
L. Beards.

A

COMMENTARY

ON THE

B I B L E.

THE BOOK OF JOB.

GENERAL OBSERVATIONS.

IN my entrance upon every part of the Sacred Writings, I desire to keep constantly in view, the same solemn charge from the Lord as he delivered to Moses from the bush; and to take off the shoe, in token of profound humiliation, as one conscious that *the place where I tread is holy ground*. Lord! grant me every suited grace at all the steps I take, *that my feet may not slide*.

In opening this book of God, the Reader will, no doubt, be led to remark with me, how very different the stile of writing is, from any of the former scriptures we have hitherto noticed in this Commentary. It forms, indeed, a beautiful manner of conveying divine truths in the variety which the Holy Ghost hath been pleased to make use of upon this occasion; and serves to manifest the riches of his grace in this particular, that while the methods are various for carrying on his gracious design, all result from *one and the same Spirit, who divideth to every man severally as he will*.

Respecting the writer of the book of Job, various have been the opinions of studious men on this point. Some have ascribed it to *Job* himself: others have pronounced *Moses* to have been the writer of it. Some have thought that it was *Elihu*; and a few others have fancied it was *Isaiah*. But I should think the thing impossible, respecting the latter. The antiquity of the book of Job is unquestionable; for the very latest period could not bring it further down than to about 1540 years before the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ; and certain it is, that *Isaiah* lived not at a greater distance from that æra than 750 years. But I do not think it necessary to detain the Reader in this place with any further observations respecting the writer of the book of Job, or the period in which it was written. In the very opening of this Commen-

tary, I have (according to the best of my ability) stated the *order* in which the several books of the Bible, as appears to me, should be placed; to which therefore I refer.

I think it, however, more important to ascertain the reality of Job's character; as some have ventured to raise questions on this point, and have supposed that no such a person as Job ever lived. But that Job was a real person, and the writings which bear his name inspired, I venture to conclude, are both undeniably proved from other parts of the Bible. The apostle Paul makes a quotation from this book, and doth it in the same manner as is usually done, whenever one sacred writer borrows from another. *It is written*, saith the apostle; meaning in the word of God: see 1 Cor. iii. 19. And as to the existence of Job, the apostle James refers to him as an illustrious example of patience, which would have been absurd, upon the presumption that Job never had existed. James v. 11. Nay, God himself, by his servant the prophet Ezekiel, classes Job with two others of his faithful servants, which puts us beyond all doubt of the reality of his person. Ezek. xiv. 14, &c.

The great object intended by the Holy Ghost from this book in the church of God, as far as our discoveries have hitherto led, is, to manifest the sovereign grace and love of a faithful God to his exercised people, notwithstanding all the outward circumstances with which they are surrounded; and at the same time, to demonstrate, in the conduct of his afflicted ones, to what an extent of patience, and even joy, in trial, his grace can lead them. But, beside these general blessings, intended to be held forth to the church, there is a yet far more important purpose, to which the book of Job, and the character of Job, was intended to minister. I mean, in the beautiful representation he makes, as a type of the ever-blessed and adored Redeemer of the church, the Lord Jesus Christ. In the sufferings of Job, and his patience under them, as far as grace enabled him to be victorious in his sorrows, the representation of Jesus may be considered. And, after his recovery, when the Lord appointed Job as an advocate for his friends, we may behold some sweet resemblance to our Lord's exaltation at the right hand of power, and becoming the glorious Intercessor for his people. Here it is, therefore, I would pre-engage the Reader's more awakened attention, when prosecuting the perusal of the book of Job. For, supposing (what I venture to believe was the case) that the Holy Ghost, in his blessed office of glorifying Jesus, was pleased, at so early an age of the church, to sketch some outlines of the Redeemer in a typical representation; surely it is our interest, and our duty, to be on the look out for the sweet traces, that while our eyes behold, our hearts may be warmed in the gratifying discovery.

I think it only necessary to detain the Reader one moment further, to remind both myself and him, of the necessity of prayer, with suitable watching at the mercy-seat, that the minds of both may be

under the divine teaching, that the further we enter into the study of these treasures of heavenly truth, our souls may be made more and more heavenly-minded from their blessed influence; and from breathing an atmosphere above the perishing things around us here below, we may, like the apostle, manifest the gracious effects these divine things, which are above, leave upon us, *in having our conversation more in heaven, from whence we look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ.* Amen.

CHAP. I

CONTENTS.

The Book opens with an account of Job, his piety, riches, integrity, and religious care of his children. Next follows, an account of Satan's malice against Job, and his permission to tempt him. The Chapter closes with the melancholy relation of the death of his children, and the calmness of mind Job manifested under these afflictions.

THERE was a man in the land of Uz, whose name was Job; and that man was perfect and upright, and one that feared God, and eschewed evil.

The name of *Job* carries with it somewhat of signification, for, according to some writers, it is derived from an Hebrew root, implying *love*. And, no doubt, the character of Job made him eminently so. If the Reader be not much acquainted with the scripture relation of places, it may not be amiss to tell him, that *Uz* was situated to the East of *Chaldea*; and though it probably was not the same with *Ur* of the Chaldees, from whence Abram was called, yet it could not be far from it. So that, in the very opening of the book of Job, a sweet thought ariseth, both from his name, and the place of his birth; namely, in the gift of the Gentile church to the Lord Jesus by the Father, from the earliest ages souls were to be gathered from the heathen world, to form a numerous train in the throng of the redeemed. Psm. ii. 8. Isa. xlix. 6: By the expression of *perfect and upright*, is not meant sinless perfection, but a general sincerity of conduct.

2 And there were born unto him seven sons and three daughters.

3 His substance also was seven thousand sheep, and three thousand camels, and five hundred yoke of oxen, and five hundred she assess, and a very great household; so that this man was the greatest of all the men of the east.

Here follows an account of the blessings of the Lord upon Job: so that what with his children, substance, and servants, Job classed very high indeed. The introduction of this man's history in this manner is beautifully chosen, in order to prepare the mind for the several most interesting pages in his life, which are to follow.

4 And his sons went and feasted *in their* houses, every one his day; and sent and called for their three sisters to eat and to drink with them.

Though I am very ready to allow, that in those feasts of Job's children, there are certain amiable qualities worth remarking; such as the love which, as brethren, they lived in together, their affection for their sisters also, and their societies in their own houses, far preferable to public-houses, and the taverns of modern times, wherein the carnal indulge too often their lusts and pleasures; yet Job's children would have been more like their father, had they feasted less, and given more. Oh! thou heavenly Samaritan! what a feast would that be, if followed up by our great ones; and what a very different world would it make the present, from what it now is, if, when *they made a feast, they called in the poor, and the maimed, and the halt, and the blind.* The imagination is not competent to form the full blessedness of such a mind, who would thus spread the Lord's bounties for the Lord's poor; and while the table was surrounded with such guests, and the hungry bellies of the perishing supplied, the generous lord of the feast seasoned his entertainment for the body, with sweet and gracious discourse for the soul. Such was thy feast, dearest Jesus! and I hope there are still some of thine, following thy example. Luke xiv. 13. and xv. 2.

5 And it was so, when the days of *their* feasting were gone about, that Job sent and sanctified them, and rose up early in the morning, and offered burnt offerings *according* to the number of them all: for Job said, It may be that my sons have sinned, and cursed God in their hearts. Thus did Job continually.

How truly amiable doth Job appear in this short, but most interesting account of him. Observe the piety manifested towards God in this religious act. And observe the tenderness of affection manifested towards his children. Parents cannot command grace for their children: but gracious parents will pray for ungracious children. And observe that this was a *daily* act of Job's. He presented them thus continually before the Lord. And observe, moreover, that the burnt offerings he presented for them had an eye to every one of them, according to the number of them all. Oh! ye parents of ungodly children, how are ye here taught to make personal and particular supplication before the mercys-seat daily, hourly, that each child may have a separate remembrance at the throne; that, like another Hannah, at a future day, when a gracious God hath heard and answered prayer, ye might be able to say, it was for this child I prayed, and the Lord hath given me my petition. 1 Sam. i. 27. But, Reader, when you have paid due attention to this lovely part of Job's character, as the pious man and the tender father, I pray you to look at him in a still more exalted view, as a true believer in Christ Jesus. For, surely, Job's sacrifices were all with an eye to Jesus. Nay, doth not the Holy Ghost intend to represent Job himself as a type of the ever blessed

Jesus, who thus acted as a Priest in his family, and presented them all with sacrifice? Oh! how blessed it is thus to trace thee, thou glorious great High Priest, typified and shadowed forth in those early ages of the world.

6 ¶ Now there was a day when the sons of God came to present themselves before the LORD, and Satan came also among them.

I cannot detain the Reader of this humble *Commentary* with a large and circumstantial account of what the scripture relates concerning the great enemy of souls, neither of the work and agency of the devil, as there set forth in his devices for the destruction of men. I take for granted that my Reader is too well established by grace, in the perfect conviction both of the reality of his person, and of the malice of his designs, to need any observation on these points. That he hath, from the first seduction of Adam in the garden to the present hour, had access to the hearts of men, is a truth too sad to be thought on, but with sorrow; and too true, but to be lamented with tears. It is his devilish work and delight to seduce sinners to their ruin. He filled the heart of Judas to betray Christ, and of Ananias to lie unto the Holy Ghost; and to lead poor sinners captive at his will. 2 Tim. ii. 26. Acts v. 3. No doubt as he is a vanquished foe, all that he is permitted to exercise upon the minds of God's people, as in the case of Job, is only to afford thereby a larger opportunity for the manifestation of God's sovereign grace, Jesus's victory, and his peoples' happiness.

7 And the LORD said unto Satan, Whence comest thou? Then Satan answered the LORD, and said, From going to and fro in the earth, and from walking up and down in it.

8 And the LORD said unto Satan, Hast thou considered my servant Job, that *there is* none like him in the earth, a perfect and an upright man, one that feareth God, and escheweth evil?

9 Then Satan answered the LORD, and said, Doth Job fear God for nought?

10 Hast not thou made an hedge about him, and about his house, and about all that he hath on every side? thou hast blessed the work of his hands, and his substance is increased in thee land.

11 But put forth thine hand now, and touch all that he hath, and he will curse thee to thy face.

12 And the LORD said unto Satan, Behold, all that he hath *is* in thy power; only upon himself

put not forth thine hand. So Satan went forth from the presence of the Lord.

The best light upon this scripture may be taken from other scriptures. And, indeed, we are so commanded to explain them *comparing spiritual things with spiritual*, 1 Cor. ii. 13. Zechariah was commissioned to relate to the church the particulars of a vision, in which he beheld Satan confronting Joshua the high priest before the Lord. Zech. iii. 1, 2. And John had another commission to deliver to the church, in the close of the canon of scripture, where the final ruin of the arch fiend was celebrated in heaven by the song of the redeemed, in which particular mention was made, that the victory over hell was wholly obtained by the blood of the Lamb. Rev. xii. 9—11. But what I particularly request the Reader to remark in the perusal of those verses, of the conference between the Lord and Satan concerning Job, as we may gather from the sequel of Job's life, is this, that the permission the Lord gave to Satan was only for the exercise of Job's faith and patience, the ruin of Satan, and the glory of God. This is the improvement the apostle James had it in commission to make of it to the church: *Ye have seen the end of the Lord, (said he) that the Lord is very pitiful and of tender mercy.* James v. 11. But, Reader, you will not need, I hope, from me, the smallest hint, while observing this exposure of Job, by divine appointment, to the malice of the devil, to have your mind led to an infinitely higher instance. Surely, it is hardly possible for a believer in Jesus not to recollect the situation of our dear Redeemer, who no sooner was filled with the Holy Ghost but was purposely led up of the Spirit into the wilderness, to be tempted of the devil. Oh! thou Holy One of God! how do all examples of suffering patience sink to nothing, in comparison of thine. Precious Jesus, suffer me never to lose sight both of thy temptations and the cause of them. Yes! thou dearest Lord, it did indeed behove thee to be made like unto thy brethren, that thou mightest be a merciful and faithful High Priest in things pertaining to God, to make reconciliation for the sins of the people: for in that thou thyself hast suffered, being tempted, thou art able to succour them that are tempted. Heb. ii. 17, 18.

13 And there was a day when his sons and his daughters *were* eating and drinking wine in their eldest brother's house.

14 And there came a messenger unto Job, and said, The oxen were plowing, and the asses feeding beside them:

15 And the Sabeans fell *upon them*, and took them away; yea, they have slain the servants with the edge of the sword; and I only have escaped alone to tell thee.

16 While he *was* yet speaking, there came also another, and said, The fire of God is fallen from

heaven, and hath burned up the sheep, and the servants, and consumed them; and I only am escaped alone to tell thee.

17 While he *was* yet speaking, there came also another, and said, The Chaldeans made out three bands, and fell upon the camels, and have carried them away, yea, and slain the servants with the edge of the sword; and I only am escaped alone to tell thee.

18 While he *was* yet speaking, there came also another, and said, Thy sons and thy daughters *were* eating and drinking wine in their eldest brother's house:

19 And, behold, there came a great wind from the wilderness, and smote the four corners of the house, and it fell upon the young men, and they are dead; and I only am escaped alone to tell thee.

Here begin the trials and temptations of Job. And observe how by a climax from smaller to greater, they arise, step by step, to a finished point of the most distressing circumstances. First, the slaughter of his servants, next the loss of his cattle, then the capture of his substance, and the death of his people; and, lastly, the total destruction of his family, in the death of all his children. Here we behold the poor man bowed down under the pressure of the affliction. And to aggravate all, Satan tempting him to horrid rebellion against God. Reader! do not fail to discover the hand of God upholding his servant under all these trials; for, otherwise, it would have been totally impossible for the vessel of flesh and blood to have rid the storm. Mark it down, I beseech you, as a truth perfectly unquestionable, that according to the nature and degree of the strength imparted, the faith of God's tried ones will be great or small. Let the trial be ever so great, ever so heavy, yet, if the eternal God be our refuge, and underneath are the everlasting arms, the believer is made more than conqueror, through his grace supporting us. But if the arm of God's power be withdrawn, the strongest believer falls with the removal. How precious Jesus is seen in his unequalled conflicts, with the powers of darkness! Luke xxii. 39—53.

20 Then Job arose, and rent his mantle, and shaved his head, and fell down upon the ground, and worshipped,

21 And said, Naked came I out of my mother's womb, and naked shall I return thither: the

LORD gave, and the **LORD** hath taken away; blessed be the name of the **LORD**.

Job's renting his mantle and shaving his head, were becoming signs that he was humbled, under the reverse of circumstances come upon him. And his worshipping God upon the ground, a like token that he viewed the Lord's hand in the affliction. Nature gives vent to the bursting within, with those signs of real grief. No doubt the agony of his soul was beheld in his looks. And indeed had he not felt, it would have argued a hard insensible heart. Jesus himself grieved at the tomb of Lazarus. John xi. 35. But while nature wept, grace triumphed. What, but grace indeed, could have induced the sentiment, which Job here uttered? Whether God gave blessings, or recalled them when he had given them, still his love was the same, and Job could and did bless him. Reader! look within. Have your lesser trials this blessed effect? Do you eye Jesus in all? Do you justify him in all? Do you approve of him in all? Do you cleave to him in all? Oh! how sweet is it, to have Job's grace under Job's exercises; and when the providences of the Lord frown, still to rest upon the love that is in the Lord's heart. Though he slay me (said Job), yet will I trust in him. Job xiii. 15.

22 In all this Job sinned not, nor charged God foolishly.

See what a seal God the Holy Ghost hath put to the faith of Job. Oh! who would not with Job rejoice in tribulations, if the issue of every trial had this blessed earnest of the Spirit?

REFLECTIONS.

BEHOLD, Reader! what a reverse of circumstances the relation of one short period, in the life of Job, hath produced! how quick the transition from the house of feasting, to the house of mourning. And what, but a well-grounded interest in Jesus, can prepare the heart for such changes, which an hour may induce? Depend upon it, faith in Jesus is the only adequate resource under every situation of trial. For this cause (saith Paul) we faint not. This is the cause and the only cause. While we look not at the things which are seen, but the things which are not seen. As long as we eye Jesus directing all things, ordering all things, and directing and ordering them for our sure welfare; while this is beheld, and believed, and depended upon, the soul will never faint. Then the whole world of losses, and bereaving providences, are still seen by the believer, as working out some certain, however at present it may be an hidden, good. The humble follower of Jesus like Job, will then be able to bless a taking God, as well as a giving God. The Lord hath only recalled what was lent - it was his own while given: it was still his whenever he pleased to take it away. And convinced at the same time, that the Lord's love is not lessened, the soul can and will rejoice, under the heaviest afflictions. And Reader! mark this down as exemplified in Job's instance, and as it is equally so in the instance of all the Lord's people. Whatever the Lord recalls, he never can or will take away his Christ. This once given is given for ever. The charter

of grace so runs, that his righteousness shall be for ever, and his salvation that which shall not be abolished. Here Job found an hiding place from the storm. And here every faithful soul, may take confidence also.

While I pray God the Holy Ghost to impress upon the mind, both of the Writer and Reader, these and all other suitable reflections of a practical nature, which arise out of the view of Job's strong faith, and confidence in Jesus; I wish, if possible, yet more particularly to interest the Reader's attention with my own, in the view of Jesus in his High Priest's office, in the presentation of himself for his people, which Job so sweetly typified, when sanctifying his children and household, in the daily burnt-offerings. Who but God himself, could have brought this man of Uz, acquainted with the knowledge of sacrifices? And what but divine teaching could have led the patriarch to the belief, that there was efficacy in them, when offered with an eye to Jesus? Oh! for the lively actings of faith, upon the person, work, and salvation of the Lord Jesus, when we behold the grand sacrifice, thus uniformly shadowed forth through so many generations! Dearest Jesus! give me to rest with full confidence on thee, and thy finished redemption, and most cordially and heartily to believe the record, which God hath given of his dear Son. May it be my earnest desire to have my own soul, and all my household sanctified, with the precious offering of thy body once for all, by which thou hast for ever perfected redemption; and hast fully manifested, that thou art *the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world.*

CHAP. II.

CONTENTS.

In the former Chapter we find Satan tempting Job, in some very heavy and trying afflictions of Job's family and circumstances; and Job triumphant. In this Chapter we have the adversary making a further attack, in his violent assault upon Job's person. To add to the poor man's affliction, his wife joins in persuading him to sin. He reproves his wife and is visited by his friends.

A GAIN there was a day when the sons of God came to present themselves before the LORD, and Satan came also among them to present himself before the LORD.

In the opening of this Chapter I cannot forbear calling upon the Reader to remark with me some sweet and precious instructions, which the Holy Ghost hath thought proper to give the church, concerning Satan and his devices, for which we never can be sufficiently thankful to that blessed Spirit. Paul tells the church that *we are not ignorant of his devices.* 2 Cor. ii. And blessed be God the Holy Ghost who hath taught us by his servant the prophet Zechariah, we have a plain representation made of the arch fiend, standing before our God to resist God's people. But to comfort the minds of God's accused ones, the same prophet was made to behold also the Lord Jesus Christ, no less present to confront the accuser, as our glorious all-prevailing advocate. I would have the

Reader, before he enters further in this Chapter, turn again to the passage referred to in the former Chapter. Zech. iii. 1—5. It forms the highest relief to the mind, the recollection of this precious office of our adorable Lord, amidst the unknown accusations of our spiritual foe, which may daily be going on against the redeemed of the Lord! John ii. 1.

2 And the LORD said unto Satan, From whence comest thou? and Satan answered the LORD, and said, From going to and fro in the earth, and from walking up and down in it.

3 And the LORD said unto Satan, Hast thou considered my servant Job, that *there is* none like him in the earth, a perfect and an upright man, one that feareth God, and escheweth evil? and still he holdeth fast his integrity, although thou movedst me against him, to destroy him without cause.

4 And Satan answered the LORD, and said, Skin for skin, yea, all that a man hath will he give for his life.

5 But put forth thine hand now, and touch his bone and his flesh, and he will curse thee to thy face.

6 And the LORD said unto Satan, Behold, he is in thine hand; but save his life.

After premising what was observed under the former verse, in the opening of this Chapter, and above all things for the consolation of every poor, tempted follower of the Lord Jesus, having endeavoured to direct the mind under Satan's temptations, to the person and office-work of the Lord Jesus, as our almighty Advocate constantly rebuking Satan; I would now in the next place, for the Reader's spiritual improvement of this precious history, beg of him to attend to those most interesting circumstances, which belongs to Job's history under those unparalleled trials. Beside the private subject of the whole of Job's temptations, considered as a believer; we must yet more eminently regard him, as a type of the ever blessed Jesus. And in this light it is a delightful subject indeed. The victory and total destruction, which the Lord Jesus Christ hath accomplished upon Satan on our behalf, is one of the grand parts of the gospel. *For this cause* (John tells us) *the Son of God was manifested, that he might destroy the works of the devil.* 1 John iii. 8. The original hatred of Satan, began personally against the Lord Jesus, and against us as his people. This we learn from what Christ himself saith, that Satan's kingdom he came to destroy. So that in the afflictions of Job, we discover Satan bruising Christ's heel: and as such Job typified the Redeemer. And nothing can be more sweet and consolatory; because we thereby discover that the great concern of Jesus,

and his interest, lay in the destruction of Satan. And the permission that these triumphs of the Lord Jesus, before his own coming in our flesh, to accomplish the victory should be shadowed forth in the exercises of his people, serves not only to shew its vast importance, but also our personal interest in them. That sweet scripture of Paul to the Colossians, beautifully sets it forth, wherein the apostle saith, speaking of Jesus; that *having spoiled principalities and powers, he made a shew of them openly, triumphing over them in it.* Coloss. ii. 15.

7 ¶ So went Satan forth from the presence of the LORD, and smote Job with sore boils from the sole of his foot unto his crown.

8 And he took him a potsherd to scrape himself withal; and he sat down among the ashes.

Every thing tended to aggravate Job's affliction, because added to the sores of the body, no doubt the enemy made the most furious attack upon his soul. But here what a type was Job of his Redeemer; who in his unequalled seasons of temptation was at once oppressed with hunger, and driven out from men into the wilderness, the haunts of wild beasts, that the attack of the enemy might be the more powerful?

9 ¶ Then said his wife unto him, Dost thou still retain thine integrity? curse God, and die.

10 But he said unto her, Thou speakest as one of the foolish women speaketh. What? shall we receive good at the hand of God, and shall we not receive evil? In all this did not Job sin with his lips?

