on to meet the armed men; without any fear or dread of them, as follows.

Ver. 22. *He mocketh at fear, and is not affrighted*, etc.] At those things which cause fear and fright to men; as arms, though ever so terrible, and armies, though never so numerous;

neither turneth he back from the sword; the naked sword, when it is drawn against him, and ready to be thrust into him; the horse being so bold and courageous was with the Egyptians a symbol of courage and boldness ^{f1410}.

Ver. 23. *The quiver rattleth against him*, etc.] The quiver is what arrows are put into and carried in, and seems here to be put for arrows, which being shot by the enemy come whizzing about him, but do not intimidate him; unless this is to be understood of arrows rattling in the quiver when carried by the rider “upon him”, so some render the last word; and thus Homer ^{f1411} and Virgil ^{f1412} speak of the rattling quiver and sounding arrows in it, as carried on the back or shoulder; but the first sense seems best, in which another poet uses it ^{f1413};

the glittering spear and the shield; the lance or javelin, as Mr. Broughton renders it, and others; that is, he does not turn back from these, nor is he

frightened at them when they are pointed to him or flung at him; so Aelianus^{f1414} speaks of the Persians training their horses and getting them used to noises, that in battle they might not be frightened at the clashing of arms, of swords and shields against each other; in like manner as our war horses are trained, not to start at the firing of a gun, or the explosion of a cannon.

Ver. 24. *He swalloweth the ground with fierceness and rage*, etc.] Being so eager for the battle, and so full of fierceness and rage, he bounds the plain with such swiftness that he seems rather to swallow up the ground than to run upon it;

neither believeth he that [it is] the sound of the trumpet; for joy at hearing it; or he will not trust to his ears, but will see with his eyes whether the battle is ready, and therefore pushes forward. Mr. Broughton and others read it, “he will not stand still at the noise of the trumpet”; and the word signifies firm and stable, as well as to believe; when he hears the trumpet sound, the alarm of war, as a preparation for the battle, he knows not how to^{f1415} stand; there is scarce any holding him in, but he rushes into the battle at once, (²⁴⁸⁶Jeremiah 8:6).

Ver. 25. *He saith among the trumpets, ha, ha*, etc.] As pleased with the sound of them, rejoicing thereat, and which he signifies by neighing;

and he smelleth the battle afar off; which respects not so much the distance of place as of time; he perceives beforehand that it is near, by the preparations making for it, and particularly by what follows; so Pliny^{f1416} says of horses, they presage a fight. The thunder of the captains, and the shouting; they understand an engagement is just about to start by the loud and thundering voice of the captains, exhorting and spiralling up their men, and giving them the word of command; and by the clamorous shout of the soldiers echoing to the speech of their captains; and which are given forth upon an onset, both to animate one another, and intimidate the enemy. Bootius^{f1417} observes, that Virgil^{f1418} and Oppianus^{f1419} say most of the same things in praise of the horse which are here said, and seem to have taken them from hence; and some^{f1420} give the horse the preference to the lion, which, when it departs from a fight, never returns, whereas the horse will. This is an emblem both of good men, (³⁸⁰⁸Zechariah 10:3); and of bad men, (²⁴⁸⁶Jeremiah 8:6).

Ver. 26. *Doth the hawk fly by thy wisdom*, etc.] With so much swiftness, steadiness, and constancy, until she has seized her prey. The Vulgate Latin version and some others read, “does she become feathered”, or “begin to have feathers?” and so Bochart: either when first fledged; or when, as it is said ^{f1421} she casts her old feathers and gets new ones, and this every year. Now neither her flight nor her feathers, whether at one time or the other, are owing to men, but to the Lord, who gives both;

[and] stretch her wings towards the south? Being a bird of passage, she moves from colder climates towards the winter, and steers her course to the south towards warmer ones ^{f1422}; which she does by an instinct in nature, put into her by the Lord, and not through the instruction of man. Or, as some say, casting off her old feathers, she flies towards the south for warmth; and that her feathers may be cherished with the heat, and grow the sooner and better. Hence it is, perhaps, as Aelianus reports ^{f1423}, that this bird was by the Egyptians consecrated to Apollo or the sun; it being able to look upon the rays of it wistly, constantly, and easily, without being hurt thereby. Porphyry ^{f1424} says, that this bird is not only acceptable to the sun; but has divinity in it, according to the Egyptians; and is no other than Osiris, or the sun represented by the image of it ^{f1425}. Strabo ^{f1426} speaks of a city of the hawks, where this creature is worshipped. It has its name in Greek from the sacredness of it; and according to Hesiod ^{f1427}, is very swift, and has large wings. It is called *οκυπτερος*, swift in flying, by Manetho ^{f1428}; and by Homer, *οκιστος πετεηνων*, the swiftest of fowls ^{f1429}. It has its name from *ηχην*, to “fly”, as Kimchi observes ^{f1430}. Cyril of Jerusalem, on the authority of the Greek version, affirms ^{f1431}, that by a divine instinct or order, the hawk, stretching out its wings, stands in the midst of the air unmoved, looking towards the south. All accounts show it to be a bird that loves warmth, which is the reason of the expression in the text.

Ver. 27. *Doth the eagle mount up at thy command*, etc.] No; but by an instinct which God has placed in it, and a capacity he has given it above all other birds. They take a circuit in their flight, and bend about before they soar aloft: but the eagle steers its course directly upwards towards heaven, till out of sight; and, as Apuleius says ^{f1432}, up to the clouds, where it rains and snows, and beyond which there is no place for thunder and lightning;

and make her nest on high? so the philosopher says ^{f1433}; eagles make their nests not in plains, but in high places, especially in cragged rocks, as in (^{<18328>}Job 39:28).

Ver. 28. *She dwelleth and abideth on the rock, upon the crag of the rock, and the strong place.*] Where she and her young are safe: so Pliny^{f1434} says, eagles make their nests in rocks, even in the precipices of them, as the philosopher quoted in the preceding verse; and here on the tooth, edge, or precipice of the rock, which is inaccessible, and so like a strong fortified place.

Ver. 29. *From thence she seeketh the prey,* etc.] From the high rock; from whence she can look down into valleys, and even into the sea; and spy what is for her purpose, and descend and seize upon them; as lambs, fawns, geese, shellfish, etc. though they may lie in the most hidden and secret places. Wherefore in the original text it is, “she diggeth the prey or food”^{f1435}; as treasure hid in secret is dug or diligently searched for; and for which she is qualified by the sharpness of her sight, as follows:

[and] her eyes behold afar off; from the high rocks and higher clouds, even from the high sky, as Aelianus^{f1436} expresses it; and who observes that she is the most sharp sighted of all birds; and so, Homer^{f1437} says, some affirm.

Ver. 30. *Her young ones also suck up blood,* etc.] As well as herself, being brought up to it by her. The eagle cares not for water, but drinks the blood of her prey; and so her young ones after her, as naturalists report^{f1438}. And Aelianus says^{f1439} the same of the hawk, that it eats no seeds, but devours flesh and drinks blood, and nourishes her young ones with the same.

And where the slain are, there is she; where there has been a battle, and carcasses left on the field, the eagles will gather to them. This is particularly true of that kind of eagles called vulture eagles, as Aristotle^{f1440} and Pliny^{f1441} observe; (see ~~428~~ Matthew 24:28). Now since Job was so ignorant of the nature of these creatures, and incapable of governing and directing them; and what they had of any excellency were of God, and not of him, nor of any man; how unfit must he be to dispute with God, and contend with him about his works of providence? which to convince him of was the design of this discourse about the creatures; and which had its intended effect, as appears in the next chapter.