The temptation is carried up to the highest point of provocation, when the wife of his bosom thus becomes the abettor of the enemy. The Reader will recollect how the adversary adopted the same plan, in the instance of Jesus, when Peter would have prompted Christ to avoid suffering. That Satan had a hand in this is most evident, from what the Lord Jesus said to him; *Get thee behind me, Satan; thou art an offence unto me.* Matt. xvi. 23. Reader! mark those traits of character in Satan's temptations, and be led therefrom to suspect those yet with more jealousy, which come from a quarter least expected. What a blessed account the Holy Ghost gives of the issue of Job's trials. In all this, did not Job sin with his lips. Oh! how truly blessed is it to be kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation.

11 Now when Job's three friends heard of all this evil that was come upon him, they came every one from his own place; Eliphaz the Temanite, and Bildad the Shuhite, and Zopher the Naamathite: for they had made an appointment together to come to mourn with him and to comfort him.

There is somewhat very interesting in this account. The uncommonly heavy afflictions of Job, had called forth, not only the pity and compassion of those men, but also their desires to the attempt of saying, or doing, what they could to alleviate his sorrows. It is a gospel precept, *to mourn with them that mourn*. And among gracious minds the Lord sometimes, and not unfrequently, affords a mutual holy joy in our visits of love, not only to those we go to comfort, but to ourselves also. It is a profitable service to visit gracious souls in their affliction, especially if we pray the Lord Jesus to go with us, and be of the party. *Better to go.* (saith Solomon) *to the house of mourning than the house of feasting.* Eccles. vii. 2.

12 And when they up lifted their eyes afar off and knew him not, they lifted up their voice, and wept; and they rent every one his mantle, and sprinkled dust upon their heads toward heaven.

What a finished picture of human misery is here drawn! when our Lord Jesus Christ was in his agony in the garden, and in that tremendous hour, which he called himself, *the hour of the power of darkness*, all human aid or consolation was taken from him; for he was withdrawn from his poor sleeping disciples, *about a stone's cast*. And in a cold night, as we are told it was so cold indeed, as to render it necessary for a fire of coals to be made in the High Priest's palace to warm the servants, Jesus's agony was so great, that he sweat great clods of blood. Oh! thou precious bleeding Lamb of God!

13 So they sat down with him upon the ground seven days and seven nights, and none spake a word unto him; for they saw that *his* grief was very great.

I venture to suppose that this seventh day here spoken of, in which it should seem an interruption was given to the long silence, was in respect to the sabbath day, which those three men no doubt revered, as they sprung from a stock which could not be ignorant of the sabbath. *Eli-phaz* being a *Timanite*, sprung from one of the descendants of *Esau*. And it is probable, that the other two were nearly of the same race, or in alliance with it. See Gen. xxxvi. 10, 11.

REFLECTIONS.

READER! I would call you, and myself at the same time, in our improvement of what is here related, to a subject which the Holy Ghost graciously intended to be gathered out of it, as well as from the whole tenor of scripture, on the same interesting point. If Job's sufferings were typical of Jesus, and we are commanded to take the example of those, who have spoken to us in the name of the Lord, for our encouragement of suffering affliction, and of patience; well may we look at such of them, as are intended to hold forth to us the outlines of him, who in his victory and triumph over Satan, wrought our deliverance in that accomplishment, and hath conquered both hell and destruction, for the salvation of his people.

Behold then, Reader, the victory of the Lord Jesus bruising the serpent's head, and subduing his kingdom both for his people, and in his people, by his glorious redemption. The original ground of the quarrel against our poor nature, began with our glorious head. Hence Jesus undertook to conquer Satan *for* us, and drive him out of the kingdom of our hearts where he had taken possession, by conquering him *in* us. The apostle saith, that forasmuch as the children were partakers of flesh and blood, he himself likewise took part of the same, that through death he might destroy him that had the power of death, that is the devil; and deliver them who through fear of death, were all their life time subject to bondage. Hence Jesus triumphed over Satan at his death on the cross, when the Redeemer's heel was bruised. And the Son of God prosecutes his victory, by converting us his people from the error of our ways, and which is called in scripture, *delivering us out of the kingdom of darkness, into the kingdom of God's dear Son*. And what is yet more, by the grace of his Spirit implanted in our hearts, he gives wisdom as in the case of Job, to escape from Satan's wiles. Thus we overcome by the blood of the Lamb, and are made more than conquerors through his grace helping us. And by and by that blessed promise will be completely fulfilled, when in death, by the faith of Christ, the *God of peace shall have bruised Satan under our feet shortly*.

Hail! then, thou glorious almighty Conqueror, thou Lord Jesus Christ! thou hast indeed spoiled principalities and powers; thou hast led captivity captive, and received gifts for men; thou hast taken the prey from the mighty, and even the lawful captive delivered! Thou hast beheld Satan, as lightning, fall from heaven; and, blessed be thy name, thou hast given unto thy people, thy redeemed, power to tread on serpents and scorpions, and over all the power of the enemy. Oh! precious, precious Jesus! give all thy children grace, that *as their day is their strength may be*; and to all thy redeemed ones, who are still exercised, as Job was, by reason of the devil's hatred, with trials and temptations, manifest in all our remaining skirmishes with the accursed foe, that *greater is He that is in us, than all that are against us*. God is faithful, who will not suffer us to be tempted above what we are able, but with every temptation will make a way to escape, that we may be able to bear it. Amen.

CHAP. III.

CONTENTS.

We have in this chapter, the complaints of Job. The whole, from beginning to end, is an unceasing lamentation. The afflicted mourner dwells much upon the miseries of life, and the happiness of death.

AFTER this opened Job his mouth, and cursed his day.

2 And Job spake, and said,

3 Let the day perish wherein I was born, and the night *in which* it was said, There is a man child conceived.

4 Let that day be darkness; let not God regard it from above, neither let the light shine upon it.

5 Let darkness and the shadow of death stain it; let a cloud dwell upon it; let the blackness of the day terrify it.

6 *As for* that night, let darkness seize upon it; let it not be joined unto the days of the year, let it not come into the number of the months.

7 Lo, let that night be solitary, let no joyful voice come therein.

It is worthy our closest observation in this account of Job, (and indeed it is one of the most important considerations in his history) that in the example of great and good men, the Holy Ghost hath been pleased to open to the view of the church, their frailties and imperfections also. While we are called upon to behold the patience of Job, James v. 11. we are to be taught, no less, that he was a man of like passions with ourselves. So in the examples of David, Peter, and others. Jeremiah acted as Job did under his affliction: Jerem. xx. 14—18. What Job hath said of the day of a man's birth, indeed, as it concerns our being born in sin, is true enough. And in this spiritual sense, the day of our death, when we die to sin, and are new born unto a life of righteousness in Jesus, by the quickening of the Spirit, is, as the wise man observes, far better. Eccles. vii. 1. But, otherwise, a child of God, under the heaviest affliction, hath a consolation in Jesus, to sweeten all. Reader! if the Lord, in infinite mercy, hath given you and me a new life, what blessings may we trace, both in our old creation, and in our new? Many a poor sinner hath been tempted to curse the day of his birth in nature. Oh! how may you and I bless the day of our new birth in grace!

8 Let them curse it that curse the day, who are ready to raise up their mourning.

9 Let the stars of the twilight thereof be dark; let it look for light but *have* none; neither let it see the dawning of the day:

10 Because it shut not up the doors of my *mother's* womb, nor hid sorrow from mine eyes.

11 Why died I not from the womb? *why* did I not give up the ghost when I came out of the belly?

12 Why did the knees prevent me? or why the breasts that I should suck?

13 ¶ For now should I have lien still and

been quiet, I should have slept: then had I been at rest,

14 With kings and counsellors of the earth, which built desolate places for themselves;

15 Or with princes that had gold, who filled their houses with silver.

16 Or as an hidden untimely birth I had not been; as infants *which* never saw light.

17 There the wicked cease *from* troubling; and there the weary be at rest.

18 *There* the prisoners rest together; they hear not the voice of the oppressor.

19 The small and great are there; and the servant *is* free from his master.

I saw no reason to interrupt the progress of those verses, but wished them, as they are not divided in the Bible, not to be considered separately in the Commentary. The language is most pathetically chosen to convey the sorrows of an afflicted mind: but the fineness of the imagery cannot veil the anguish of the spirit with which they are delivered. What Job saith of the grave, if dying in Jesus, is true indeed, and most blessed. But, out of Christ, an untimely birth, as infants which never saw the light, must be preferable.

20 Wherefore is light given to him that is in misery, and life unto the bitter *in* soul;

21 Which long for death, but it *cometh* not; and dig for it more than for hid treasures;

22 Which rejoice exceedingly, *and* are glad, when they can find the grave?

23 *Why is light given* to a man whose way is hid, and whom God hath hedged in?

24 For my sighing cometh before I eat, and my roarings are poured out like the waters.

25 For the thing which I greatly feared is come upon me, and that which I was afraid of is come unto me.

26 I was not in safety, neither had I rest, neither was I quiet; yet trouble came.

These questions and conclusions, if dictated by the Spirit of grace, would have gone much further to have softened the sorrows of the man of Uz, in looking to the Lord, than all the vehement expressions we read before. But alas! a mind under the impulse of temptation makes sad

work of it, and, like Jonah, if the gentle and tender expostulation of God puts the enquiry, *Dost thou well to be angry?* for the moment, will boldly and impudently say, as he did, *I do well to be angry, even unto death.* Jonah iv. 9. But did Jonah think so when the boiling anger of the moment was over, Jonah, chapter ii? Did Job think so when he prayed, Job xlii. 5, 6?

REFLECTIONS.

PONDER, my soul, over this view of Job; and behold in him, whose patience is so highly testified of by the Holy Ghost, what man is in his highest attainments. Oh! precious Jesus! lamb of God, where shall I look for excellence, but in thee! Remark, further, my soul, in this complaint of Job, still the grace of God restraining the devil's power. Though Job was provoked by the adversary to curse the day of his birth, we do not hear a word of his cursing God. Whereas the accusation of Satan was, that if the Lord touched all he had, Job would curse God to his face. Do not, my soul, neither let the Reader, overlook this. The reason for which the Lord permitted Satan to exercise his servant so greatly, was not for the discovery, whether Job was a man subject to the same sins and infirmities as others of the fallen race of Adam; but Satan had accused Job of hypocrisy, and that he had no real love of God in his heart: here therefore was the issue of trial. Will Job, under these dreadful trials, abjure God? Will he give up his God? No! Though he laments himself, and laments his state, yet not a word against the Lord. Here let my soul look to Jesus, who in his unequalled sufferings, though for the while deserted of his Father, that his people might not be deserted for ever, never lost sight of his dependance upon him, when he uttered that dolorous cry; *My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me!* Lastly, from the representation made in this chapter, let both Reader and Writer learn, if Job's sufferings were so great as to induce him to lament the day of his birth, even while grace within restrained the power of the enemy; what must be the horrors of that place where no grace is felt, and where *the worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched.* Oh! precious Jesus! what everlasting praise must be due to thee, what love ought thy redeemed to feel in the contemplation, that *thou hast delivered us from the wrath to come,* when thou didst give thy soul an offering for sin, and didst die, *the Just for the unjust, to bring us to God.* Blessed be the day of every sinner's new birth in thee! And blessed be God for Jesus Christ!

CHAP. IV.

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This chapter opens with the controversy between Job and his friends, which runs through the whole book, until, at the close of it, God settles the dispute. Eliphaz begins, and his expostulation with Job is pursued through all this chapter.

THEN Eliphaz the Temanite answered and said,

This *Eliphaz* was of *Teman*, the seed of *Esau*. Let the Reader remark this in the opening of the controversy, it will throw some light upon the subject. We find the enemy, Satan, had given over. His charge Job had refuted. Satan had said Job would prove himself a hypocrite, by cursing God. This had proved a lie. Now *Eliphaz* comes forward to the charge.

2 *If we assay to commune with thee, wilt thou be grieved? but who can withhold himself from speaking?*

3 Behold; thou hast instructed many, and thou hast strengthened the weak hands.

4 Thy words have upholden him that was falling, and thou hast strengthened the feeble knees.

Observe how he compliments Job on his past services in the cause of God and charity. But, from what follows, it is plain he meant not to applaud the man of Uz in those services, but only therefrom the more fully to shew, as he thought, that it was all done from ostentation and hypocrisy.

5 But now it is come upon thee, and thou faintest; it toucheth thee, and thou art troubled.

6 *Is not this thy fear, thy confidence, thy hope, and the uprightness of thy ways?*

It is remarkable that *Eliphaz* maketh use of the same word as Satan did; *Put forth thine hand*, said Satan to God, *and touch all that he hath, and he will curse thee to thy face*; chap. i. 11. So again, chap. ii. 5. And here *Eliphaz* talks of Job being touched, and now he shews what he is. The whole of *Eliphaz's* charge is directed, not to comfort the mourner, not to assuage his afflictions, not to console his mind under the pleasing hope, that though outward tribulations were great and heavy upon him, yet the Lord was his friend: But the whole tendency of this man's speech, in those verses, is directed to prove that Job's iniquity was found out, and that his hypocrisy was discovered. Reader! observe these things, and then look at Job. The greatest affliction a child of God can feel from the taunts of his enemies, is certainly that which would tempt him to suspect the Lord had forsaken him. David gives an instance of this, when, in the case of his flight from Absalom, *Shimei* came forth to curse him: the curses of *Shimei* he could bear, for he saw the Lord's hand in this trial. But when the taunt was from many, that there was no help for him in his God, then the cup of his sorrow run over. As if he had said, Lord! if it were so, I should be ruined indeed: But no; in the midst of all, *thou, O Lord, art a shield for me, my glory, and the lifter-up of my head*: see 2 Sam. xvi. 5—8. See also Psm. iii. both the title and the whole of the Psalm. But when the Reader hath paid all due attention to this interesting subject, as it relates to Job, and David, and the faithful in all ages, I beg of him not to overlook Him who, in his ascent to the same hill as David trod, the Mount of Olives, was as-

saulted by the powers of darkness, and tempted by the enemy to the same distrust. Oh! precious Jesus! how faded, and shrunk away into nothing, do appear the trials and afflictions of the best of thy servants, in their hours of sorrow, when thy unequalled agonies in temptation are brought forward to view? Luke xxii. 39—44. Reader! I beseech you, turn to this interesting passage.

7 ¶ Remember, I pray thee, who *ever* perished, being innocent? or where were the righteous cut off?

8 Even as I have seen, they that plow iniquity, and sow wickedness, reap the same.

9 By the blast of God they perish, and by the breath of his nostrils are they consumed.

10 The roaring of the lion, and the voice of the fierce lion, and the teeth of the young lions, are broken.

11 The old lion perisheth for lack of prey, and the stout lion's whelps are scattered abroad.

This reasoning of Eliphaz was false and ill-grounded. Many an innocent person, as Eliphaz could not but well know, had perished. The murder of Abel, by Cain, led the van; and the history of the world furnished out continual examples. Indeed it was this very circumstance which gave even the heathens themselves cause to argue, that there must be another world for rewarding the good, and punishing the bad. So that Eliphaz brought forward an argument here to distress Job, that he himself ought to have known the falseness of. Poor Job! how sharp were his exercises, when though Satan had seemingly withdrawn, yet truly not so, but to attack him with other weapons.

12 ¶ Now a thing was secretly brought to me, and mine ear received a little thereof.

13 In thoughts from the visions of the night, when deep sleep falleth on men.

14 Fear came upon me, and trembling, which made all my bones to shake.

15 Then a spirit passed before my face; the hair of my flesh stood up:

16 It stood still, but I could not discern the form thereof: an image *was* before mine eyes, *there was* silence, and I heard a voice, *saying*,

17 Shall mortal man be more just than God? shall a man be more pure than his Maker?

18 Behold, he put no trust in his servants; and his angels he charged with folly :

19 How much less *in* them that dwell in houses of clay, whose foundation *is* in the dust, *which* are crushed before the moth ?

20 They are destroyed from morning to evening : they perish for ever without any regarding *it*.

21 Doth not their excellency *which is* in them go away ? they die, even without wisdom.

It is probable that, as in those early ages, we know the Lord did, by means of visions and dreams, convey divine truths to the minds of his people, that Eliphaz had been thus made acquainted concerning the solemn distinction here set forth between the holiness and purity of God, and the holiness and purity of all created excellence. And, as far as these things might be made useful to impress on Job's mind a sense of his creatureship state and uncleanness, the vision of Eliphaz was striking and proper. But if he introduced it here by way of calling in the divine authority to enforce what he had said before, in proof of Job's hypocrisy, it was ill judged and deceitful, as the sequel of Job's history, in God's justification of him, manifested. But for the moment, leaving both the history of Job, and the exercise of his mind by Eliphaz, I would beg the Reader's attention to a sweet thought arising out of what this *Temanite* hath said. He tells us, that in this vision he heard a voice proclaiming that God puts no trust in his servants, and his angels he charged with folly. Think, Reader ! how pure and holy was Jesus in his great undertaking for poor sinners, when, though angels are charged with folly, a voice from heaven declared Jesus to be God's only begotten Son, in whom he was, and is, well pleased. And, remember, in this proclamation from heaven, concerning the good pleasure of Jehovah, in the perfection and holiness of Jesus, it was that holiness which belonged to Jesus as Redeemer and Mediator; that perfection of the work which the Father gave him to do, and by which, both in doing, and in dying, he hath wrought out a complete salvation. Let me only add one thought more on this most precious of all subjects. As Jesus was thus beheld, and thus proclaimed as the glorious Head of his people, so are his people beheld in him: if Jesus was made *sin for us, when he knew no sin*, it was that *his people, who knew no righteousness, might be made the righteousness of God in him.* 2 Cor. v. 21.

R E F L E C T I O N S.

MY soul! here are some very sweet instructions to be gathered from this chapter. In whatever light Eliphaz, the *Temanite*, be considered, still the Holy Ghost can and will make his conduct minister to the glory of God, and the good of God's children. His observations, in several parts, plainly teach God's people, whose remains of indwelling corruption are too apt to break out in murmuring under their afflictions, that there is no case, nor situation, in which a child of God can be placed, that for a moment can admit of dissatisfaction. But his observations no less teach

at the same time, even in this point of view, that godly men make too light of God's afflictions, when they add to the smart, by giving unseasonable addition to the afflicted, in saying or doing whatever may serve to irritate and aggravate their sorrows. Certain it is, that Satan's grand artifice was to vex Job; so to conduct himself that, in the impulse of the moment, he might charge God foolishly, and curse him. And if the conversation of Eliphaz, however plausible, had a tendency to accomplish the same end, whatever the Temanite was in himself, he was evidently Satan's instrument to cast down the godly. Methinks I would therefore learn from hence, caution, even in a zeal for God and his glory, not to add to an heart that is vexed; but sweetly draw off the mind of any poor sufferer, which comes within my way, from brooding over the affliction; to look at the God of all our mercies in the affliction; or, to use the beautiful words of the prophet, to call upon the sufferer *to hear the rod, and who hath appointed it.* And how should I do this so effectually, either in mine own sorrows, or the sorrows of others, as by looking to thee, thou blessed Jesus, in whose unequalled sorrows every child of God would soonest learn to forget his own. Oh! thou blessed Jesus! how doth thy bright example tend to dignify the path of suffering, and to give a lustre to the tears of the heaviest affliction. Oh! for grace to follow thee by faith to the garden, to the wilderness, to the cross, and there meditate, until the soul goeth forth in the interesting enquiry, *Is it nothing to you, all ye that pass by: behold, and see if there be any sorrow like unto my sorrow which is done unto me, wherewith the Lord hath afflicted me in the day of his fierce anger?*

CHAP. V.

CONTENTS.

The speech of Eliphaz is continued through the whole of this chapter. He dwells upon several circumstances concerning sin and its consequent affliction, and recommends in affliction a crying unto God.

CALL now, if there be any that will answer thee; and to which of the saints wilt thou turn?

2 For wrath killeth the foolish man, and envy slayeth the silly one.

3 ¶ I have seen the foolish taking root: but suddenly I cursed his habitation.

4 His children are far from safety, and they are crushed in the gate, neither *is there* any to deliver them.

5 Whose harvest the hungry eateth up, and taketh it even out of the thorns, and the robber swalloweth up their substance.

6 ¶ Although affliction cometh not forth of

the dust, neither doth trouble spring out of the ground;

7 Yet man is born unto trouble, as the sparks fly upward.

Eliphaz still harps upon the same string in these verses, that a affliction is a sure mark of sin, and therefore it is plain, that in his mind his conclusions were unfavorable concerning Job. And there is somewhat invidious in his several expressions, as referring to the short-lived triumphs of the wicked, because he referred to Job's former prosperity. Certain it is, that all the prosperity of the wicked is but as the grass. But then, this was nothing in respect to Job. Eliphaz had no consciousness, notwithstanding what he here saith of affliction not coming forth from the dust, that, though the Lord sends chastisement, yet, to his children, love is at the bottom. Heb. xii. 5, 6.

8 I would seek unto God, and unto God would I commit my cause:

This advice is truly scriptural; though it is rather to be feared, when viewed in connexion with what Eliphaz said before and after, it is rather meant to imply that Job did not seek to God in his affliction. But, Reader! let you and I not consider the Temanite's signs so much as the goodness of his counsel. One of the sweetest signs that grace is in the heart, and that trouble will be sanctified, is when that trouble leads the heart *to* God, and not *from* God. That it was so in Job's instance is evident by what the poor man said in another chapter, Shew me wherefore thou contendest with me? Job x. 2.

9 Which doeth great things and unsearchable; marvellous things without number:

10 Who giveth rain upon the earth, and sendeth waters upon the fields:

11 To set up on high those that be low; that those which mourn may be exalted to safety.

12 He disappointeth the devices of the crafty, so that their hands cannot perform *their* enterprise.

13 He taketh the wise in their own craftiness: and the counsel of the froward is carried headlong.

14 They meet with darkness in the daytime, and grope in the noon day as in the night.

15 But he saveth the poor from the sword, from their mouth, and from the hand of the mighty.

16 So the poor hath hope, and iniquity stoppeth her mouth.

17 ¶ Behold, happy is the man whom God correcteth: therefore despise not thou the chastening of the Almighty:

18 For he maketh sore and bindeth up: he woundeth, and his hands make whole.

Be Eliphaz who he may, or let his views be what they might in his address to Job, yet we must own he giveth in these words a most sublime description of the sovereignty, and goodness of God. Reader! I would call upon you to remark with me, some of the sweet and precious truths contained within these verses. First, mark what he saith of God, as governing in the kingdom of *nature*. To him he ascribes all the great things produced. Not as some do to chance or accident, but to a settled plan of his order; the rain, and the dew, and the waters which run through the earth. Next he goes on and contemplates the works of God in the kingdom of his *providence*. Here he more largely treats; in stating how the Lord sets up one, and lowereth another; and while men are concluding, that it is from their own plans, and wisdom, and foresight, Eliphaz reasoneth with a precision and certainty, that it is God that taketh the wise in their own craftiness, and the counsel of the froward is carried headlong. But Eliphaz doth not stop here, for whether he himself had any experience of divine influences, or had marked it in others, I do not stay to enquire, but certain it is, his language equally applies to the works of God in the kingdom of his *grace*, when he talks of the Lord saving the poor sinner from the sword, and giving hope to the poor, in stopping the mouth of iniquity. This is true gospel. And therefore, in a more especial manner, may it be said, *that* man is happy, who is made sore by the convictions of God's Spirit, and bound up, and healed by the blood and righteousness of Christ.

19 He shall deliver thee in six troubles: yea, in seven there shall no evil touch thee.

20 In famine he shall redeem thee from death: and in war from the power of the sword.

21 Thou shalt be hid from the scourge of the tongue: neither shalt thou be afraid of destruction when it cometh.

22 At destruction and famine thou shalt laugh: neither shalt thou be afraid of the beasts of the earth.

23 For thou shalt be in league with the stones of the field: and the beasts of the field shall be at peace with thee.

24 And thou shalt know that thy tabernacle *shall be* in peace; and thou shalt visit thy habitation, and shalt not sin.

25 Thou shalt know also that thy seed *shall be* great, and thine offspring as the grass of the earth.

This is a most beautiful description, of a soul at peace with God; and if read in a spiritual sense, with an eye to Christ, riseth to a point of sublimity, beautiful, and gracious indeed. Though six troubles and seven, may and will beset the godly, yet God is engaged by his faithfulness in the covenant of redemption, to carry his people safely through them all. War, famine, the pestilence, the sword, the strife of tongues, all are converted into messengers of sanctification, and wisdom to the righteous. They may, like the angel to Peter in the prison, they may smite roughly, but like that messenger they all come commissioned, to bring life, and liberty, and peace. Nay, saith Eliphaz, the very stones of the field, and the beasts of the earth, shall be in league with God's people. Mark this, Reader! so long as a poor sinner is unawakened, unregenerated, and at war with God, being an enemy to God by wicked works, all creation, and all providences are at war with him. But when that poor sinner hath found peace with God, in the blood and righteousness of the Lord Jesus Christ, then all nature, and every providence, ministers to his welfare. Let the Reader note that precious declaration of God concerning this, which we meet with, Hosea ii. 18—23.

26 Thou shalt come to *thy* grave in a full age, like as a shock of corn cometh in in his season.

Precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of his saints. Oh! how sweet is it to know that he that lives in the Lord, must die in the Lord. Jesus will be with his servants wherever they are, living or dying. And he that drops into the arms of Jesus in death, drops like a shock of corn fully ripe, let the age be what it may. And thus that scripture is fulfilled; while the sinner, die whensoever he may, though it be at an hundred years, dies immature: the child of God though but an infant of days, dies an hundred years old in the calculation of grace. Isaiah lxx. 20.

27 Lo this, we have searched it, so it *is*; hear it, and know thou it *for thy good*.

Eliphaz here concludes his sermon, leaves it as all preachers must, to the mind and conscience, to judge its truth!

REFLECTIONS.

THE best improvement that we can make under God the Holy Ghost, from this discourse of the man of *Timan*, is to consider the whole scope

of his reasoning, not as it concerns Job only, but all the exercised family of the faithful upon earth. As far as we have already advanced, in the history of this patriarch's sufferings, we trace enough to discover some of the sweet designs of the Lord in his affliction! God will manifest that Satau's charge is false. Job's integrity shall be proved. And therefore Job's integrity must be brought to the trial. The enemy charged him with hypocrisy. And Job's friends are endeavouring to prove it. During the sharp exercise the Lord will sustain him.

Reader! remark from what we have already seen in Job's history, that a suitableness of mind and heart under trial, is one of the highest attainments of faith. There is little or no exercise for faith, when all things go well. When the Lord in his providence, neither suffers our desires to be crossed, nor thwarts our wishes; then it is smooth sailing down the stream of life. But if God raiseth a storm; permits the enemy to send wave after wave, and when we cry the Lord gives no answer, but seemingly stands aloof from our prayers; then in the prospect of shipwreck, still to hang on and trust God, when we cannot trace him; this is the patience of the saints!

But oh! precious Jesus, how sweet is it to eye thee, thou blessed Author and Finisher of faith in such moments. While we look at thee what strength doth it induce! when we lose sight of thee, what poor creatures the best of thy servants are! Oh! Lord! I would say for myself and Reader, give us to believe! help thou our unbelief.

CHAP. VI.

CONTENTS.

We have in this chapter Job's answer to Eliphaz. He entereth upon his defence, in which we see the workings of the afflicted mind; and the mingled state of grace, with human infirmity, variously displaying itself.

BUT Job answered and said,
 2 O that my grief were thoroughly weighed,
 and my calamity laid in the balances together!

3 For now it would be heavier than the sand of the sea: therefore my words are swallowed up.

4 For the arrows of the Almighty *are* within me, the poison whereof drinketh up my spirit: the terrors of God do set themselves in array against me.

There is a great beauty here manifesting itself, in the wish of Job for a Mediator; for I hope the Reader will not overlook what is plainly implied, in all these several expressions. Job tells Eliphaz and his friends with him, that their incompetency of knowing what his grief was, made both him and them, think lighter of it than it really was. Therefore saith Job, Oh! that it were weighed!

Are not these the cries both of nature and grace, after one that could weigh them? Job perfectly knew that the Almighty, whose arrows he says were within him, could not be ignorant of the depth of his sorrows. But if there was a day's man, a mediator, who from a perfect knowledge of his state, could graciously stand up between God and his soul, to plead his cause and make his peace: this would be the desire of his heart. Reader! how sweet is it to remark, the universal voice of every enlightened mind; from the first transgressor in the garden of Eden, to the coming of the promised seed, all sending forth their most fervent cries, for this glorious, gracious Mediator! Did not Adam say as much when he cried out, I heard thy voice in the garden, and I was afraid? Gen. iii. 10. And did not Israel do the same, when they cried unto Moses: go thou near and hear all that the Lord our God shall say, and speak thou unto us, all that the Lord our God shall speak? Deut. v. 27. What are these instances, with many others that might be brought forward in proof, but testimonies, that it is a Mediator, the soul oppressed with sin and sorrow, hath been longing for in all ages. Reader! think of your happiness in having one, so sweetly revealed to you, and one so near to you, and so near to God?

5 Doth the wild ass bray when he hath grass?
or loweth the ox over his fodder?

6 Can that which is unsavoury be eaten without salt? or is there any taste in the white of an egg?

7 The things *that* my soul refuseth to touch *are* as my sorrowful meat.

These are striking expressions, to denote the total insufficiency of all earthly comforts. How differently doth the soul feel, when creature comforts are sanctified with redeeming blessings. David felt this in an high degree, when he saith, O my God, my soul is cast down within me; therefore will I remember thee from the land of Jordan, and of the Hermonites, and from the hill Mizar. Psm. xlii. 6. Reader! it is blessed to still and calm the troubled spirit, by thoughts of God. I cannot bid those troubled waters be quiet; but Jesus can. Him therefore let me remember.

8 ¶ O that I might have my request; and that God would grant *me* that thing that I long for;

9 Even that it would please God to destroy me; that he would let loose his hand, and cut me off!

10 Then should I yet have comfort; yea, I would harden myself in sorrow: let him not spare for I have not concealed the words of the Holy One.

Is it not probable (I only propose it as a question, and do not determine upon it,) that Satan had secretly tempted Job to self-murder? His wife had openly recommended it. Chap. ii. 9. But though Job presumed to wish the Lord would take away his life; yet grace restrained all desires, to take it away with his own hand. Oh! that every poor tempted soul, when under such peculiar exercises from Satan, may look up and behold his security, in the restraining grace of Jesus. 2 Cor. xii. 7—9.

11 What *is* my strength, that I should hope? and what *is* mine end, that I should prolong my life?

12 *Is* my strength the strength of stones? or *is* my flesh of brass?

13 *Is* not my help in me? and is wisdom driven quite from me?

Eliphaz had intimated, the want of wisdom in Job's grief. Chap. iv. 21. Job in those verses refutes this argument, and proves that he was not void of reason.

14 ¶ To him that is afflicted pity *should be shewed* from his friend; but he forsaketh the fear of the Almighty.

15 My brethren have dealt deceitfully as a brook, *and* as the stream of brooks they pass away;

16 Which are blackish by reason of the ice; *and* wherein the snow is hid:

17 What time they wax warm, they vanish: when it is hot, they are consumed out of their place.

18 The paths of their way are turned aside; they go to nothing, and perish.

19 The troops of Tema looked, the companies of Sheba waited for them.

20 They were confounded because they had hoped; they came thither, and were ashamed.

21 For now ye are nothing; ye see *my* casting down, and are afraid.

22 Did I say, Bring unto me? or, Give a reward for me of your-substance?

23 Or, Deliver me from the enemy's hand? or, Redeem me from the hand of the mighty?

24 Teach me, and I will hold my tongue: and cause me to understand wherein I have erred.

25 How forcible are right words! but what doth your arguing reprove?

26 Do ye imagine to reprove words, and the speeches of one that is desperate, *which are as wind?*

27 Yea, ye overwhelm the fatherless, and ye dig a *pit* for your friend.

28 Now therefore be content, look upon me; for *it is* evident unto you if I lie.

29 Return, I pray you, let it not be iniquity; yea, return again, my righteousness *is* in it.

30 Is there iniquity in my tongue? cannot my taste discern perverse things?

In all these verses we have the warm expostulations of the man of Uz, concerning the unkindness, and deceitfulness, of those who professed friendship for him. They came, as was understood, to comfort him. Whereas every thing that Eliphaz had hitherto advanced, in the name of himself and those who came with him, was directly full of reproof. He therefore compares them to the brook, which from its fullness, during the fall of rain, promised supply, but in the scorching summer when really needed, offereth nothing. The latter part of Job's speech is uncommonly striking. He apologizeth for any inadvertent expressions, which had dropped from him, from the desperate state of his afflictions; but begs them to observe that in all this, he had not condemned God, though he had lamented himself. His righteousness, by which no doubt he means to imply, his righteous thoughts of God, were the same. And thus, though Satan had charged him with hypocrisy, and his friends contended for the same, yet there was no hypocrisy with him.

REFLECTIONS.

READER! let us ponder over the situation, in which the Holy Ghost hath represented Job in this chapter, and gather from it those precious instructions, which we may humbly suppose, the Lord the Spirit, graciously designed to convey.

Though we hear Job thus expressing himself, in the bitterness of his complaints, and speaking unadvisedly with his lips, yet it is not the complaining *to* God when under trouble which causeth sin, but the complaining *of* God. Here lies all the difference. Paul the apostle hath told the church, from the authority of God the Holy Ghost, that no chastening for the present seemeth to be joyous, but grievous. And every

saint's own experience bears witness to the truth. Nay, unless we feel our trials, how can they be sanctified. Reader! mark the striking difference, and observe how we are taught, neither to despise the chastenings of the Lord, by making too light of them; nor faint under them, as if they were too heavy. If a child manifests stubbornness under a father's rod, as though he felt it not, and appears determined not to regard it; what must we think of him? And if on the other hand, he sinks and faints under the rebuke, how would this improve?

But here, precious Jesus, as in every other thing, so in this, thy bright example, thy blessed pattern, shews what thy followers should be. When in thine unequalled conflicts, thy soul was exceeding sorrowful, even unto death, yet we hear no complaining word, no angry expostulation. As the prophet had described thee, so the Evangelist records of thee, that thou wast led as a Lamb to the slaughter, and as the sheep before her shearers is dumb, so didst thou not open thy mouth. Oh! Lamb of God! give me to be everlastingly keeping in view thy meekness! and while I behold thee, condescending to the deepest abasement; feeling all indignities, bearing all our sins, receiving all thy Father's wrath, and enduring all that contradiction of sinners, which in the days of thy flesh, thou didst sustain for me and for my salvation: oh blessed Jesus, let me ask my soul, was it for me, that thou wast oppressed, thus exercised, thus tempted, thus buffeted, thus crowned with thorns; and all for me? Oh! give me grace in all my lesser trials, which were not worthy to be mentioned, to be looking unto thee. And though at times, my poor weak and corrupt nature, feels tempted to cry out under them, like Jonah or like Job, as though I did well to be angry; yet, Lord, if thou wilt strengthen me with one view of thee, then in thy power shall I take up the cross, and follow thee, thou Lamb of God, whithersoever thou goest, and be more than conqueror, through thy grace helping me.

CH A P. VII.

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Job prosecutes the same subject in this Chapter as in the former. He is looking forward to death and the grave, as the period of repose from his troubles. He is partly speaking to his friends; and part of it is a prayer to God.

IS there not an appointed time to man upon earth? *are not* his days also like the days of an hireling?

2 As a servant earnestly desireth the shadow, and as an hireling looketh for the reward of his work:

3 So am I made to possess months of vanity, and wearisome nights are appointed to me.

4 When I lie down, I say, When shall I arise,

and the night be gone? and I am full of tossings
to and fro unto the dawning of the day.

5 My flesh is clothed with worms and clods of
dust; my skin is broken, and become loathsome.

6 My days are swifter than a weaver's shuttle,
and are spent without hope.

This seems to be an address from Job to his friends. He compares human life under several very striking similitudes, and therefrom wishes to point out, that as a poor labouring man in any station, looks forward to the evening of the day with a kind of joy, that he shall then have rest; so he might be excused wishing for the grave, to put an end, not only to his labours, but his sorrows, and peculiar sufferings, by reason of his loathsome disease. Reader! it will abundantly more tend to our relief, under sorrow of any kind, to bring our case before the throne, and wait the Lord's time for deliverance, than presumptuously to prescribe when the hour shall be. A child of God is more afraid, that he should come out of the furnace unpurged, and the Lord's end in putting him there not answered, than that he should be there too long. And hence, you may put this down as a sure maxim; until we see God's wisdom, and God's love in our afflictions, we never shall be reconciled to them as we ought. But when a believer in the furnace can and doth say, My God my Saviour is exercising me, I know all is right; I know all shall be well; oh! how sanctified then is that sorrow!

7 O remember that my life is wind: mine eye
shall no more see good.

8 The eye of him that hath seen me shall see
me no more: thine eyes are upon me, and I am
not.

9 As the cloud is consumed and vanisheth
away: so he that goeth down to the grave shall
come up no more.

10 He shall return no more to his house, neither
shall his place know him any more.

From man Job appears to be turning unto God. Oh! that in all the afflictions of the Lord's faithful ones, this plan was more adopted. I do not mean that we should use Job's words; but only Job's method. If a child of God instead of seeking out companions, to pour out his afflictions into their bosom, was to go with his sorrows to pour them into the bosom of Jesus. Oh! how different would be the relief?

11 Therefore I will not refrain my month; I
will speak in the anguish of my spirit; I will com-
plain in the bitterness of my soul.

12 ¶ *Am* I a sea, or a whale, that thou settest a watch over me?

13 When I say, My bed shall comfort me, my couch shall ease my complaint;

14 Then thou scarest me with dreams, and terrifiest me through visions:

15 So that my soul chooseth strangling, and death rather than my life.

16 I loath *it*; I would not live alway: let me alone; for my days *are* vanity.

17 What *is* man, that thou shouldest magnify him? and that thou shouldest set thine heart upon him?

18 And *that* thou shouldest visit him every morning? and try him every moment?

19 How long wilt thou not depart from me, nor let me alone till I swallow down my spittle?

20 I have sinned; what shall I do unto thee, O thou preserver of men? why hast thou set me as a mark against thee, so that I am a burden to myself?

21 And why dost thou not pardon my transgression, and take away mine iniquity? for now shall I sleep in the dust; and thou shalt seek me in the morning, but I *shall* not be.

Those who know what restless nights and pains are, will best enter into an apprehension of Job's complaints, in these verses. But amidst these expostulations of Job, what is the most pleasing part of this prayer, and which shews that grace was still alive in his breast, is that expression where Job confesseth that he hath sinned. Here we find him a child of God still. And let the Reader remark with me, from this precious evidence, what seems the whole design of the Holy Ghost, in recording the life and trials of Job. God describes him as his servant: so he mentioned him to Satan: A perfect and an upright man, one that feared God, and eschewed evil: chap. i. 8. And what is the scripture sense of such a character? The word of God tells us elsewhere, when we are informed, that *there is not a just man upon earth, that doeth good, and sinneth not.* Eccles. vii. 20. Hence, therefore, the character of Job was peculiarly marked as a man faithfully attached to God. Against this, Satan contends that Job would prove himself to be an hypocrite. To demonstrate the reverse of this, the Lord permitted Job to be thus severely exercised. When, therefore, we find Job's integrity unimpeached, and in the midst of owning himself to have

sinned, that he is still faithful in his creed, the testimony of God is confirmed. Job, like Elias, is a man of like passions with other servants of the Lord. But God's testimony standeth sure; Job is one that feared God, and eschewed evil.

REFLECTIONS.

LET me call upon my own heart, while I call upon the Reader's also, to make the necessary improvements from what this chapter of Job's sufferings affords, as it may suit our own circumstances and situations in life. No man hath any cause to wonder at afflictions. Our life, as Job saith, at the best is but wind. A life, therefore, so much like the vapour, must be marked with vanity. And if the Lord marks this life with trial, it is because some blessed end, some gracious design is to be the result of it. And if we could but see the kind and gracious hand of Jesus in all, what a blessing would be in it. Here lies all the difference between the sufferings of one man and another. All men, more or less, are born to trial. For he that follows the world, as well as he that follows Jesus, must take up a cross: but while the one hath that cross lightened by Jesus, the other finds his heavier for want of Jesus. My Brother! are these lines under the eye of a troubled soul? Do you feel sorrow? Do you see the hand of Jesus in that trouble? Are you prayerful under it? Are you humbled with it? Is it sanctified? Doth it lead you *to* the Lord, and not *from* the Lord? Put these questions close: see to it that the answers are what they should be. And mark this down as a circumstance never to be questioned or disputed; the trouble that leads the heart *to* God, never did, nor ever will, do any harm. And, on the contrary, the affliction that doth not accomplish this end, never did, nor ever will, do any good. Precious Jesus! make all my trials to bring about this grand and important purpose. Chuse thou for me, O my God; send what thou knowest to be most suited to thy glory, and my everlasting good. Lord! let not my way-ward fancy direct, but thy wisdom. Let the affliction be what thou seest proper. In what measure, to what extent, how long, and how lasting; sure I am, all will turn to my good, if Jesus be in it. Lead me, Lord, when my heart is at any time overwhelmed, to the Rock that is higher than I; and then, though in the world I may and shall have tribulation, yet in thee I shall have peace.

CHAP. VIII.

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We have here a new speaker, but to the same old account. Bildad the Shuhite, seconds what Eliphaz had advanced; and in his condemnation of Job, seems to rest the conclusion of the argument upon this issue, that God would shortly interpose, and prove Job's hypocrisy.

THEN answered Bildad the Shuhite and said,
 2 How long wilt thou speak these things?
 and how long shall the words of thy mouth be like a strong wind?

3 Doth God pervert judgment? or doth the Almighty pervert justice?

4 If thy children have sinned against him, and he have cast them away for their transgression;

5 If thou wouldest seek unto God betimes, and make thy supplication to the Almighty;

6 If thou wert pure and upright; surely now he would awake for thee, and make the habitation of thy righteousness prosperous.

7 Though thy beginning was small, yet thy latter end should greatly increase.

8 ¶ For enquire, I pray thee, of the former age, and prepare thyself to the search of their fathers:

9 (For we *are but of yesterday*, and know nothing, because our days upon earth *are a shadow* :)

The very ground which Bildad sets out upon was ill founded. Job had never said that God did pervert judgment. He had indeed complained in the bitterness of his soul; but not a word to accuse God of perverting judgment. He seems to take a new argument to irritate poor Job's mind, by insinuating that the death of Job's children was a judgment from God upon them for their iniquity; which, admitting it had been true, was an act of great unkindness to the poor father, in thus reminding him of the source of his affliction. Reader! I pray you, pause and remark with me, how sharp the exercises of Job were. The messengers which came to him at the first were all treading upon the heels of each other, and all fraught with evil tidings, worse and worse. So here again, his friends, which came under a supposed offer to comfort him, only succeeded one another in sharper reproof. Precious Jesus! how sweet is it in our sorrows, to have thee as a Comforter to fly to.

10 Shall not they teach thee, *and* tell thee, and utter words out of their heart?

11 Can the rush grow up without mire? can the flag grow without water?

12 Whilst it *is* yet in his greenness, *and* not cut down, it withereth before any *other* herb.

13 So *are* the paths of all that forget God; and the hypocrite's hope shall perish:

14 Whose hope shall be cut off, and whose trust *shall be* a spider's web.

15 He shall lean upon his house, but it shall

not stand: he shall hold it fast, but it shall not endure.

16 He *is* green before the sun, and his branch shooteth forth in his garden.

17 His roots are wrapped about the heap, *and* seeth the place of stones.

18 If he destroy him from his place, then *it* shall deny him, *saying*, I have not seen thee.

19 Behold, *this* is the joy of his way, and out of the earth shall others grow.

20 ¶ Behold, God will not cast away a perfect *man*, neither will he help the evil doers:

21 Till he fill thy mouth with laughing, and thy lips with rejoicing.

22 They that hate thee shall be clothed with shame; and the dwelling place of the wicked shall come to nought.

Observe in all these verses, how the whole scope of *Bildad's* discourse is levelled against hypocrisy; and how indirectly he points to poor *Job* under all. I stay not to particularize: but what I would desire the Reader more immediately to regard, is the false conclusion the *Shuhite* draws of the providence of God. Though it be certainly true, that God never did, nor ever will, cast away a perfect man, neither help evil-doers; yet this conclusion is not to be made by a view of outward things. The prophet was so struck, in his days, with what he saw of the prosperity of the wicked, and the sorrows of the righteous, that he stands up to talk with God on the subject. *Wherefore* (saith he) *doth the way of the wicked prosper*. Jerem. xii. 1. And *Asaph* was so overwhelmed with what he saw of the proud man's oppression and success, that he declared it staggered him. Psm. lxxiii. 3, 4. We must look therefore to another state to have these things fully and finally cleared up. There, the Lord will judge the world in righteousness, and minister true judgment unto the people.

REFLECTIONS.

WHILE we look on and behold the exercises of *Job* still heightening, and distresses, in the unkindness of his friends, coming from a quarter from whence he was looking for relief and consolation, I would beg the Reader, as I desire to observe the same conduct myself, to be regarding no less how gracious the Lord supported his mind while Satan thus assaulted him, and even his supposed friends joined in the temptation to cast him down. Surely *Job* might well have said, as another sufferer did in an after age of the church, *If the Lord himself had not helped me, it had not failed but my soul had been put to silence.*

Reader! it is very precious to look back and see how the Lord hath been helping us in past exercises, when we at the time were perfectly unconscious of his presence and his favor. Like some besieged city, against whose walls the battering cannons of mighty foes threatened every moment to take the place by storm, and put every soul to the sword; but by the Lord's throwing in succours unperceived, and garrisoning it by his divine presence, the city is saved, and the foe put to flight: so God's people are kept in a thousand instances where they have been many times ready to surrender, and to give up all as lost. Reader! depend upon it, thus it is with the people of Jesus. And according to the degree and strength of that sweet assistance Jesus gives the soul, so their faith is made to hold out and to be maintained. If Jesus communicates of his fulness and all-sufficiency, let the affliction be ever so great, the temptation ever so powerful, and the continuance of it ever so lasting, the succour from within bears up the soul, and makes the poor believer more than conqueror. Jesus is present, and that is enough. If the Lord be for us, what need we fear who is against us? If God justifieth, what care we who condemneth? Oh! for grace to be always upon the look-out for the justifying love and mercy of God our Father, the atoning blood and righteousness of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the sealing, heart-satisfying, and soul-rejoicing testimony of God the Holy Ghost.

C H A P. IX.

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This is a most beautiful and highly interesting chapter. Job here enters again upon his defence: in which we find nothing of reproach concerning the unkindness of his friends; but a delightful testimony of God's wisdom, power, and justice; and humbling views of himself.

THEN Job answered and said,
 2 I know *it is* so of a truth; but how should man be just with God?

3 If he will contend with him, he cannot answer him one of a thousand.

4 *He is* wise in heart, and mighty in strength; who hath hardened *himself* against him, and hath prospered?

What a blessed evidence is here, that Job takes shame to himself, in the consciousness of man's sin, and God's righteousness. How very strong and conclusive is the question, How should man be just with God? There are a thousand sins, and ten thousand transgressions, which pass away over our unthinking minds, into the gulph of forgetfulness, every one of which, if God were to bring forward, would be enough to prove guilt. And though we forget them, yet God doth not; our secret sins are in the light of his countenance, Ps. xc. 8. What a thought is this to convince the soul of sin! What a motive is it, or ought it to be, to seek redemption in the blood of Jesus?

5 Which removeth the mountains, and they know not: which overturneth them in his anger.

6 Which shaketh the earth out of her place, and the pillars thereof tremble.

7 Which commandeth the sun, and it riseth not; and sealeteth up the stars.

8 Which alone spreadeth out the heavens, and treadeth upon the waves of the sea.

9 Which maketh Arcturus, Orion, and Pleiades, and the chambers of the south.

10 Which doeth great things past finding out; yea, and wonders without number.

11 Lo, he goeth by me, and I see *him* not: he passeth on also, but I perceive him not.

12 Behold, he taketh away, who can hinder him? who will say unto him, What doest thou?

Now let the Reader follow the footsteps of the Holy Ghost, and mark, as he goeth on through Job's history, how Satan is baffled, and the poor sufferer is helped forward by grace. Satan was confident that Job would curse God, but behold how he blesteth him: how highly doth he talk of God's perfections. The poor afflicted mourner seems to forget, for the moment, his own sorrows, while discoursing of God's glory. Observe how Job follows God in the world of *nature*; removing mountains, shaking the earth, controuling the heavenly bodies, and governing the sea. Then he prosecutes the subject into the world of *providence*; going by unperceived, taking away and none can hinder him, or say unto him, what doest thou? And had Job lived under the gospel of Jesus, how would his soul have expatiated on Jesus' works in the world of *grace*? Reader! think what blessed privileges you are called to, before whom light and immortality is so fully brought to light in the gospel.

13 *If* God will not withdraw his anger, the proud helpers do stoop under him.

14 How much less shall I answer him, and choose out my words *to reason* with him?

15 Whom, though I were righteous, *yet* would I not answer, *but* I would make supplication to my judge.

16 If I had called, and he had answered me; *yet* would I not believe that he had hearkened unto my voice.

17 For he breaketh me with a tempest, and multiplieth my wounds without cause.

18 He will not suffer me to take my breath, but filleth me with bitterness.

19 If *I speak* of strength, lo, *he is strong*: and if of judgment, who shall set me a time to *plead*?

20 If I justify myself, mine own mouth shall condemn me: *if I say, I am perfect*, it shall also prove me perverse.

21 *Though I were perfect, yet would I not know my soul*: I would despise my life.

How very striking is this reasoning of Job, and what a spirit of the gospel it breathes. If the proud helpers stoop, what could Job do? God will make good every charge. Nay, saith Job, though I were righteous, that is, if my own heart did not reproach me, and I was led thereby to fancy myself righteous, yet would I not venture to trust it were so. Nay, more than this; if I had called, and God had answered me, yet even then I would not presumptuously think that this grace was on account of my deserts: oh! no, I would conclude, saith Job, that it was his mercy, not my merit, his free love and grace, not my deservings. Reader! I beseech you, pause over this passage. Is it not pure gospel from beginning to end? Where could Job learn this, but from Him who teacheth not as man teacheth? Was it not the same Almighty Teacher, indeed, that thus teaching and convincing Job of sin, taught and led him also to believe in his kinsman-Redeemer? See chap. xix. 25. I must not dismiss our view of this precious passage, until I have further begged the Reader to remark with me, one or two beauties more contained in it. Job, though justifying himself with respect to his conduct among men, makes a mighty distinction between this, and his justification before God. And in this, he is followed by other holy men of old. David, when unjustly charged by men, carries his cause to God: *Judge me, O Lord*, (saith he) *according to my righteousness, and according to the integrity that is in me*. Psm. vii. 8. And the apostle Paul tells the Corinthians, that he was not to be judged of men, or of man's judgment. 1 Cor. iv. 3. But when God takes up the cause, as it concerns the sinner before God, David cries out, *Enter not into judgment with thy servant, O Lord, for in thy sight shall no man living be justified*. Psm. cxliii. 2. And Paul saith, *All the world is become guilty before God*. Rom. iii. 19. And Job declares that *he would not know his soul*: and elsewhere he saith, *I abhor myself, and repent in dust and ashes*: chap. xlii. 6.

22 ¶ This is one *thing*, therefore I said it, He destroyeth the perfect and the wicked.

23 If the scourge slay suddenly, he will laugh at the trial of the innocent.

24 The earth is given into the hand of the

wicked: he covereth the faces of the judges thereof; if not, where, *and who is he?*

25 Now my days are swifter than a post: they flee away, they see no good.

26 They are passed away as the swift ships: as the eagle *that* hasteth to the prey.

27 If I say, I will forget my complaint, I will leave off my heaviness, and comfort *myself*:

Job, in those verses, makes an inference from what he had before laid down as a doctrine: *This one thing therefore I said*; meaning, what he had insisted upon before, that by outward providences, no man should draw conclusions of God's favor or disapprobation. To speak of it in gospel terms, the Lord causeth *his sun to shine upon the evil and upon the good, and sendeth the blessings of rain upon the just and upon the unjust.* Matt. v. 45.

28 I am afraid of all my sorrows, I know that thou wilt not hold me innocent.

29 *If* I be wicked, why then labour I in vain?

30 If I washed myself with snow water, and make my hands never so clean;

31 Yet shalt thou plunge me in the ditch, and mine own clothes shall abhor me.

32 For *he is* not a man, as *I am*, *that* I should answer him, *and* we should come together in judgment.

33 Neither is there any daysman betwixt us, *that* might lay his hand upon us both.

34 Let him take his rod away from me, and let not his fear terrify me:

35 *Then* would I speak, and not fear him; but *it is* not so with me.

Here Job not only dwells upon the same humbling subject, of man's uncleanness as he must appear before God, but he again, as in a former instance, sends out the fervent wish of his soul, for a mediator, a daysman. No doubt the spirit of Christ, which was in the early prophets, and taught them to speak by faith of the sufferings of Christ, and the glory that should follow, (1 Pet. i. 11.) taught also holy men of old to be looking for the same Lord Jesus as this precious Mediator, this Almighty Daysman, who alone was found competent to lay his hand upon both parties, God and man, and make up the deadly breach which sin had made. Oh! lovely evidence this of the faith of Job in a coming Mediator! Reader! do not overlook it: and remember that Job's

complaint that there was none, was in effect a prayer that one might be found. Hence, when Jesus came, the cry of those that knew him was, *We have found him of whom Moses and the prophets did write.* John i. 45.

REFLECTIONS.

PERHAPS no part of the Old Testament writings is more calculated, under the blessed Spirit's teaching, to impress upon the soul a deep sense of sin, and to lay the soul lower in the dust in the view of it, than Job's humbling language of his spirit in this chapter. Reader! let us pause and consider. Surely, however light and unthinking minds may pass over the consideration, yet it is a solemn question, *How should man be just with God?* Never was there a soul, really and truly brought nigh by the blood of Jesus, who thought lightly of this question. Abraham, the friend of God, felt his soul strongly exercised when he cried out, under a deep sense of God's holiness, and his uncleanness; *Behold, now (said he) I have taken upon me to speak unto the Lord, which am but dust and ashes.* And all the saints of God, in all ages, have thought the same. My soul! I charge it upon thee; is it not indeed a very solemn thing? Even now in ordinances and means of grace, surely thou durst not draw nigh with lightness and indifference: and though thou art looking forward, as here in ordinances, so then in death, to come before God in Jesus' blood and righteousness, that this, and this alone, is thine only plea; yet when thou callest to mind, that in that solemn, awful hour, in the final event of which thine everlasting all depends, thou art to come before God as thy Judge, to receive a full absolution for the whole of life, is not thine whole nature struck with solemnity and awe, though thine eye is all the while upon Jesus?

And if such be the very awful process to every true believer in Christ; if David's flesh trembled, as he tells us it did, when contemplating God in judgment, though he was directing the eye of faith to Jesus as his blessed Surety; what horror will seize the soul of that man who comes before that tremendous judgment-seat void of an interest in Christ, and without the Mediator to plead his cause, or the Mediator's righteousness to justify his person. Oh! Reader! think, I beseech you while reading Job's confession, that snow-water cannot impart cleanness to the sinner, and nothing but the fountain of Jesus' blood can take away guilt; think of the blessedness of those who are looking to Jesus, and have a Christ, a Mediator to plead for them in his blood and righteousness, while law and conscience both accuse. Oh! precious, precious Jesus? how increasingly precious is thy salvation every moment. Oh! give us to see that we have redemption in thy blood, and are justified from all things, from which none of the sons of Adam could ever be justified by the law of Moses.

CHAP. X.

CONTENTS.

Job continueth in a voice of complaint through this Chapter. He seems to express himself, as one so borne down with sorrow that he

knows not what he sayeth. He pleads hard with God, for a little respite of ease before his death.

MY soul is weary of my life; I will leave my complaint upon myself; I will speak in the bitterness of my soul.

2 I will say unto God, Do not condemn me; shew me wherefore thou contendest with me.

Though there is in those verses much seeming impatience, yet when the mourner crieth out, Do not condemn me; is there not in the same voice, a cry for mercy and favour? Reader! how sweet is it in the afflictions of God's redeemed, that in a thousand afflictions there is no curse. Jesus hath taken out the whole curse, when he was made a curse for his people. Oh! the soul-reviving, soul-comforting thought! Yes! thou dearest Lord, thou didst drink the cup of trembling; that thy people might drink the cup of salvation.

3 *Is it good unto thee that thou shouldest oppress, that thou shouldest despise the work of thine hands, and shine upon the counsel of the wicked?*

4 Hast thou eyes of flesh? or seest thou as man seeth?

5 *Are thy days as the days of man? are thy years as man's days,*

6 That thou inquirest after mine iniquity, and searchest after my sin?

Reader! you and I may derive much good from this enquiry of Job, if so be the Spirit of Jesus graciously lead out our minds, when at any time under affliction, to a similar enquiry, "Shew me wherefore thou contendest with me;" if in humbleness of soul we refer our cause to God, is a blessed plea of the seeking soul under affliction. We are bad judges in our own concerns. And therefore, if like Job we conclude that Jesus doth not contend for nothing, we may well suspect our own hearts, if at any time the Lord speaks in frowning providences, afflicting dispensations, dead ordinances, and the like. Mark this down, my brother, as a sweet token of grace, when we not only desire to have our souls abide by God's trials, but fearing lest evil should be lurking beneath, we desire to be tried. *Search me, O God, (said one of old) try me, and know my thoughts. And see if there be any wicked way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting.* Psm. cxxxix. 23, 24.

7 Thou knowest that I am not wicked; and *there is none that can deliver out of thine hand.*

When Job saith, as here, I am not wicked, we should compare it with what he had said before, in order to apprehend his meaning. He had before cried out, I have sinned. Chap. vii. 20. And in the preceding chapter to this, again and again declared, that if he justified

himself, his own mouth would condemn him; therefore by saying here that the Lord knew he was not wicked, Job could mean nothing more, than that he was not an intentional sinner, or as Satan charged him, and his friends wanted to prove him to be, an hypocrite before God; a dissembler with the Lord. This view of Job's meaning, I have the more largely insisted upon, because it will serve to throw a light upon many other similar passages, in his whole history.

8 Thine hands have made me and fashioned me together round about: yet thou dost destroy me.

9 Remember, I beseech thee, that thou hast made me as the clay; and wilt thou bring me into dust again?

10 Hast thou not poured me out as milk, and curdled me like cheese?

11 Thou hast clothed me with skin and flesh, and hast fenced me with bones and sinews.

12 Thou hast granted me life and favour, and thy visitation hath preserved my spirit.

13 And these *things* hast thou hid in thine heart: I know that this *is* with thee.

What a beautiful description Job gives of God's work in his formation? He eyes God as making him, feeding him, sustaining, protecting, fencing him, and granting continued instances of life and favor. Now saith Job, (and he pleads these things, as so many arguments for mercy), did my God thus bestow such tokens of wisdom and love, and will he not hear the cries of his afflicted creature? There is a great sweetness, and strength of persuasion, in this argument. But Reader! how this pleading riseth to an higher note; when paraphrased in the melodious accents of the gospel? How may every poor believer in Jesus, bring forth those arguments and say; Thou hast made me, O Lord, and new made me in Christ Jesus, thy dear, ever blessed Son; not only given me a being, but a new being, and an union of being in and with Jesus; thou hast fed me with his body, and caused me to drink of his blood; clothed me with his righteousness, put on the garment of salvation, fenced me from all the accusations of sin and Satan, of law and justice; visited me day by day with thy grace; granted me life and favor; and Jesus himself hath preserved my spirit; and shall I now despond; shall I now be afraid? Surely if the Lord were pleased to kill me, would he have received Jesus as my Redeemer at my hands, or accepted me in Jesus; or have shewed me all these things? Judges xiii. 23.

14 If I sin, then thou markest me, and thou wilt not acquit me from mine iniquity.

15 If I be wicked, woe unto me; and if I be

righteous, *yet* will I not lift up my head. *I am* full of confusion; therefore see thou mine affliction;

16 For it increaseth. Thou huntest me as a fierce lion: and again thou shewest thyself marvellous upon me.

17 Thou renewest thy witnesses against me, and increaseth thine indignation upon me; changes and war *are* against me.

18 ¶ Wherefore then hast thou brought me forth out of the womb? O that I had given up the ghost, and no eye had seen me!

19 I should have been as though I had not been! I should have been carried from the womb to the grave.

20 *Are* not my days few? cease *then*, and let me alone, that I may take comfort a little,

21 Before I go *whence* I shall not return, *even* to the land of darkness and the shadow of death;

22 A land of darkness, as darkness *itself*: and of the shadow of death, without any order, and *where* the light is as darkness.

What Job hath here said, that he was full of confusion, and that his affliction increased, may serve to account, in some measure, for the many hasty complaints he throws out. It is one of the most interesting beauties of the scriptures, and for which we never can sufficiently offer up our praises to God the Holy Ghost, that he hath not only recorded the *faith* of the eminent servants of the Lord, but their *frailties* also. And the gracious intention of that blessed, and condescending Teacher, in this kind and merciful act, no humble soul should be at a loss to understand. Surely it was to comfort the Lord's people, under their infirmities, that, as these things were written aforetime, written for our learning, so we in the view of them through patience, and comfort of the scriptures, might have hope. Rom. xv. 4.

REFLECTIONS.

OUR views of Job in this chapter are various. In one part of it, we behold him in the exercise of grace. In another under the frettings of nature. Alas! what is man in his highest attainments, when for a moment he loseth sight of Jesus? My Brother! if you know any thing of your own heart, you will know also, if so be that the Lord hath quickened you, to a new and spiritual life, that you are still in the body; and a body of sin and death, which drags down the soul. Much of nature

as well as grace, is in the best of saints. If you have the spirit of Christ, you have also a body of flesh. If you have strong faith, you know what it is to have strong corruptions. And hence, were it not that perpetual communications are imparted, to keep the soul alive amidst the rubbish of corruption, what believer would be able to withstand long the many powerful foes of his salvation, which he hath to encounter?

We see Job, in this chapter, giving way to much impatience. But it will be a profitable view of the subject, if from the view we are led to see where our strength is, and by whom alone the best of men are kept, from similar backslidings. My Brother! it is Jesus alone that keeps his people in the hour, and from the power of temptation; and to have an eye stedfast upon him, to live to him, to believe in him, to delight ourselves in him, to lie passive in his hands, under every dispensation however trying, to be pleased with him as a sure friend when all things frown, as though he was turned to be our enemy; to depend upon his word, his faithfulness, his truth, when every method whereby he can be faithful, seems for the time to be lost; and like the prophet, when the fig trees blossom, and the fields fruit both fail; yet even then to live upon an unchangeable God in Christ, when all outward circumstances are changed; this, this is the patience of the saints. This is what God the Father is pleased with, in the grace of his dear Son, manifested in the faith of his people, and while the believer thus gives glory to God, God will give peace to the believer. Them that honor me, saith God, I will honor. Oh! then for grace to live to his glory, in dark seasons as well as light, and to make Christ all and in all.

CHAP. XI.

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We have in this Chapter the remonstrance of a third friend of Job, and much to the same purpose as the two former. Zophar the Naamathite takes up the subject against Job, and reasons on God's justice in Job's calamities.

THEN answered Zophar the Naamathite, and said,

2 Should not the multitude of words be answered? and should a man full of talk be justified?

3 Should thy lies make men hold their peace? and when thou mockest, shall no man make thee ashamed?

4 For thou hast said, My doctrine is pure, and I am clean in thine eyes.

Of all the friends of Job, this Zophar seems the most unfriendly. The others had, in some measure, softened their speeches, with fair words; but this man is outrageous to an excess. He calls Job's rea-

soning lies and mockery. Poor Job! surely Satan must have had a hand in this. And Reader! let us from hence discover, that the arch fiend doth make use even of our friends, when other resourses fail him, to exercise the faith and patience of God's children. Our Lord tells us that a man's foes, are they of his own household. Matt. xxxvi. 10. And no doubt never more so, than when in exercises like these of Job, they co-operate with the great enemy of our salvation, to persecute for the cause of Christ.

5 ¶ But oh that God would speak, and open his lips against thee;

6 And that he would shew thee the secrets of wisdom, that *they are* double to that which is! Know therefore that God exacteth of thee *less* than thine iniquity *deserveth*.

Reader! do remark how prone the heart of man hath been in all ages, to make appeals to God. It is truly awful to hear, as not unfrequently may be heard, speeches like this dropping from the lips of carnal men; not only among the more open and profane, but even among some who would be hurt to have their religion called in question, who assume the freedom in direct defiance of the commandment, to take the Lord's name in question, and call upon him to be a witness to their idle assertions as true.

7 Canst thou by searching find out God? canst thou find out the Almighty unto perfection?

8 *It is* as high as heaven; what canst thou do? deeper than hell; what canst thou know?

9 The measure thereof *is* longer than the earth, and broader than the sea.

10 If he cut off, and shut up, or gather together, then who can hinder him?

11 For he knoweth vain men: he seeth wickedness also; will he not then consider *it*?

12 For vain man would be wise, though man be born *like* a wild ass's colt.

Zophar in those verses draws a most beautiful, and striking contrast, between the glory and greatness of God, and the vanity and littleness of man. He points to several of the distinguishing attributes of Jehovah, such as his sovereignty, eternity, incomprehensibility. He then takes the dullest, and silliest of all domesticated animals, by way of shewing the poverty and emptiness of man, and in that of an ass and a wild ass, and even worse than both, a wild ass's colt, which of course must be more egregiously stupid than its dam, sets forth the folly of the man that pretends to wisdom.

13 ¶ If thou prepare thine heart, and stretch out thine hands toward him;

14 If iniquity *be* in thine hand, put it far away, and let not wickedness dwell in thy tabernacles.

15 For then shalt thou lift up thy face without spot; yea, thou shalt be stedfast, and shalt not fear:

16 Because thou shalt forget *thy* misery, and remember *it* as waters *that* pass away:

17 And thine age shall be clearer than the noon-day; thou shalt shine forth, thou shalt be as the morning.

18 And thou shalt be secure, because there is hope; yea, thou shalt dig *about thee*, and thou shalt take thy rest in safety.

19 Also thou shalt lie down, and none shall make *thee* afraid; yea, many shall make suit unto thee.

20 But the eyes of the wicked shall fail, and they shall not escape, and their hope *shall be as* the giving up of the ghost.

There is much good counsel in this advice of *Zophar*; though less applicable to Job than he thought. Job had confessed himself a sinner; but would not allow himself to be an hypocrite: and this was the point of contention. *Zophar* intimates by his speech, that he thought there was some secret dreadful transaction, which he had been guilty of, known only to the Lord, and Job's own conscience; and therefore urgeth him to make confession, and to put it away. All the rest of his discourse is founded upon the same arguments, as had been pressed upon Job before, namely, that great sins required great punishment; and that Job's calamities were on this account. So that until a reform took place, he could expect no relief: but when that point was accomplished, God's mercy would follow.

REFLECTIONS.

READER! how happy is it for you and for me, that we live under a brighter dispensation, than Job's counsellors, and are taught by him in whom are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge. Yes! blessed Jesus! thou hast taught that great afflictions not only may abound among those whom God loveth, but that heavy trials and temptations, when found in the path of godliness, are rather testimonies of

vine favour. Thou hast said thyself; *As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten.* I beseech thee, therefore, blessed Master, that I may eye thee in every dispensation, and then sure I am, that I shall discover love at the bottom of all thine appointments, and wisdom guiding and regulating all. My Jesus, while he governs as my God, will never forget that he is also my Saviour, my brother, my husband, my friend. And if such views as these, will not stop the voice of complaint, nothing will. And dearest, blessed Master, while I thus beseech thee to grant me grace and strength equal to my day, that I may be always on the look out for thy wise and loving government in all things: yet when it shall please thee, as most suited to thy good will and pleasure, to hide from me thy plan, and as with Job, things are mysterious, and discouraging; yet even then, blessed Lord, never, oh never, remit the communications of thy grace within, that faith may be in lively exercise, and that I may find strength from thee, to trust thee when I cannot trace thee. Let the storm from without beat ever so violently, yet if my Jesus support the roof within, my poor frail tabernacle will not fall. Oh! for the sweet consolations and lovely teachings of Jesus, by his Spirit, that I may be able to say, at the worst of times, I see enough of Jesus in this dispensation, to be assured it is in his appointment! It must therefore be among the all things which work together for good. It shall be well. I shall wade through this affliction, as I have, by the Lord's leading me, through many before. Here then, blessed Lord, I will rest. Though I see thee not in all these providences of thine, it is enough that thou seest me? and art not only looking on, but tempering my trials to my strength, and hast promised to stay thy rough wind in the day of thy east wind. Though, like the disciples, my soul may fear as I enter the cloud, yet Jesus will be there, and he will shine out, and shine through all. By and by, every intervening cloud will be for ever taken out of the way; and he that is now my God and my salvation, will be my everlasting light, my God, and my glory.

CHAP. XII.

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In this chapter, Job makes reply. He still dwells upon the same arguments of his own integrity, as it concerned his trust and dependance upon God. He manifests great strength of understanding, concerning the afflictions of the righteous, and contends that they are by no means marks of God's displeasure.

AND Job answered and said,
 2 No doubt but ye *are* the people, and wisdom shall die with you.

3 But I have understanding as well as you; I *am* not inferior to you: yea, who knoweth not such things as these?

4 I am *as* one mocked of his neighbour, who

calleth upon God, and he answereth him: the just upright *man is* laughed to scorn.

5 He that is ready to slip with *his feet is as a lamp despised* in the thought of him that is at ease.

6 The tabernacles of robbers prosper, and they that provcke God are secure; into whose hand God bringeth *abundantly*.

7 ¶ But ask now the beasts, and they shall teach thee; and the fowls of the air, and they shall tell thee:

8 Or speak to the earth, and it shall teach thee: and the fishes of the sea shall declare unto thee.

9 Who knoweth not in all these that the hand of the LORD hath wrought this?

10 In whose hand *is* the soul of every living thing, and the breath of all mankind.

Poor Job, irritated by his friends, and no doubt vexed by his adversary, as Hannah felt, 1 Sam. i. 6. seems for a while to forget his bodily ailments, and gives scope to an asperity not unlike those who opposed him: but his arguments are strong and conclusive. He insists upon it, that even the brute creation, since the fall, were living evidences that much evil might abound in the midst of God's goodness: the whole creation groaneth under oppression; yet no impeachment ariseth out of it against the divine love and wisdom. Poor harmless animals are slaughtered to gratify the luxury of worthless men: and even the fishes of the sea are dragged forth to pamper the appetites of sinners. But, saith Job, who doth not see that in all these the goodness of God is the same?

11 Doth not the ear try words? and the mouth taste his meat?

12 With the antient *is* wisdom; and in length of days understanding.

13 With him *is* wisdom and strength, he hath counsel and understanding.

14 Behold, he breaketh down, and it cannot be built again: he shutteth up a man, and there can be no opening.

15 Behold, he withholdeth the waters, and they dry up: also he sendeth them out, and they overturn the earth.

16 With him *is* strength and wisdom : the deceived and the deceiver *are* his.

17 He leadeth counsellors away spoiled, and maketh the judges fools.

18 He looseth the bond of kings, and girdeth their loins with a girdle.

19 He leadeth princes away spoiled, and overthroweth the mighty.

20 He removeth away the speech of the trusty, and taketh away the understanding of the aged.

21 He poureth contempt upon princes, and weakeneth the strength of the mighty.

22 He discovereth deep things out of darkness, and bringeth out to light the shadow of death.

23 He increaseth the nations, and destroyeth them : he enlargeth the nations, and straiteneth them *again*.

24 He taketh away the heart of the chief of the people of the earth, and causeth them to wander in a wilderness *where there is* no way.

25 They grope in the dark without light, and he maketh them to stagger like a drunken *man*.

I do not offer a paraphrase on this most delightful discourse of Job. It is too plain to need any, and too sublime to be aided by any. The sum and substance of it is, that the Lord is righteous in all his ways, and holy in all his works. And that he breaketh down, and it cannot be again built; that he shutteth, and none can open; that the deceiver and the deceived are his; yea, all shall ultimately minister to his glory, however various the designs of men, or whatever are their devices. And, Reader! pause with me, just to remark what beautiful and glorious illustrations there are in the word of God, in confirmation of God's sovereignty, and wisdom in that sovereignty. When Joseph was sold as a slave, here both the deceiver and the deceived were God's; and the issue, in the salvation of the whole patriarch's family, arose out of that dark event. When Haman erected a gallows for Mordecai, how little did he think that he himself should be hung upon it. Nay, infinitely higher, and more important than a thousand, or ten thousand such instances; when the Lord Jesus was crucified by the malice of the Jews, who but the Lord could have known that this one event was the salvation of a world! Reader! allow me to make the same remark as the Psalmist hath, after giving the church a long and beautiful account of God's leading his people by the hand through the whole of the dispensation in the wilderness; *Who is wise, and will observe these things, even they shall understand the loving kindness of the Lord.* Psm. cvii. 43.

REFLECTIONS.

READER! you and I shall go over this sweet and interesting book of Job to very little good, if we do not, as we read it, look up for the teaching of the Holy Ghost, and seek from it to search our own interest in what we meet with in the several chapters. Our own life is the most important of all lives to be well versed in: and depend upon it, what we meet with in the history of Job and his friends, may, in numberless occasions, under the Spirit's teaching, be made profitable to our own. It was a blessed command the man of God had in commission to give the church, when he said, 'Thou shalt remember all the way which the Lord thy God led thee these forty years in the wilderness, to humble thee, and to prove thee, to know what was in thine heart, whether thou wouldest keep his commandments, or no.' Under this idea, is there nothing in what we have already reviewed of Job's history, applicable to ourselves? Is not Satan accusing us as he did Job? Hath our gracious God permitted him to harrass us with his devices? Have we the unkindness of friends, or the malice of open enemies, to grapple with also? Hath the Lord brought us under any bereaving providences; any bodily or spiritual afflictions? How are we exercised on any of these occasions! Pause, Reader! look into your own heart, as I pray God to search mine. How are we dealing with God; and how is the Lord dealing with us? Oh! Sir, depend upon it, that is ever a sweet mercy, however harsh it may at first seem, which, in the close, brings the soul to Jesus. The medicine we take may be nauseous, but its effect is salutary. Job was stripped of all his earthly comforts: but Job lost not his God. This brought him up. Let our bodies be ever so poor, ever so sickly, ever so sore, yet, if we have Jesus formed in our souls, the hope of glory, here is enough to sing Hallelujah in the whole. And if the trials the Lord sends come with a commission to lead to Jesus, surely love was at the bottom, and by and by our praises will be called forth in acknowledgment. Lord, I would say for myself and Reader, give us both grace to be ever on the look-out for the Lord's manifestations to us, and our proper and wise use of them; and then we shall assuredly find that *at evening time it will be light*. Mercy and goodness have been following us all the days of our life, until we come to dwell in the house of our God for ever.

CHAP. XIII.

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Job prosecutes the subject of his expostulation with his friends through the greater part of this chapter. He leaves discoursing with them, for a short space, and makes an earnest application to God.

LO, mine eye hath seen all this, mine ear hath heard and understood it.

2 What ye know, *the same* do I know also: I *am* not inferior unto you.

3 Surely I would speak to the Almighty, and I desire to reason with God.

4 But ye *are* forgers of lies, ye *are* all physicians of no value.

5 O that ye would altogether hold your peace! and it should be your wisdom.

6 Hear now my reasoning, and hearken to the pleadings of my lips.

7 Will ye speak wickedly for God? and talk deceitfully for him?

8 Will ye accept his person? will ye contend for God?

9 Is it good that he should search you out? or as one man mocketh another, do ye *so* mock him?

10 He will surely reprove you, if ye do secretly accept persons.

11 Shall not his excellency make you afraid? and his dread fall upon you?

12 Your remembrances *are* like unto ashes, your bodies to bodies of clay.

13 Hold your peace, let me alone, that I may speak, and let come on me what *will*.

14 ¶ Wherefore do I take my flesh in my teeth, and put my life in mine hand?

15 Though he slay me, yet will I trust in him: but I will maintain mine own ways before him.

16 He also *shall be* my salvation: for an hypocrite shall not come before him.

17 Hear diligently my speech, and my declaration with your ears.

In addition to the arguments Job had used before, he riseth up to another point of reasoning in those verses, and plainly tells his friends, that while they vainly supposed they were taking the part of God against him, they were really making the cause of God to suffer by their false counsel: for in so doing, and putting it down as a matter of fact, that afflictions were sure marks of displeasure, they were speaking wickedly for God. Hence, Job calls them, physicians of no value; and he should consider it their wisdom if the consciousness of this would make them hold their peace. Reader! let us by the way, make the same observation of all false reasoning to minds distressed; when men point not to that which can alone heal. A broken heart

none can heal but Jesus: and whatever men direct to short of his blood and righteousness, are literally, like Job's counsellors, physicians of no value.

18 Behold now; I have ordered *my* cause; I know that I shall be justified.

19 Who *is* he *that* will plead with me? for now, if I hold my tongue, I shall give up the ghost.

One might have thought, had we not known otherwise, that Job had read Paul's challenge, Rom. viii. 33. or that he had humbly borrowed those sweet words which the prophet useth in reference, as we may suppose, to the person of Jesus. Isa. l. 7, 8. But, indeed, what Job had said before, that though God should slay him, yet would he trust in him, carries with it so noble an act of the most lively faith, as nothing but an eye to the righteousness of a Redeemer could produce. And that Job had those views, a subsequent part of his discourse with his friends very plainly, and very fully proves: chap. xix. 25, 26.

20 ¶ Only do not two *things* unto me: then will I not hide myself from thee.

21 Withdraw thine hand far from me: and let not thy dread make me afraid.

22 Then call thou, and I will answer: or let me speak, and answer thou me.

23 How many *are* mine iniquities and sins? make me to know my transgression and my sin.

24 Wherefore hidest thou thy face, and holdest me for thine enemy?

25 Wilt thou break a leaf driven to and fro? and wilt thou pursue the dry stubble?

26 For thou writest bitter things against me, and makest me to possess the iniquities of my youth.

27 Thou puttest my feet also in the stocks, and lookest narrowly unto all my paths; thou settest a print upon the heels of my feet.

28 And he, as a rotten thing, consumeth, as a garment that is moth eaten.

We see the mourner here, as in several instances before, using language wonderfully bold with God, which nothing but the firmest

faith in Christ could warrant. Indeed, if the believer goes to God in the Redeemer's righteousness, and seeks justification in the name of the only begotten Son of God, this may and will induce an holy confidence. Happy the soul who can thus draw near! But without this, when God calls, who could answer?

REFLECTIONS.

READER! let you and I pause over this view of Job's confidence, and ask our own hearts whether, in our approaches now in ordinances, and looking forward to our appearance shortly before the judgment-seat, when we shall stand before the throne, we have this well grounded assurance of acceptance in Jesus.

It is a grand question, and of all others the most important to be rightly known. Some are for postponing this enquiry, as if it could not be fully known until the last day. But let those who know not the scripture, neither the power of God, be content so to defer it. Let you and I see whether the knowledge is not attainable now, and under the conviction that it is, bring the blessed effects of it into present possession and enjoyment, that we may be the patient followers of them who now, through faith and patience, inherit the promises.

The Lord hath said he will be sanctified by all them that draw nigh unto him: Hence, when the Holy Ghost is about to convince a sinner of sin, he sets up a tribunal in his very heart, and the work of grace begins in making the poor sinner to know and feel a sensibleness of his own lost and utterly undone estate, as it stands before God. Thus breaking up the fallow ground of the heart for the seed of righteousness, the Holy Ghost next brings the convinced sinner acquainted with the person and work of the Lord Jesus Christ: and so powerfully convinceth him of the suitableness and all-sufficiency of Jesus for salvation, as to incline the sinner's whole soul to the belief, and to the cordial and hearty acceptance of redemption in this blessed way of God's own appointing. And when these blessed works are wrought in the poor sinner's soul, like Job, he hastens to plead the whole before the throne. Reader! is this your privilege, your happiness, your confidence? If so, these precious things speaks for themselves. It is by these things, men live, and in this is the life of the soul. Oh! for grace thus to bring the Lord Jesus, and his finished work, in the arms of our faith in all our approaches to a mercy-seat in ordinances here below, in prayer, in communion, and in all our intercourse with God, while this side Jordan; and when we pass the river of death, this will be our sure and safe pleading against all the accusations of Satan, the fears of our own conscience, the terrors of God's broken law, and the just judgments of Almighty God. Yes! blessed Jesus, I will now and for ever say, Thou hast answered, and thou wilt answer for me, O Lord, my God!

CHAP. XIV.

CONTENTS.

Job continues his discourse through this chapter. He seems, in what is here said, to be addressing himself more than his friends, and from

the view he takes of the miseries of life to implore God for a mitigation of his sorrows.

MAN *that is* born of a woman *is* of few days, and full of trouble. ¹

2 He cometh forth like a flower, and is cut down: he fleeth also as a shadow, and continueth not.

This description is set forth in a very elegant poetical strain; but the humbling view of our nature is not the less for that. Poor dying man! who is at the best, frail, polluted, full of trouble, and his life but a vapour!

3 And dost thou open thine eyes upon such an one, and bringest me into judgment with thee?

4 Who can bring a clean *thing* out of an unclean? not one.

5 Seeing his days *are* determined, the number of his months *are* with thee, thou hast appointed his bounds that he cannot pass;

6 Turn from him, that he may rest, till he shall accomplish, as an hireling, his day.

What a striking enquiry? Who, from such a polluted creature as man, can bring forth any thing clean? Precious Jesus! thou, and thou only; for a poor polluted sinner, washed in thy blood, will come forth clean, and the darkest creature in corruption be made whiter than snow!

7 ¶ For there is hope of a tree, if it be cut down, that it will sprout again, and that the tender branch thereof will not cease.

8 Though the root thereof wax old in the earth, and the stock thereof die in the ground;

9 Yet through the scent of water it will bud, and bring forth boughs like a plant.

10 But man dieth, and wasteth away: yea, man giveth up the ghost, and where *is* he?

11 As the waters fail from the sea, and the flood decayeth and drieth up:

12 So man lieth down, and riseth not: till the heavens *be* no more, they shall not awake, nor be raised out of their sleep.

13 O that thou wouldest hide me in the grave, that thou wouldest keep me secret, until thy wrath be past, that thou wouldest appoint me a set time, and remember me!

14 If a man die, shall he live *again*? all the days of my appointed time will I wait, till my change come.

15 Thou shalt call, and I will answer thee: thou wilt have a desire to the work of thine hands.

There cannot be a question, from this most beautiful and striking passage, but that Job had the clearest apprehensions of a future state. He describes the vegetable production, and, in the instance of a tree cut down, shews that there is yet a principle of life in it. And can it be supposed, (it is as if Job had said) that man, at his dropping into the grave, hath no life, nothing further? But Job riseth to an higher evidence, when he adds a prayer that he might be hid, until the indignation was over past. And then he saith, when the Lord shall call, he will answer. The Lord cannot but have a desire to his own work. These are very strong testimonies in proof of Job's confidence in another state. But oh! how infinitely they fall short of what believers in Jesus are possessed of. Oh! thou precious Lord God! it is thou which hast brought life and immortality to light by thy gospel! And, Reader! let me beg of you to read what Paul the apostle delivered to the church of the Thessalonians, by way of animating their minds on this important subject: 1 Thess. iv. 13 to the end.

16 ¶ For now thou numberest my steps: dost thou not watch over my sin?

17 My transgression is sealed up in a bag, and thou sewest up mine iniquity.

18 And surely the mountain falling cometh to nought, and the rock is removed out of his place.

19 The waters wear the stones: thou wastest away the things which grow *out* of the dust of the earth; and thou destroyest the hope of man.

20 Thou prevailest for ever against him, and he passeth: thou changest his countenance, and sendest him away.

21 His sons come to honour, and he knoweth *it* not; and they are brought low, but he perceived *it* not of them.

22 But his flesh upon him shall have pain, and his soul within him shall mourn.

Job is here getting again into his old note of complaining. The poor man seems at times, when his whole soul felt warmed with the subject of divine love, to lose both a sight and sense of his own sorrows. But *the clouds return after the rain*. Probably some new pains of body, and distress of mind, breaking out afresh, like a captive awaking from sleep, whose refreshment, during that state of nature's forgetfulness, had been sweet, finds himself still in prison; so Job, after dwelling upon the Lord's goodness, falls back again to the feeling of his own misery, and laments it. Alas! what is the sum total of life, but what Job observes, both in the opening and close of this chapter? Without an eye to Jesus, without an interest in Jesus, as an hireling's is his day, and that day a day only of trouble! Oh! how sweet that prayer; *So teach us to number our days, as to apply our hearts unto wisdom.* Psm. xc. 12.

REFLECTIONS.

READER! while we contemplate, from the perusal of this chapter, the low and depressed state of our fallen nature, born to trouble, and but of short continuance; and while such a view tends, under divine teaching, to induce all that suitable and becoming frame of mind belonging to sinful, perishing, dying creatures, let us turn the leaf of the chapter also to that interesting part of it, and read of that God-man, who, to redeem our nature from those ruined circumstances, condescended to be born of a woman, and to be also of a few days upon earth, and those days full of trouble. Indeed, all the sorrows of the human state sink to nothing, when compared to the sorrows of Jesus, wherewith he was afflicted when he stood as our Surety, and when the Lord afflicted him in the day of his anger. He took upon him our sins; was made a curse, counted a deceiver, a blasphemer, a devil, nay, the prince of devils, when in the same moment his holy soul knew no sin, and in his mouth there was no guile. From the first assumption of our nature, Jesus became subject to the same feelings. He humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross: and all the miseries incident to man's life the blessed Jesus bore. He drank deep of that cup, the cup of trembling: and endured a contradiction of sinners against himself, compared to which, all the unkindness of Job's friends is not to be mentioned. The reproaches of them that reproached me (saith Jesus, speaking of the blasphemies of men against God), are fallen upon me. And if the prophet Jeremiah, under the persecutions he sustained, cried out, *Woe is me, my mother hath born me a man of contention to the whole earth*, what might the Lord Jesus have said concerning the opposition which he met with from every quarter!

O thou blessed Jesus! may it be my consolation, in every little exercise which thou art pleased to call me to, in the contemplation of thine unequalled sorrows, to lose sight of my own. And may it form one of my most sanctified hours to be following thy steps to the garden, and to the cross. There may I be looking on Jesus, there see my

Lord, and from that view gather instruction. And while I view thine agony and bloody sweat, hear thy dolorous cries, and behold thy love still remaining firm and unshaken to thy redeemed; oh! may thy Holy Spirit lead forth my whole heart and soul in all the earnest affections of love and adoration.

CHAP. XV.

CONTENTS.

We have in this chapter Eliphaz reassuming the argument. He falls hard upon Job, still harping upon the string of Job's hypocrisy. He maketh use of sound reasoning however, only so far as it related to Job, it was misapplied.

THEN answered Eliphaz the Temanite, and
* said,

2 Should a wise man utter vain knowledge,
and fill his belly with the east wind?

3 Should he reason with unprofitable talk? or
with speeches wherewith he can do no good?

To all these questions, the answer is direct. But what application had this reasoning to Job? Vain knowledge, unprofitable talk, and speeches good for nothing, were not in Job's discourse.

4 Yea, thou castest off fear, and restrainest
prayer before God.

This, had it been true, would have been a heavy charge: and if false, made Eliphaz a transgressor. Reader! you may safely conclude, that a prayerless state is a graceless state. And on the contrary, where a spirit of supplication is poured out, that soul will delight to draw nigh to God.

5 For thy mouth uttereth thine iniquity, and
thou choolest the tongue of the crafty.

6 Thine own mouth condemneth thee, and not
I: yea, thine own lips testify against thee.

Surely this was a very unkind, not to say unjust construction, which Eliphaz put upon Job's words. He had complained indeed in the bitterness of his soul, but not *against* God, though *to* God.

7 *Art* thou the first man *that* was born? or wast
thou made before the hills?

8 Hast thou heard the secret of God? and
dost thou restrain wisdom to thyself?

9 What knowest thou, that we know not?
what understandest thou, which *is* not in us?

10 With us *are* both the greyheaded and very aged men, much elder than thy father.

11 *Are* the consolations of God small with thee? is there any secret thing with thee?

12 Why doth thine heart carry thee away? and what do thy eyes wink at,

13 That thou turnest thy spirit against God, and lettest such words go out of thy mouth?

How taunting are those questions, and to what profit? And especially when we consider them coming from the mouth of one who came as a friend to condole with Job on his calamities. Reader! do pause to remark with me, how very important an office that is of visiting the sick, and persons under affliction; yet while a man be found faithful, he should not be harsh and severe in his observations. Elipház came to comfort Job: but alas! as Job said, what miserable comforters were both his friends and him!

14 What is man that he should be clean? and *he which is* born of a woman, that he should be righteous?

15 Behold, he putteth no trust in his saints! yea, the heavens are not clean in his sight.

16 How much more abominable and filthy *is* man, which drinketh iniquity like water?

Separating these words, for a moment, from any connexion with either Job or his friends, what strong and forcible truths do they contain. How sure and certain? How just and humbling? But, Reader! do not overlook what sweet testimonies they carry with them to the truth of the gospel! If men be unclean; if saints can find no trust from God; if the heavens are not clean in God's sight; judge, Reader, the vast necessity and importance of a righteousness in which God will put trust. And where shall we find that, or in whom, but in Jesus? Make one observation more on this interesting passage. Though Jehovah puts no trust in angels, yet, in Jesus his dear and ever blessed Son, as the sinners' Surety, he doth; and while the heavens are not clean in his sight, he saith concerning Jesus, *This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.* Reader! do not overlook this, I beseech you. I know not what your feelings are; but I can tell you for myself, I have, upon numberless occasions, found great comfort, and an holy joy, when going to God my Father in prayer, I have been enabled to tell him of the purity and spotlessness of Jesus, and his righteousness as my covering.

17 ¶ I will shew thee, hear me; and that *which* I have seen I will declare;

18 Which wise men have told from their fathers, and have not hid *it*:

19 Unto whom alone the earth was given, and no stranger passed among them.

20 The wicked man travaileth with pain all *his* days, and the number of years is hidden to the oppressor.

21 A dreadful sound *is* in his ears: in prosperity the destroyer shall come upon him.

22 He believeth not that he shall return out of darkness, and he is waited for of the sword.

23 He wandereth abroad for bread, *saying*, Where *is it?* he knoweth that the day of darkness is ready at his hand.

24 Trouble and anguish shall make him afraid; they shall prevail against him, as a king ready to the battle.

25 For he stretcheth out his hand against God, and strengtheneth himself against the Almighty.

26 He runneth upon him, *even* on *his* neck, upon the thick bosses of his bucklers:

27 Because he covereth his face with his fatness, and maketh collops of fat on *his* flanks.

28 And he dwelleth in desolate cities, *and* in houses which no man inhabiteth, which are ready to become heaps.

29 He shall not be rich, neither shall his substance continue, neither shall he prolong the perfection thereof upon the earth.

30 He shall not depart out of darkness; the flame shall dry up his branches, and by the breath of his mouth shall he go away.

31 Let not him that is deceived trust in vanity: for vanity shall be his recompence.

32 It shall be accomplished before his time, and his branch shall not be green.

33 He shall shake off his unripe grape as the vine, and shall cast off his flower as the olive.

34 For the congregation of hypocrites *shall*

be desolate, and fire shall consume the tabernacles of bribery.

35 They conceive mischief, and bring forth vanity, and their belly prepareth deceit.

Eliphaz makes a long discourse, and lays down many great truths and sound arguments; though in many instances accompanied with ill-founded observations. His chief scope is to shew that where a life of misery is, there must have been much wickedness. Job, on the contrary had contended, that God might and did afflict his people, and that afflictions were no marks of divine displeasure. And this is so very agreeable to the whole tenor of the gospel, that there can be no doubt but Job was under the same divine Teacher. Indeed Job, in his heavy trials and afflictions, became a lively type of the great Author of the gospel himself. I do not detain the Reader with any length of remarks on Eliphaz's discourse. The words of it are very plain, and the drift of it as easy to be understood. And they can receive no beauty in an illustration of what is too beautiful in point of language to be increased.

REFLECTIONS.

READER! let us pause over what we have been reading of the aggravated afflictions of Job. Was it not enough that the Lord was exercising his servant, but those three men must throw in their unkind and unjust interpretations of God's dealings? Surely those sharp and bitter reproaches could not fail to add to poor Job's misery. We naturally look round in our sorrows for some to commiserate. But this distressed sufferer, instead of consolation, met with nothing but reproof.

But let us pass over the view of men, that are but instruments, and behold how the Lord produces good from evil. Though no chastening for the present seemeth to be joyous, but grievous, nevertheless, afterward it yieldeth the peaceable fruits of righteousness to them that are exercised thereby. No calamity, no stroke of trouble, however heavy, however severe, can rob a follower of the Lord of his favor. Nothing can take away our Christ, that first, and best, and comprehensive gift of a covenant God! *What shall separate us from the love of Christ?* (saith Paul) *Neither death, nor life,* (saith the apostle) *neither things present, nor things to come.* Having him then, in him we possess all things.

But, Reader! let us not close this chapter of the relation of Job's sufferings, nor indeed any other, without looking beyond Job, to him that was the Prince of Sufferers, as he was the Prince of Peace. Yes! blessed Jesus! it behoved thee, that in all things thou mightest have the pre-eminency. Oh! thou gracious Redeemer! how do all sorrows sink to nothing, when we behold thee in the garden, and on the tree; when we behold thy agony and bloody sweat, thy cross and passion; and hear that heart-piercing cry, *My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?* And all this, not for thyself, but for thy people; not that thy holy life needed ought, but for thy voluntary grace and favor to our poor, lost, ruined, and undone nature: thou didst suffer, the just for the unjust, to bring us to God; and didst even admit the being de-

serted of thy Father for a space, that we might not be deserted for ever! Boundless love of a most precious, loving Saviour!

CHAP. XVI.

CONTENTS.

Job in this chapter is again entering upon his defence. He complains of the unkindness of his friends; pleads for more tenderness from them; shews the pitifulness of his case: and again, as to the charge of hypocrisy, contends that he is not guilty.

THEN Job answered and said,
 2 I have heard many such things: miserable comforters *are* ye all.

The retort Job makes on Eliphaz, is to the same amount as before. He had already heard much reasoning of the same kind; but what can reasoning do to assuage the sorrows of an heavy heart. He had before told both Eliphaz and his companions, that they were physicians of no value, (chap. xiii. 4.) and here he adds that they were miserable comforters. But, Reader! is not the same kind of observation still more applicable, when considered as referring to a soul seeking salvation; to an awakened sinner, who is truly anxious to be informed how to find peace with God: are not those miserable comforters, who would send the poor distressed creature to his best endeavours, to his repentance, tears, and the like, instead of directing him to Jesus, to God's pardoning love and mercy in the blood and righteousness of his dear Son, and to the sweet comforts and influences of the Holy Ghost! Can any thing be more plain, than that a guilty sinner needs a holy Saviour; and short of this, the enquiring soul comes short of all! Precious Lamb of God! be thou my consolation, for without thee I should be miserable for ever.

3 Shall vain words have an end? or what emboldeneth thee that thou answerest?

4 I also could speak as ye *do*: if your soul were in my soul's stead, I could heap up words against you, and shake mine head at you.

5 *But* I would strengthen you with my mouth, and the moving of my lips should asswage *your* grief.

6 Though I speak, my grief is not asswaged: and *though* I forbear what am I eased?

There is a very sweet expression of Job in these verses, in which he intimates, that he would not have served his friends as they have him, had a reverse of circumstances been their portion. Reader! do not overlook it, for it is a blessed token of grace. And how beautiful and lovely is the same feature in Jesus, as the apostle hath marked it; *Who when he was reviled, reviled not again.* 1 Pet. ii. 23.

7 ¶ But now, he hath made me weary: thou hast made desolate all my company.

8 And thou hast filled me with wrinkles, *which* is a witness *against me*: and my leanness rising up in me beareth witness to my face.

9 He teareth *me* in his wrath, who hateth me: he gnasheth upon me with his teeth; mine enemy sharpeneth his eyes upon me.

10 They have gaped upon me with their mouth; they have smitten me upon the cheek reproachfully; they have gathered themselves together against me.

11 God hath delivered me to the ungodly, and turned me over into the hands of the wicked.

12 I was at ease, but he hath broken me asunder: he hath also taken *me* by my neck, and shaken me to pieces, and set me up for his mark.

13 His archers compass me round about, he cleaveth my reins asunder, and doth not spare; he poureth out my gall upon the ground.

14 He breaketh me with breach upon breach, he runneth upon me like a giant.

15 I have sewed sackcloth upon my skin, and defiled my horn in the dust.

16 My face is foul with weeping, and on my eyelids *is* the shadow of death;

17 ¶ Not for *any* injustice in mine hands: also my prayer *is* pure.

18 O earth, cover thou not my blood, and let my cry have no place.

Perhaps in no part of Job's complaints doth the torrent with which his whole frame was overwhelmed rise higher, than in what is contained in this discourse. His heart seemed to have been full, and he gives it vent. How exercised in his family, in his person, by the enemy of souls, the unkind and unjust reproaches of his friends; and to sum up all, his God looking on, and yet to his earnest cries returning no answer. Job knew not the blessed issue which awaited the whole, and therefore only spoke while under the full pressure of the accumulated burthens. There is a great elegance in the figure of Job's leanness, when he consi-

dered the wrinkles of his wasted body, as carrying about with him an unceasing witness to his grief. And the close of the complaint, in crying to the earth to cover not his blood, but to be above the ground in testimony for him; these are most striking expressions of the mind of Job.

19 Also now, behold, my witness *is* in heaven, and my record *is* on high.

20 My friends scorn me: *but* mine eyes poureth out *tears* unto God.

21 O that one might plead for a man with God, as a man *pleadeth* for his neighbour!

22 When a few years are come, then I shall go the way *whence* I shall not return.

But the greatest beauty of Job's discourse, and what I would above every other call upon the Reader to remark with me is, the earnest longing contained in the close of his address, in which he is so passionately looking out for the Mediator. Let the Reader look over again and again what Job here saith, *Oh that one might plead for a man with God!* Then let him see that prayer answered, in the appointment of Jesus, as our Great High Priest and Intercessor; and then let him determine for himself, (for to his own heart under the blessed Spirit's teaching, I leave the subject for decision), whether Job had not an eye to Jesus; who is not only our Advocate with the Father, but is such in the very way which Job desired, even as the man Christ Jesus pleading for his neighbour, his poor brethren, his kinsmen after the flesh, and whom he is not ashamed to call brethren. Heb. ii. 11.

REFLECTIONS.

READER! while we behold Job bowed down under the very heavy load of sorrow, and hear the complaints issuing from him, as related in this chapter; let us not be too hasty, in charging the poor man with impatience. Alas! what can the coolness of reason accomplish, in the hour of warm distresses. No doubt it is our unbelief, which is at the bottom of all our rash conclusions, and unbecoming thoughts. And had Job instead of looking at second causes, been able to have had his faith always exercised, in resting upon God's faithfulness, and God's promises; faith would have triumphed more nobly. But where, blessed Jesus, where shall we look for this perfection of faith, but in thee the author of it? Oh! that I had but grace in all my lesser exercises, to remember that thou art everlastingly pursuing one plan, and that a plan of pure love and mercy, in all the events which take place in thy church, and among thy people! Thou hast thine eyes upon them for good. And all is working together for good, even in the very moment when outward circumstances, or inward trials, seem to be most distressing. This we know by the sequel of Job's history, to have been the case in his instance. And it is the same in the instance of all the redeemed. How many a precious soul hath found cause in the close of some heavy trial, to look back through the dark passage he hath been

brought, and then he could discern, though he could not while passing through it, the clear marks of Jesus's presence, and his leadings in the way! How many have kissed the rod, at the moment it hath been taking from them, which while exercising in God's hand, they have trembled under? Reader! let our improvement from this chapter, and indeed from all Job's history, be to arrive to this most certain conclusion; whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth. Precious Jesus! never, never remit those tokens of thy love to me, however painful to flesh and blood! Under the blessed teachings of thy Holy Spirit, I am every day learning more and more, (though one of the most wayward scholars in thy school), that they are necessary. I see, gracious Lord, that the greatest enemy I have to contend with is my spiritual warfare, is my own fleshly, sinful, corrupt, and unbelieving heart. I see that this flesh is always seeking ease and enjoyment, and for ever opposing the holy pursuits, and desires of my better part. Lord! undertake for me. Stir up my soul. Unsettle my rest; hedge up my path with thorns if thou seest it needful, so that if I seek after my lovers in any corrupt affection, I may not find them. And dear Lord, allure me, and bring me into the wilderness, and there speak comfortably unto me, according to thine own most sweet and gracious promise, that I may return unto thee, my *Ishi*, my first, and best, and truest husband, at length, perfectly convinced that in thee only, present peace and everlasting happiness are found.

CHAP. XVII.

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Job continueth his discourse through this Chapter. He speaks of the grave as an asylum: still holding fast his integrity, he looks up to God with an hope, that the sufferings he was exercised with, would not afford an occasion of stumbling to the good, nor confidence to the bad; and points out his relationship with the worm and corruption.

MY breath is corrupt, my days are extinct,
the graves are ready for me.

2 *Are there not mockers with me? and doth not mine eye continue in their provocation?*

3 *Lay down now, put me in a surety with thee; who is he that will strike hands with me?*

Was not Job a type of Jesus in the very great sufferings, with which he was exercised; and especially in those exercises when despised and afflicted of men? It should seem indeed, that with an eye to the Lord Jesus, the great enemy of souls was permitted to make his attack upon Job; because it is not only suitable that the Son of God, in his own person should triumph over the foe, but in his members also. Jesus as the surety of his people, first entered the field of battle with Satan, and conquered him; but all whom God did foreknow, are said to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the first born among many brethren. Rom. viii. 29. Oh! what a blessedness in this point of view, is there in the afflictions of the righteous!

4 For thou hast hid their heart from understanding: therefore shalt thou not exalt *them*.

5 He that speaketh flattery to *his* friends, even the eyes of his children shall fail.

6 ¶ He hath made me also a byword of the people; and aforetime I was as a tabret.

7 Mine eye also is dim by reason of sorrow, and all my members *are* as a shadow.

8 Upright *men* shall be astonied at this, and the innocent shall stir up himself against the hypocrite.

9 The righteous also shall hold on his way, and he that hath clean hands shall be stronger and stronger.

10 But as for you all, do ye return, and come now: for I cannot find *one* wise *man* among you.

We shall do well in these calamities of Job, to look beyond the man of Uz, and contemplate him whose sufferings were unequalled. When Christ as the surety of his people, bore all the billows of wrath due to the sinner, it was no small aggravation of his calamity, that he endured also the contradiction of sinners against himself. He was reproached as a false prophet, as a sabbath breaker, a deceiver, nay, as in league with the devils, casting out evil spirits, by Beelzebub the prince of them. He was not only scourged, and his sacred head crowned with thorns; but laughed at in the midst of his agonies, and tauntingly required to come down from the cross. Precious Jesus! how do all sorrows sink to nothing in the view of thine? Never was there any like unto that sorrow wherewith the Lord afflicted the sinner's surety in the day of his fierce anger! Lament. i. 12.

11 ¶ My days are past, my purposes are broken off, *even* the thoughts of my heart.

12 They change the night into day: the light *is* short because of darkness.

13 If I wait, the grave *is* mine house: I have made my bed in the darkness.

14 I have said to corruption, Thou *art* my father: to the worm, Thou *art* my mother, and my sister.

15 And where *is* now my hope? as for my hope, who shall see it?

16 They shall go down to the bars of the pit, when *our* rest together *is* in the dust.

There are two sweet thoughts of Job contained in these verses, which very highly merit our regard. The first is, of the alliance man hath with corruption; and the other is, of the conduct which should be ever preserved among those, who have worms for their nearest relations. Sweet were Paul's thoughts on the same subject, when he protested to the *Corinthian* church that *he died daily*. 1 Cor. xv. 31. And how affectionately doth Job close his address in this chapter toward his friends, notwithstanding all the harsh lectures which they had been reading to him. They shall go down to the bars of the pit, (that is, we shall, saith Job, along with all mankind), and there we shall rest together in the dust. What though we cannot agree here; in that silent home the wicked cease from troubling. However in life men differ; in death contention ceaseth. Blessed consideration to the believer in Jesus! Though sin brought death into the world, Jesus by taking out the sting of death, hath put a blessing into death. 'Blessed,' said a voice from heaven, 'are the dead which die in the Lord. Yea, saith the Spirit,' as if confirming the glorious truth, 'for they rest from their labours, and their works do follow them.' Rev. xiv. 13.

REFLECTIONS.

READER! let you and I seek grace from the Lord, that we may gather from this chapter all the blessed improvements the Holy Ghost intended from it, to convey to his church and people. For you and I may with equal justness, take up Job's language as he did, and say, Our breath is corrupt, our days are extinct, and the grave is ready for us. Whether Job's afflictions, or Job's trials, may be or not our portion in going home through our pilgrimage state, we know not. These things are in a wiser and better appointment than our own. But whether or not a time of trouble come, death *must* come; for it is appointed unto all men once to die, and after this the judgment. And what an awful thing must it be, to be unprepared for what is so sure! Depend upon it, the man that lives at an uncertainty, will die at an uncertainty. How much doth the example of Job recommend itself to our notice and imitation; if like him, we were to deal familiarly with death; take a turn often to the grave, and fancy ourselves as there, before that in reality we are carried there; this would tend to lessen the apprehension, and lead the soul into a serious enquiry, of the surest means of making it a peaceable and happy dwelling place. This would be to use the world as not abusing it, and to induce, under divine teaching, those blessed effects, which while prompting the heart to say to corruption, thou art my father; and to the worm, thou art my mother and my sister, would lead out the whole soul in desires after him, who by his death hath overcome death, and by his resurrection, hath secured the everlasting happiness of his redeemed. Yes! thou Great, thou Almighty Conqueror of death, hell, and the grave! This would be to become savingly acquainted with thee, and thy precious salvation, that both in a living hour, and in a dying hour, our hearts might be on the

look out for the Master's call, that whether it should be at midnight or at cockcrow, or in the morning, we might be found like those wise servants, who wait for their Lord's approach. Precious Jesus! write thy gracious warning upon each heart, and grant us grace, to live up to the constant exercise of it, by faith in thy blood and righteousness: *Be ye always ready, for ye know not at what hour the Son of man cometh.*

CHAP. XVIII.

CONTENTS.

In this Chapter Bildad comes forth to a second attack upon the man of Uz, and more violent than before. Chap. 8. His chief scope, through the whole of his discourse is, to fasten upon Job the conviction of wickedness and hypocrisy.

THEN answered Bildad the Shuhite, and said,

2 How long *will it be ere* ye make an end of words? mark, and afterwards we will speak.

3 Wherefore are we counted as beasts, *and* reputed vile in your sight?

There is nothing new in these observations, except in the different manner of expression. *Bildad* seems mighty angry, that what he had said before had been so little regarded. He chargeth Job with idle unprofitable talk, and with observing contempt towards him and his friends. But he advanceth no one proof to make good that charge, and there the matter seemeth to rest.

4 He teareth himself in his anger: shall the earth be forsaken for thee? and shall the rock be removed out of his place?

5 ¶ Yea, the light of the wicked shall be put out, and the spark of his fire shall not shine.

What an unnecessary question or two, doth the Shuhite make use of here. Surely Job in desiring quietness and a deliverance from trouble and pain, had never intimated that he wished miracles to be wrought, in the accomplishment of the mercy he implored. But Reader! we shall lose the whole design and drift of what those three visitors of poor Job upon his dunghill, were intended for, if we lose sight of the Lord's grace towards Job in the permission of those exercises, and the discomfiture of Satan, as was all along determined to be accomplished, in the issue of the attack. This the Reader should continue to recollect, as he passeth through the perusal of Job's history. The very outset of the business, from the charge of Satan, was to prove Job an hypocrite. And when the enemy's more immediate attack upon Job, on account of his substance and children was over; through the means of those mistaken friends, the enemy assaults him in those afflictions.

6 The light shall be dark in his tabernacle, and his candle shall be put out with him.

7 The steps of his strength shall be straitened, and his own counsel shall cast him down.

8 For he is cast into a net by his own feet, and he walketh upon a snare.

9 The gin shall take *him* by the heel, and the robber shall prevail against him.

10 The snare *is* laid for him in the ground, and a trap for him in the way.

11 Terrors shall make him afraid on every side, and shall drive him to his feet.

12 His strength shall be hungerbitten, and destruction *shall be* ready at his side.

13 It shall devour the strength of his skin: *even* the firstborn of death shall devour his strength.

14 His confidence shall be rooted out of his tabernacle, and it shall bring him to the king of terrors.

15 It shall dwell in his tabernacle, because *it is* none of his: brimstone shall be scattered upon his habitation.

16 His roots shall be dried up beneath, and above shall his branch be cut off.

17 His remembrance shall perish from the earth, and he shall have no name in the street.

18 He shall be driven from light into darkness, and chased out of the world.

19 He shall neither have son nor nephew among his people, nor any remaining in his dwellings.

20 They that come after *him* shall be astonished at his day, as they that went before were affrighted.

21 Surely such are the dwellings of the wicked, and this *is* the place of *him that* knoweth not God.

I see no reason for making a break in this discourse of Bildad. It should seem better to read it wholly through, and then look to gather into one point of view, the drift of his whole reasoning. The Shuhite is not through the whole of it, speaking personally of Job, but rather his object is to make Job draw the application of his discourse himself. He is describing the character of an hypocrite, and then pointing to his sure destruction. And this he doth under several particulars. His candle shall be put out. The sparks he hath kindled shall not shine. His feet shall be taken as in a net. His life shall be in terrors. Both roof and branch shall die. When Bildad had thus drawn out in a very finished manner, the picture of the wicked; he evidently intended that Job should feel, that it was he whom the Shuhite had in view. The close of his lecture evidently implied all this, for he calls it the misery of such an end, and which as far as outward things reached, marked the present situation of the man of Uz.

REFLECTIONS.

OUR reflections on this chapter will be rendered profitable, if so be the Holy Ghost graciously make them so for us, in leading our minds to consider how very consistent it is, with the love the Lord hath to the persons of his people, as in the instance of Job, to chasten them for their departures and infirmities. Reader! only pause and consider how great, how dear, how inexpressibly costly our redemption was to God, And therefore how suitable it is, that there should not be the smallest abuse of his covenant mercy, by his dear Son. Though Job was no hypocrite, yet Job confessed himself to be a sinner, sprung from the common stock of whom it is with truth said, there is none righteous, no not one. And there is in the best of men, even the most faithful servants of the Lord Jesus, so much of that commonness of corruption, belonging to a fallen nature, that if God's grace did not restrain it, the worst of sins would be the sad and deadly consequence breaking out in all. How blessed is it then to see in God's chastisement of our sin, though accepting the person of his people in Jesus, he manifests the holiness of his nature, and secures his own glory. And here, blessed Jesus, cause both Writer and Reader to pause, and contemplate the unparalleled instance of this regard Jehovah had to his holiness, and to his glory, when for sin in us he put thee to grief. Never, surely, was there such a proof ever given. And never can there be any more the like to it; as when he made thee to be sin for us, though thou knewest no sin, that we might be made the righteousness of God in thee. Hail! thou holy, blessed, spotless Lamb of God. Oh! what unknown, what unnumbered, what never to be fully accounted for, or fully recompensed riches, blessings, glories, are contained in the one offering of thyself once for all, by which thou hast for ever perfected them that are sanctified. Oh! write this precious thought upon my inmost soul, and let death itself never, never be able to blunt the remembrance of it; Je-sus and his glorious redemption hath more to plead for his church before God and his Father, than all the church's sins can plead against them. Neither can eternity itself recompense the infinite merit of the righteousness and blood-shedding sacrifice of a God incarnate.

CHAP. XIX.

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Considered with an eye to Christ and Job's faith in him, this Chapter is one of the most interesting in the whole subject of Job's contest with his friends. Job maketh answer to Bildad; begs that he and his companions would spare their unjust censures; still urgeth his present misery, as an apology for his groanings, and concludes with professing his strong confidence in a Redeemer, and everlasting life in him.

THEN Job answered and said,
 2 How long will ye vex my soul, and break me in pieces with words?

Job's account of being broken in pieces with hard words, serves to lead the mind to the recollection of Jesus. Psm. cix. 1—3.

3 These ten times have ye reproached me: ye are not ashamed *that* ye make yourselves strange to me.

4 And be it indeed *that* I have erred, mine error remaineth with myself.

5 If indeed ye will magnify *yourselves* against me, and plead against me my reproach:

6 Know now that God hath overthrown me, and hath compassed me with his net.

7 Behold, I cry out of wrong, but I am not heard: I cry aloud, but *there is* no judgment.

By *ten* times Job seems to have meant, their speaking was doubled by reason of the severity of it. And the poor man pleads what ought to have stopped their unkindness, his afflictions were the Lord's afflictions, and when this is the case it is doubly cruel to heigten them.

8 He hath fenced up my way that I cannot pass, and he hath set darkness in my paths.

9 He hath stripped me of my glory, and taken the crown *from* my head.

10 He hath destroyed me on every side, and I am gone: and mine hope hath he removed like a tree.

11 He hath also kindled his wrath against me, and he counteth me unto him as *one of* his enemies.

12 His troops come together, and raise up

their way against me, and encamp round about my tabernacle.

13 He hath put my brethren far from me, and mine acquaintance are verily estranged from me.

14 My kinsfolk have failed, and my familiar friends have forgotten me.

15 They that dwell in mine house, and my maids, count me for a stranger: I am an alien in their sight.

16 I called my servant, and he gave *me* no answer; I intreated him with my mouth.

17 My breath is strange to my wife, though I intreated for the children's *sake* of mine own body.

18 Yea, young children despised me; I arose, and they spake against me.

19 All my inward friends abhorred me: and they whom I loved are turned against me.

20 My bone cleaveth to my skin and to my flesh, and I am escaped with the skin of my teeth.

There seems to be much of that which is, and ever will be true gospel in those verses. They are not only of a bodily complaint, but of the anguish of the soul. *First*, Job eyes God's hand in all. It is the Lord, saith Job, that hath fenced up my way. When the awakened sinner not only feels the affliction, but eyes the Lord's hand in that affliction; this is a sweet token that the visitation is beheld spiritually. Reader! recollect how Jesus, when he undertook to place himself in the sinner's room, and to become sin and a curse for his people, felt and uttered his dolorous cries in consequence thereof. Thy reproach, saith Jesus, hath broken my heart. Psm. lxi. 20. *Secondly*, the complaint Job makes of having his brethren put far from him. Here the mourner is a lively type also of the Lord Jesus: who is represented as a stranger unto his brethren, and an alien unto his mother's children. Psm. lxi. 8. John vii. 5. *Thirdly*, the extremity of his bodily sufferings, his bones cleaving to his skin, and like one escaped with the skin of his teeth. Who can read this and overlook what is said of Jesus, whose tongue cleaved to his jaws, and all whose bones were out of joint. Psm. xxii. 14, 15.

21 ¶ Have pity upon me, have pity upon me,
 O ye my friends; for the hand of God hath touched me.

22 Why do ye persecute me as God, and are not satisfied with my flesh?

Nothing could have been more moving than this address. Surely if the hearts of Job's friends had been capable of any feeling, they would have ceased their persecution. Precious Jesus! how delightful is it to view thee in thy clemency and love, who art a brother born for adversity.

23 O that my words were now written! oh that they were printed in a book!

24 That they were graven with an iron pen and lead in the rock for ever!

I consider these words merely as a preface to what Job was about to say, and not what he had already uttered. And in this sense they serve by way of introduction, to one of the most illustrious instances of faith to be met with, concerning the Lord Jesus Christ in the Old Testament scripture. Pray, Reader, as they are thus introduced and in so important a manner, let you and I attend to them the more earnestly.

25 ¶ For I know *that* my Redeemer liveth, and *that* he shall stand at the latter *day* upon the earth:

26 And *though* after my skin *worms* destroy this *body*, yet in my flesh shall I see God:

27 Whom I shall see for myself, and mine eyes shall behold, and not another; *though* my reins be consumed within me.

Every word in those verses is of vast moment, and deserves our closest regard. *First*, observe Job's open and professed knowledge in a Redeemer: and that Redeemer his own. I know that my Redeemer liveth. *Secondly*, let us recollect what the scriptures in Job's days, (even if we trace him back as far as the time of Moses,) had taught of a Redeemer. In the Levitical dispensation, the right of redemption was vested in a kinsman, the next of kin. See Levit. xxv. 25. And by comparing this law, with what was observed in the days of the Judges, we learn moreover that both the right of inheritance, and the marriage of the next of kin, by way of raising up the name of the dead upon that inheritance, were parts of the same service in redemption. Both these therefore were performed by Jesus, as the kinsman Redeemer of his people, in whom Job professed knowledge. See Ruth iv. 5. 6, with the commentary on these passages. *Thirdly*. This Redeemer in whom Job professed knowledge and faith, was God as well as man; for what is here called goel-Redeemer, in another scripture is called the same, and joined to the Lord of hosts. Isaiah liv. 6. *Fourthly*. Job's conviction of his kinsman Redeemer's living, is a most precious part in Job's creed. None but a living Saviour can save a dead sinner. But Job's faith led him to this precious conclusion, and which Jesus hath since most fully realized;

if Jesus lives his people must live also. John xiv. 19. *Fifthly.* There is another very precious article in this faith of the man of Uz; namely, his own personal interest in all this. It was not enough with Job, (neither, Reader, let it be with you or me,) to know that there is a Redeemer which liveth; but the sweetest part with him was that it was *his* Redeemer: I know, said he, that *my* Redeemer liveth. *Sixthly.* It was no small evidence of the strength of Job's faith, and shews that the faith of the poor afflicted mourner, was true gospel faith, that he was looking forward with a certain assurance, that this his kinsman Redeemer should stand at the latter day upon the earth. Here are clearly included all the grand parts of the gospel. It points to Jesus in his human nature; in his incarnation. It points to Jesus in his crucifixion, that he who once did stand upon the earth in substance of our flesh; and was crucified, dead, and buried, is the very one who shall stand again at the latter day upon the earth. It points to the resurrection, in that it implies the grave was not able to retain him. It points to his ascension, and return at the right hand of power; because without this his redemption, power, and compleat work had not been manifested. And it as fully points to his universal judgment, because this forms a grand part in the work of redemption. So vast therefore a subject of faith and hope, was included in this part of Job's knowledge of his kinsman-Redeemer. *Seventhly.* Job's confidence in the resurrection of the body, by virtue of his interest in this goel-Redeemer. Nothing can be more strongly asserted, than the Patriarch expresseth it. 'Though after my skin worms destroy this body.' And what body so miserable as Job's with sore boils, which made him loathsome to himself and all that saw him? Yet, saith Job, in this very body shall I see him, and mine eyes shall see him for myself and not another for me. Sweet thought also, Reader! The raised bodies of believers will not only see Jesus for themselves, but they will see Jesus in their flesh. God in flesh, in their own nature. Oh! the glorious, inexpressibly glorious consideration!

28 But ye should say, Why persecute we him, seeing the root of the matter is found in me.

29 Be ye afraid of the sword: for wrath *bringeth* the punishments of the sword, that ye may know *there is* a judgment.

These words form no unsuitable conclusion to Job's discourse. It is as if he had said; And will you now any more prosecute me, while I am thus looking to my kinsman Redeemer? Will you endeavour to strip off my leaves, and my fruit of this glorious hope, when the root of the matter, even Jesus himself, is found in me? Oh! vain attempt! besides there is a judgment to be dreaded by you for such conduct. And this reasoning of Job was also founded on that gospel doctrine; Whoso toucheth you, toucheth the apple of his eye. Zech. ii. 8.

REFLECTIONS.

READER! have not you and I cause to blush, while we thus behold a man like Job, in ages so remote from the clear sunshine of the gospel, and overwhelmed as he was with such a pressure of woe, yet professing a

faith so lively, so ardent, so strong, so steady, and unshaken in the Redeemer! while we with all the evidences of a crucified, a risen, and exalted Saviour, can hardly at times maintain a fixedness of soul upon him! Oh! that this view of the Patriarch may be made instrumental, in the sus Christ, Yes! thou dearest Lord, thou art indeed our goel, our Lord the Spirit's Almighty hand, to quicken the faith of both, and lead out the souls of both, upon the person and work of our Lord Jesus, kinsman Redeemer; thou ever livest indeed, for by thy death thou hast destroyed him that had the power of death. Thou shalt indeed stand at the latter day upon the earth. Thou wilt come to be glorified in thy saints, and to be admired in all that believe. Help me, Lord, to live daily, hourly, in this precious faith, and to be looking for thy coming, as one that looketh for his best, his dearest friend. Oh! the rapture which will break in upon my soul when I shall see Jesus, my Redeemer, as God in my flesh, in my nature, manifesting himself to every son of light. And oh! Lord! grant me strength and grace in this blessed hope, to be looking forward to the grave as to a chamber of repose; as one perfectly convinced that I shall rise again, when thou shalt come to call thy members, from the beds and chambers of their slumber; and when both soul and body united by thee, and in thee, to be separated no more, shall be taken home to thine, and thy Father's court, to serve God in his temple, night and day. Build me up, dearest Lord, in this blessed assurance every day, until the last day shall come; and then may my soul ascend to join the spirits of just men made perfect; and my body sweetly fall asleep in Jesus, well convinced that *precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of his saints.*

CHAP. XX.

CONTENTS.

Job having in the foregoing Chapter closed his answer to Bildad; he is appealed to in this, by a new address of Zophar. But the whole of what he advanceth is to the same amount as the former, and runs all upon the same mistaken idea, that misery and suffering can only mark the character of bad men.

THEN answered Zophar the Naamathite, and said,

2 Therefore do my thoughts cause me to answer, and for *this* I make haste.

3 I have heard the check of my reproach, and the spirit of my understanding causeth me to answer.

The Reader should observe in the very opening of Zophar's sermon, that notwithstanding all his violence in support of what he calls good men, and the punishment of the wicked, he gives no testimony of goodness in his own heart, for he shews not the least compassion to Job. Surely had he felt as a good man, he never could have added misery to a heart that was afflicted like Job's, nor when the poor man cried out,

Have pity upon me, have pity upon me, O my friends, as he had just done, have instantly insulted him as he doth in this chapter. Reader! depend upon it there is no true source for morality, and the common charities of life, but in the grace of God in Jesus Christ; and the only dependence for the exercise of the love of man, must be found in the love of God.

4 Knowest thou *not* this of old, since man was placed upon earth,

5 That the triumphing of the wicked *is* short, and the joy of the hypocrite *but* for a moment?

6 Though his excellency mount up to the heavens, and his head reach unto the clouds;

7 *Yet* he shall perish for ever like his own dung: they which have seen him shall say, Where *is* he?

8 He shall fly away as a dream, and shall not be found: yea, he shall be chased away as a vision of the night.

9 The eye also *which* saw him shall *see him* no more; neither shall his place any more behold him.

10 His children shall seek to please the poor, and his hands shall restore their goods.

11 His bones are full *of the sin* of his youth, which shall lie down with him in the dust.

12 Though wickedness be sweet in his mouth, *though* he hide it under his tongue;

13 *Though* he spare it, and forsake it not; but keep it still within his mouth;

14 *Yet* his meat in his bowels is turned, *it is* the gall of asps within him.

15 He hath swallowed down riches, and he shall vomit them up again: God shall cast them out of his belly.

16 He shall suck the poison of asps: the viper's tongue shall slay him.

17 He shall not see the rivers, the floods, the brooks of honey and butter.

18 That which he laboured for shall he restore,

and shall not swallow *it* down: according to *his* substance *shall* the restitution *be*, and he shall not rejoice *therein*.

19 Because he hath oppressed *and* hath forsaken the poor; *because* he hath violently taken away an house which he builded not;

20 Surely he shall not feel quietness in his belly, he shall not save of that which he desired.

21 There shall none of his meat be left; therefore shall no man look for his goods.

22 In the fulness of his sufficiency he shall be in straits: every hand of the wicked shall come upon him.

23 *When* he is about to fill his belly, *God* shall cast the fury of his wrath upon him, and shall rain *it* upon him while he is eating.

24 He shall flee from the iron weapon, *and* the bow of steel shall strike him through.

25 It is drawn, and cometh out of the body; yea, the glittering sword cometh out of his gall: terrors *are* upon him.

26 All darkness *shall be* hid in his secret places: a fire not blown shall consume him; it shall go ill with him that is left in his tabernacle.

27 The heaven shall reveal his iniquity; and the earth shall rise up against him.

28 The increase of his house shall depart, *and* *his goods* shall flow away in the day of his wrath.

29 This *is* the portion of a wicked man from God, and the heritage appointed unto him by God.

I have not interrupted the perusal of the whole discourse of Zophar's, for there is no break in it from beginning to end. The observations arising out of it, therefore, are general observations, which may as well be taken in one point of view as separately. The chief scope of his preaching is, to shew the misery of the wicked, and the prosperity of the righteous. And if Zophar had connected the subject as referring to this life and another, and then insisted upon it that wickedness, must sooner or later, produce misery, all would have been well. But by confining his observations to the limits of this life only, and going upon

that ground, that God never did, nor ever would afflict the righteous, he miserably mistakes the truths of God, and the universal experience of the faithful in all ages. Had he read the history of the Patriarchs, the cruel treatment of Joseph; the bondage of Israel in Egypt, and the like, he would have found the fallacy of his arguments; or had he known, what we know, of Jesus and his sorrows. And the Reader will take notice I hope, that to this ignorance, must be ascribed all the ill reasoning of all the discourses of Job's three friends. If we keep this therefore in view as we read their sermons, then we shall learn how to make the suitable improvements from them, and under this restriction, we shall find many striking observations, well deserving our notice and regard. How beautifully doth Zophar describe, the wretched state of even the most prosperous sinner. How short are his triumphs; how fleeting and unsubstantial all his joy. Though he maketh his nest on high, and his head reacheth the clouds, yet this is only to make his fall more grievous and heavy. His name, his dwelling place, his memory, how soon forgotten. His sins lie down with him in the grave. His conscience, his thoughts, his whole heart always in alarm. What a finished representation of misery, doth Zophar give of the miserable state of wicked men while they live, and of the terrors in which they often die. But as the discourse of Zophar was directed personally to Job in all this, how unkind and unjust was the whole of his reasonings. How much sweeter is that short, but decisive passage of God by the prophet; *Say ye to the righteous that it shall be well with him; for they shall eat the fruit of their doings. Woe unto the wicked it shall be ill with him, for the reward of his hands shall be given him.* Isaiah iii. 10, 11.

REFLECTIONS.

READER! instead of following Zophar's sermon with the conclusions he draws, let you and I look at the subject of the trials and exercises of God's faithful servants, according to what the gospel teacheth us; and what the blessed author of the gospel in his bright example proved, that great exercises imply great grace bestowed, and the fullest evidence of divine love in the appointment of both. What prophet, what apostle, what martyr of God hath been truly eminent as God's servant, but hath been as truly distinguished in suffering? Nay, thou blessed holy Lamb of God! what was thy life when upon earth, but that of a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief?

Reader! let us learn properly to estimate these things. Whenever sinful staggerings would arise at any of the little exercises we are called to; Oh! let us be looking to holy men gone before, and especially looking unto the Lord Jesus. Let us remember the gracious advice the Holy Ghost gives by his servant the apostle. 'Consider him (saith the apostle) that endured such a contradiction of sinners against himself, lest ye be weary and faint in your mind.' One view of Jesus directed by God the Holy Ghost, and by him suitably impressed upon our souls, will quell a thousand carnal reasonings, on the subject of the exercises of the faithful. And while we eye Jesus going before us in the path of trouble, and hear God's faithful promises and covenant engagements to his exercised people under him; this will make us strong in the grace which is in Christ Jesus. We shall then feel some of Paul's

animated spirit; like him be furnished from the Lord with all suitable grace for the trial; and say as he did, *I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us.*

CHAP. XXI.

CONTENTS.

Job again takes up the discourse in this Chapter, and makes another appeal against the false reasoning of his friends. He contendeth, that the wicked sometimes prosper in this life, and therefore it is not less to be expected that the righteous should sometimes suffer: but in death they are alike.

BUT Job answered and said,
 2 Hear diligently my speech, and let this be your consolations.

3 Suffer me that I may speak; and after that I have spoken, mock on.

The man of Uz makes another attempt to win the kindness of his friends, that they might consider his case, as peculiarly needing commiseration. But if he cannot move them to this, he desires still to be heard; and if, after what he had further to say, they were still so harsh in their censures, that then they should mock on.

4 As for me, *is my complaint to man?* and if *it were so*, why should not my spirit be troubled?

5 Mark me, and be astonished, and lay *your hand upon your mouth.*

6 Even when I remember I am afraid, and trembling taketh hold on my flesh.

Perhaps this part of Job's discourse is as interesting and important as any in the whole controversy. He first reminds his friends, that his eye is unto God. From him came his affliction, and therefore from him alone he looks for deliverance. He next intimates how very strange and singular his visitations had been: and how, from the greatest prosperity he had been, in a moment, thrown down to the very depth of misery. The very remembrance of what he once was, and what he was now brought to, he could not recollect but with trembling.

7 ¶ Wherefore do the wicked live, become old, yea, are mighty in power?

Job in this verse reminds his friends of the very different state of the wicked. It is as if he had said, If according to your judgment, that my God is visiting me with such peculiar calamities, for some very heavy and peculiar transgressions, can you explain to me upon the same principles, how it is that the wicked have become old in their carnal prosperity, and continue, to the very close of a long life, prosperous in the world? The same enquiry hath occupied the minds of reflecting men in

all ages. It is only the gospel of Jesus which gives a satisfactory answer. Jer. xii. 1—3.

8 Their seed is established in their sight with them, and their offspring before their eyes.

9 Their houses *are* safe from fear, neither *is* the rod of God upon them.

10 Their bull gendereth, and faileth not; their cow calveth, and casteth not her calf.

11 They send forth their little ones like a flock, and their children dance.

12 They take the timbrel and harp, and rejoice at the sound of the organ.

13 They spend their days in wealth, and in a moment go down to the grave.

Job gives, in these verses, a most masterly description of prosperous sinners: and every age of the Church affords numberless living examples, that the account is not heightened. Observe, what a view the man of Uz gives, in the first place, of their mirth. They are unvisited by affliction. *The rod of God, as a kind father, is not felt by them. Observe the training of their children. What a melancholy picture is this of an ungodly house: They send them forth to the dance. Alas! what thousands of graceless parents there are, in the present day, who do this, and are regardless of their children's eternal welfare. They take the timbrel and the harp (the same fashionable instruments which the frivolous make a chief part of the education of our day); but not a word of taking the Bible, or the sweet sounds of the gospel of Jesus, for their little ones to be brought up in the knowledge of it: but the whole system tends to this end, how to excel in that, which the stage dancers and the lowest of animals excel in, as well as they! Observe in what striking terms Job describes the result of all this: *they spend their days in wealth, and in a moment go down to the grave.* And who that looks round, and contemplates what is daily going on in the carnal world before their eyes, can require further evidence of the truth of this now, as well as in Job's days. Read what Asaph hath remarked to the same effect, and compare the scriptures together. Psalm lxxiii. 3—20.

14 Therefore they say unto God, Depart from us; for we desire not the knowledge of thy ways.

15 What *is* the Almighty, that we should serve him? and what profit should we have, if we pray unto him?

16 ¶ Lo, their good *is* not in their hand: the counsel of the wicked is far from me.

17 How oft is the candle of the wicked put out?

and *how oft* cometh their destruction upon them? God distributeth sorrows in his anger.

18 They are as stubble before the wind, and as chaff that the storm carrieth away.

19 God layeth up his iniquity for his children: he rewardeth him, and he shall know *it*.

20 His eyes shall see his destruction, and he shall drink of the wrath of the Almighty.

21 For what pleasure *hath* he in his house after him, when the number of his months is cut off in the midst?

22 Shall *any* teach God knowledge? seeing he judgeth those that are high.

23 ¶ One dieth in his full strength, being wholly at ease and quiet.

24 His breasts are full of milk, and his bones are moistened with marrow.

25 And another dieth in the bitterness of his soul, and never eateth with pleasure.

26 They shall lie down alike in the dust, and the worms shall cover them.

With what awful words does this part of Job's discourse open? And can we suppose that there were ever any men upon earth so abandoned as to use this language? It would be for the honour of human nature if there were not. But if in words the graceless do not so defy God, they do what is tantamount in actions, by which they despise him! How beautifully Job describes the fleeting vaporish continuance of the wicked man's prosperity, under the similitude of a candle, which is often put out! Life itself, if left like a candle to burn out, would not last long even then. But how often will a thief, as we call it, in the candle, put it out! How oft the fleeting of the oil will put it out! How oft by snuffing it, is it put out! And who shall say how often God, by the blowing of the wind of his anger in sickness, or sudden visitations, puts life out! And is this worthy to be called prosperity, even the most carnal gratifications of the ungodly, when exposed to such sudden, and everlasting danger every moment! The prophet Isaiah hath drawn a fine comparison between an old prosperous sinner in death, and the child of grace, called upon to enter glory; where he saith, the child shall die an hundred years old; but the sinner, being an hundred years old, shall be accursed. Isaiah lxx. 20.

27 Behold, I know your thoughts, and the devices *which* ye wrongfully imagine against me.

28 For ye say, Where *is* the house of the prince? and where *are* the dwelling places of the wicked?

29 Have ye not asked them that go by the way? and do ye not know their tokens,

30 That the wicked is reserved to the day of destruction? they shall be brought forth to the day of wrath.

31 Who shall declare his way to his face? and who shall repay him *what* he hath done?

32 Yet shall he be brought to the grave, and shall remain in the tomb.

33 The clods of the valley shall be sweet unto him, and every man shall draw after him, as *there are* innumerable before him.

34 How then comfort ye me in vain, seeing in your answers there remaineth falsehood?

In those verses Job makes his conclusion from what he had said; and though he foresees that those three friends would not join issue with him, yet he sets it down as an unquestionable truth, that the prosperity of the wicked becomes a sure argument that there is a day of account to follow; and as the sinner prospers in his iniquity, notwithstanding the eye of God is all along upon him, so assuredly there shall be a time when his miseries shall overtake him, when the day of retribution shall come. Hence, therefore, Job leaves them to infer, that the afflictions of the afflicted shall be recompensed, and the issue of their sorrows shall be, they shall have peace at the last. We cannot but admire the reasoning of Job in an age so remote from the gospel, when we find his belief bears so striking a conformity to all that the blessed religion of the Lord Jesus Christ hath assured, and established, concerning the final termination of the righteous and of sinners. Rom. ii. 7—10.

REFLECTIONS.

READER! let us pause over the perusal of this chapter, and, for the moment, drop the recollection of both Job and his friends, to bring the subject itself a little nearer home, as it concerns the same circumstances here described in the present day in which we dwell.

If we look at human life as it appears in the great mass of men, what a confused state of affairs it seems! In the bulk, no doubt, as to *outward* things, the ungodly and the despisers of God are the most prosperous. They are as Job hath here described them. Hence if we allowed ourselves to reason from outside shew, we should frequently pronounce the sinner happy, and the saint miserable. But what an erroneous calculation should we then make! To form a proper estimate even of the real enjoyment of prosperous circumstances, we must look

within as well as without. We must follow the great man, or the rich man, into his retirement. We must see him according to what he feels and what he confesses, and not by what the world have concluded concerning his real happiness. And if we were to do this, we should discover many an aching heart in a fine house; and many a miserable man, who to the world looks gay and smiling. So that even in respect to the happiness of this life, the prosperous sinner hath not the best of it. And uniformly is it found, that they who follow the world, as well as they who follow Christ, must and do take up a cross; and sometimes a very heavy galling cross to such it is.

But whatever be the enjoyments of the sinner here, what can be the frothy unsatisfying pleasures of the whole carnal world, compared with that glory which shall be revealed? Oh! precious Jesus! in the recollection of thee and of thy presence, how doth every thing sink to nothing in the view of the soul. Truly hast thou promised, that, in this life, they that love thee shall inherit substance, and that thou wilt fill all their treasures. And solid, satisfying, and substantial, all thy mercies are. But who shall describe, or what heart shall conceive, the nature, the extent, the durableness, the vast joys which thou hast laid up for, and which thou art thyself to impart to, thy redeemed in glory! Lord! let a conviction of them continually warm my soul, and animate my heart; and do thou enable me, oh! thou bountiful Lord! so to pursue thee, in all the paths of grace here below, that I may at length attain to that glory which shall be revealed; to the everlasting enjoyment of the presence of God and the Lamb, and those unspeakable felicities which eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither hath entered into the heart of man to conceive, but which are at thy right hand for evermore.

CHAP. XXII.

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In this Chapter Eliphaz brings a new charge against Job, which is the third he brought against him. He perverts Job's reasoning, it should seem, to a very different meaning to what he intended, in delivering his sentiments in the preceding chapter. Eliphaz very severely reproves the Man of Uz in this: though, towards the conclusion, he gives some sweet counsel.

THEN Eliphaz the Temanite answered and said,

2 Can a man be profitable unto God, as he that is wise may be profitable unto himself?

3 *Is it* any pleasure to the Almighty, that thou art righteous? or *is it* gain to him, that thou makest thy ways perfect?

4 Will he reprove thee for fear of thee? will he enter with thee into judgment?

Nothing can be more true than this; though, in respect to Job, it is

most falsely applied. How can man be profitable to God? is a question which never can be sounded too often, nor too loudly, through the chambers of every self-righteous man's heart. Indeed it is astonishing that any man's heart should, amidst all other deceptions, fall under this. The glories of God in creation, the glories of God in redemption; the salvation of innumerable souls by the wonderful process of grace and love in God's dear Son: all these manifest God's graciousness, and goodness, and abundant mercy: but what profit is brought to my God in the salvation of such a sinner as I am? Oh! precious Jesus! give me grace rightly to value thine, and thy Father's everlasting love in lying low in the dust before thee, and being content to be nothing; for in deed, and in truth, I am worse than nothing! ruined, lost and undone, in myself, and so should remain to all eternity, were it not that in thy righteousness I am made righteous, and in thy complete salvation now and for ever accepted. Yes! blessed Lord! thou art indeed my all; for thou art made of God to me, *wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption, that all my glorying may be in thee, O Lord.* 1 Cor. i. 30.

5 ¶ *Is not thy wickedness great? and thine iniquities infinite?*

6 For thou hast taken a pledge from thy brother for nought, and stripped the naked of their clothing.

7 Thou hast not given water to the weary to drink, and thou hast withholden bread from the hungry.

8 But *as for* the mighty man, he had the earth; and the honourable man dwelt in it.

9 Thou hast sent widows away empty, and the arms of the fatherless have been broken.

10 Therefore snares *are* round about thee, and sudden fear troubleth thee;

11 Or darkness, *that* thou canst not see: and abundance of waters cover thee.

12 *Is not* God in the height of heaven? and behold the height of the stars, how high they are!

13 And thou sayest, How doth God know? can he judge through the dark cloud?

14 Thick clouds *are* a covering to him, that he seeth not; and he walketh in the circuit of heaven.

15 Hast thou marked the old way which wicked men have trodden?

16 Which were cut down out of time, whose foundation was overflown with a flood :

17 Which said unto God, Depart from us : and what can the Almighty do for them ?

18 Yet he filled their houses with good *things* : but the counsel of the wicked is far from me.

19 The righteous see *it*, and are glad : and the innocent laugh them to scorn.

20 Whereas our substance is not cut down, but the remnant of them the fire consumeth.

In the character of Eliphaz, we behold a mixture of every thing unamiable. It should seem by Job's history, and indeed from the account the Lord himself gave of him, that he was a perfect and an upright man (chap. i. 8.) ; so that nothing could be more false, unjust, and cruel, than the charge of Eliphaz. It reminds me of Shimei's cursing David. It reminds me, indeed, of One, compared to whom both Job and David were shades, and darkness complete. Yes! blessed Jesus! thou amidst all thy holy harmless state didst not escape the obloquy of a blasphemer, a gluttonous man, and a wine-bibber; nay, a devil; 2 Sam. xvi. 7, 8. Matt. xi. 19. John vii. 20. I do not think it necessary to follow Eliphaz through the several charges which he brings against Job, when not one of them could be substantiated; and especially when we call to mind God's testimony to his servant's uprightness of character, both in respect to God, and man. It is enough to observe, that the *Temanite* loaded him with every thing opprobrious; and thereby serves to shew the Reader, as the sequel of the history will hereafter more fully manifest, that he had not taken counsel from God in what he advanced.

21 ¶ Acquaint now thyself with him and be at peace: thereby good shall come unto thee.

22 Receive, I pray thee, the law from his mouth, and lay up his words in thine heart.

There is a great deal of sound truth, and sound gospel, in this advice of Eliphaz. An acquaintance with God, must be the only foundation for true peace with him. He that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him. Heb. xi. 6. Reader! until we know God in Christ, and by the teachings of his blessed Spirit are made sensible of our need of him, we shall neither be conscious we need peace, or ever seek or desire it! Hence how earnestly doth the Apostle pray the Church, as an ambassador of Christ, to be reconciled to God, in the righteousness and death of Jesus. 2 Cor. v. 20.

23 If thou wilt return to the Almighty, thou shalt be built up, thou shalt put away iniquity far from thy tabernacles.

24 Then shalt thou lay up gold as dust, and the gold of Ophir as the stones of the brooks.

25 Yea, the Almighty shall be thy defence, and thou shalt have plenty of silver.

26 For then shalt thou have thy delight in the Almighty, and shalt lift up thy face unto God.

27 Thou shalt make thy prayer unto him, and he shall hear thee, and thou shalt pay thy vows.

28 Thou shalt also decree a thing, and it shall be established unto thee: and the light shall shine upon thy ways.

29 When *men* are cast down, then thou shalt say, *There is* lifting up; and he shall save the humble person.

30 He shall deliver the island of the innocent: and it is delivered by the pureness of thine hands.

Some of those blessings which Eliphaz points out as the sure consequence of peace with God, are strictly true. The soul which is brought into divine favour by Jesus, shall be built up in Jesus. God will be that soul's defence; and the soul will delight itself in God. These are the blessed consequences of such a state of reconciliation and favour. But when Eliphaz talks of laying up gold as the dust, and silver in plenty; if these things be taken in the literal acceptation of this world's goods; here Eliphaz falls back again into his old idea, that prosperity in this world is a mark of God's favour; and the reverse, in affliction, a sure sign of God's anger. There are indeed riches, yea durable riches, and righteousness, which belong to the followers of the Lord; for Jesus promiseth to give them to his people, and to fill all their treasures. Pro. viii. 18—21. But these differ totally from what Eliphaz had in view; and therefore it is plain, that this poor man's reasonings were all foreign to grace. Neither, with all his pretended wisdom, had he himself suitable conceptions of what is meant in being acquainted with God! So that this man holds forth a lively specimen of all similar characters, who, in the present hour, speak from books and the information of others; but not, as our Lord hath marked it, from the abundance of the heart: and as John his servant did, when the life which he had seen and enjoyed, he recommended, from this very consideration, to the enjoyment of others. 1 John i. 1—3.

REFLECTIONS.

READER! the view here presented to you of Job's exercises, is the more profitable from being the more plain. In all the charges of the friends of Job before, there were none so palpably false and cruel; and therefore here we feel the more comfort, from the consciousness that Job himself found that consolation under them, which a mind of rectitude

cannot but enjoy, under the false accusations of the wicked. Indeed Job was too deeply drenched in affliction, from the sufferings of his body, not to be very sensibly affected also, however false the charges were, with what Eliphaz had said. The man that doth not realize his trials, and feel them as trials, will not truly profit by them. Yet, certainly, Job had a comfortable retreat in his own mind, in the consciousness of their falsehood. Our profit will be the more striking from this chapter, in what we behold under this particular. We are taught the blessedness of that state of mind, when, from being exercised with the temptations, or the accusations of Satan, we can look to Jesus, with thankfulness, when the tempter's malice is ill founded.

But what I would particularly desire from the perusal of this chapter, to have impressed both upon the Reader's mind and my own, is this; that when the malice of men, or the adversary, raiseth storms of trial, or persecution, falsely against us, this is the blessed moment to look after, and narrowly to watch, and eye the hand of Jesus in the permission. My brother! do mark this down as a never-failing maxim, whatever our trial be, it must be by Jesus's appointment. Be the instrument who, or what it may, yet Jesus is in it. His love, his wisdom, is at the bottom. Mark this down, as a rule never to be controverted. Then follow this up with another. Whatever the trial be, it is for good. Thy God, thy Jesus, my soul, cannot do iniquity. Mark this also. And this will bring out a third, as the sweet and blessed result of the two which went before: the end shall be as Job's was; glory to God, and salvation to his redeemed. When Eliphaz thus charged Job, when Shimei cursed David, and when, on an infinitely more important exercise than both, or than all the world of God's children put together, Jesus was traduced and blasphemed, what was the result? As it is beautifully expressed in one of the Psalms: 'I will cry unto God, most high, even unto God, that performeth all things for me.' Yes! Reader! it is very sweet and very precious, when the conscious soul, unjustly oppressed, can take refuge in divine favour, and divine strength, and say, *Thou shalt answer for me, O Lord my God!*

But chiefly let our eye and heart, upon all those occasions, be altogether fixed upon the person and work of Jesus. In all situations, he is the pattern, and forerunner of his people: and what he said of old, he saith the same to all his exercised family now: fear none of these things, which thou shalt suffer. Though Satan cast *some* of you in prison, when he would cast, if he could, *all*: and when, instead of *prison* he wishes it were *hell*; yet, it shall be but for ten days, though he would have it to be for ever. Fear not therefore; but be faithful unto death and I will give you (saith the faithful and true witness) the crown of glory that fadeth not away.

CHAP. XXIII.

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Job is again, in this chapter, described, as making still further his defence. From the decision of man, he appeals to God; and opens his mouth in an earnest cry to God, for permission to approach him. He still insists upon it, the issue of this sharp trial shall be to his joy.

THEN Job answered and said,
 2 Even to day *is* my complaint bitter: my stroke is heavier than my groaning.

3 Oh that I knew where I might find him! *that* I might come *even* to his seat!

4 I would order *my* cause before him, and fill my mouth with arguments.

5 I would know the words *which* he would answer me, and understand what he would say unto me.

6 ¶ Will he plead against me with *his* great power? No; but he would put *strength* in me.

If we read these words of Job with an eye to the gospel, (and after what we have reviewed of Job's strong faith, in his kinsman Redeemer, chap. xix. 25—27. we surely may safely do it;) they contain the sweet and gracious breathings of a pious soul, after fellowship with God in Christ. And I beg the Reader to observe yet further with me, how ardent that faith in Christ was, when the suffering Believer took confidence, that God would put strength *in* him, and not put forth that strength *against* him. For, Reader! what is God's strength, as it concerns a poor awakened sinner, but Jesus, and his salvation? That beautiful passage, in the Prophet, fully confirms it: *Let him take hold of my strength* (saith Jehovah) *to make peace with me, and he shall make peace with me.* Isaiah xxvii. 5.—What is the strength of Jehovah but Christ? Hence God commands Zion to put it on, Isaiah ii. 1. And, in reference to former manifestations of it, God himself, by the Prophet, calls upon his strength, to awake, as the arm of the Lord. Isaiah li. 9.

7 There the righteous might dispute with him; so should I be delivered for ever from my judge.

How beautiful is this, with an eye to Jesus? There indeed, in Jesus's strength, and Jesus's righteousness, as the Redeemer and Surety of his people, the poor believer might even plead with God, on the score of righteousness; for in Jesus, as the sinner's surety, the law of God hath received, and God's perfect acknowledgment of it is recorded in Scripture, full, nay double equivalent, for all its righteous demands, Isaiah xl. 1, 2.

8 ¶ Behold, I go forward, but he *is* not *there*; and backward, but I cannot perceive him:

9 On the left hand, where he doth work, but I cannot behold *him*: he hideth himself on the right hand, that I cannot see *him*:

What Job here complains of, how fully do all God's people know! Reader, have you not known what it is to be searching for Jesus, and,

like the church of old, sending forth often the question, without obtaining a satisfying answer, *Saw you him whom my soul loveth?* Precious seeking souls are in pursuit of Jesus, in private prayer, in meditation, in reading, and in public ordinances; hearing his gospel preached; sitting under the means; and yet often remain unrefreshed, and without the enjoyment of the Redeemer's presence. Nevertheless, it should always be recollected, upon these occasions, that Jesus is present; he is looking on, he is exciting the desire in the heart, and by and by will be found of the poor seeker. Isaiah xlv. 19. Psalm xxvii. 8—14.

10 But he knoweth the way that I take: *when* he hath tried me, I shall come forth as gold.

11 ¶ My foot hath held his steps, his way have I kept, and not declined.

How delightful it is to observe, both the Old and the New Testament confirming this blessed truth, that the issue of the trial of God's children, was never doubtful. It must work for good, and therefore it is more precious than gold that perisheth. 1 Pet. i. 7.

12 Neither have I gone back from the commandment of his lips; I have esteemed the words of his mouth more than my necessary *food*.

What a lovely account doth Job give of himself here, that the word of God was so precious to him. Reader! is it not enough to make us blush? Did Job so speak; did Jeremiah so declare, that he found God's words, and did eat them, and they were the very joy and rejoicing of his heart? Did David assert, that the words of God's mouth were sweeter to him than honey, and the honey-comb: and do you and I think less of those precious gracious words of Jesus, which contain salvation? Oh! blessed Lord! make thy word so greatly my delight, that it may be my meditation all the day, and let mine eyes prevent the night watches, that I may be occupied in it! Jeremiah xv. 16. Psm. xix. 10. cxix. 72.

13 ¶ But he *is* in one *mind*, and who can turn him? and *what* his soul desireth, even *that* he doeth.

14 For he performeth *the thing that is* appointed for me: and many such *things are* with him.

15 Therefore am I troubled at his presence: when I consider, I am afraid of him.

16 For God maketh my heart soft, and the Almighty troubleth me:

17 Because I was not cut off before the darkness, *neither* hath he covered the darkness from my face.

Job here falls back again into somewhat of his former frame. Perhaps some new pain of the body goaded him at the moment; at least, we may consider grace less active than when he expressed himself so sweetly in the former part of the chapter. Alas! what is man, even the best of men, if for one moment left without the influence of the Holy Spirit. Reader, let you and I learn from it, the vast importance of David's prayer, *Lord take not thine holy Spirit from me!* Psalm li. 11.

REFLECTIONS.

READER, I cannot beg a greater blessing from our gracious Covenant God in Christ, either for you or for myself, than that a Spirit of grace may be poured out upon us both, to lead us with similar breathings of soul, and earnest desires of spirit, for drawing near to the footstool of the mercy seat, which Job here desired to approach. Depend upon it, the nearest and sweetest communion believers have with God, rests upon this very method, when their whole souls are going forth, in pleading justification before God, upon the pure footing of righteousness: not of our righteousness, you may well suppose, for we have none, but that of Jesus. This is the strength, Job saith, God will put in his pleading, praying people. And here, and here alone it is, that either now, at a mercy seat, or hereafter, at a throne of judgment, poor sinners can ever be delivered from their judge!

Pause, Reader, and contemplate the vast privilege! Count over, if it be possible, the immense mercy; and then think what everlasting love, what a revenue of everlasting praise will be for ever offered to the Father's grace in providing, and the Son's tenderness and mercy in accomplishing, such a redemption, by his righteousness, and blood. Oh! Holy Father! never, never suffer me to lose sight of thy rich, free, and sovereign grace, in thus providing strength for a poor sinner to lay hold of, to make peace with thee by thy dear and ever blessed Son! And oh, thou lovely, and all loving Lamb of God, that art as well the Lion of the tribe of Judah, give me to see how, in thy compleat righteousness, my soul finds strength to plead for salvation, on the ground of justice. Yes, blessed Jesus! in thee, and thy strength and holiness, I may come, even to God the Father's seat. I may tell him of justice, and plead for acceptance on the score of righteousness; for thou art made of God to me, both wisdom and righteousness; and therefore God is just, in being the justifier of every poor sinner that believeth in Jesus. All hail! thou holy, righteous Saviour of sinners! Oh! for more of this blessed communion at a mercy seat, in having fellowship with God in Christ! Oh, for grace to maintain a constant intercourse at the gate of heaven, in finding strength, even the strength of Jesus's righteousness, to plead this, and this only, before my God, for sure acceptance in the beloved.

CHAP. XXIV.

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The general scope of Job's reasoning in this chapter, is much to the same purport as he had before made use of; namely, that from the out-

ward circumstances, either of the wicked or the righteous, no right judgment could be formed to draw conclusions concerning either.

WHY, seeing times are not hidden from the Almighty, do they that know him not see his days?

Job opens the subject with a pertinent question, which is as much as to say, If you think that riches and prosperity are sure marks of God's favour, and the reverse, in poverty and adversity, the evident indications of his displeasure; on what principle consistent with this maxim, will you make it appear, how it is that the knowledge and love of God, in the discernment of his ways, do not keep pace with it?

2 *Some* remove the landmarks; they violently take away flocks, and feed *thereof*.

3 They drive away the ass of the fatherless, they take the widow's ox for a pledge.

4 They turn the needy out of the way: the poor of the earth hide themselves together.

5 Behold, *as* wild asses in the desert, go they forth to their work; rising betimes for a prey: the wilderness *yieldeth* food for them *and* for their children.

6 They reap *every one* his corn in the field: and they gather the vintage of the wicked.

7 They cause the naked to lodge without clothing, that *they have* no covering in the cold.

8 They are wet with the showers of the mountains, and embrace the rock for want of a shelter.

9 They pluck the fatherless from the breast, and take a pledge of the poor.

10 They cause *him* to go naked without clothing, and they take away the sheaf *from* the hungry;

Job here instanceth, in a variety of most oppressive cases, the prosperity of bad men, against whom no judgment is immediately executed: and from thence Job leaves his friends to make their conclusions. He beautifully represents the tyranny and injustice of proud and oppressive men; of infamous robbers of their property, in removing the ancient land marks; of perverters of right paths, in turning the needy out of his way; of violently seizing the flocks of the poor; of depriving the labourer of his hire; and, in short, in doing all manner of injustice; and yet, because judgment is not executed speedily upon the wicked, who

would infer, that either times, or things, or persons, are hidden from the Almighty?

11 *Which* make oil within their walls, and tread *their* winepresses, and suffer thirst.

12 Men groan from out of the city, and the soul of the wounded crieth out: yet God layeth not folly *to them*.

13 They are of those that rebel against the light; they know not the ways thereof, nor abide in the paths thereof.

14 The murderer rising with the light killeth the poor and needy, and in the night is as a thief.

15 The eye also of the adulterer waiteth for the twilight, saying, No eye shall see me; and disguiseth *his* face.

16 In the dark they dig through houses, *which* they had marked for themselves in the day time: they know not the light.

17 ¶ For the morning *is* to them even as the shadow of death; if *one* know *them*, *they are in* the terrors of the shadow of death.

18 He *is* swift as the waters; their portion is cursed in the earth: he beholdeth not the way of the vineyards.

19 Drought and heat consume the snow waters: *so doth* the grave *those which* have sinned.

20 The womb shall forget him; the worm shall feed sweetly on him; he shall be no more remembered; and wickedness shall be broken as a tree.

21 He evil intreateth the barren *that* beareth not: and doeth not good to the widow.

22 He draweth also the mighty with his power: he riseth up, and no *man* is sure of life.

23 *Though* it be given him *to be* in safety, whereon he resteth; yet his eyes *are* upon their ways.

24 They are exalted for a little while, but are gone and brought low; they are taken out of the way as all *other*, and cut off as the tops of the ears of corn.

Job follows up the same kind of reasoning, through all these verses: for though the terms made use of, and the similitudes by which the doctrine is illustrated, vary, yet the sum and substance is the same. The thief of the day, or the murderer of the night, are both alike in this respect: sometimes their prosperity is great, as though they had committed no evil: and sometimes their destruction cometh speedily. But from those events no conclusions can be drawn with such certainty as from outward things to infer the judgment of God. That it will be well with the righteous, and ill with the wicked, is the unerring doctrine of a divine government: but that men, from their scanty knowledge and observation, may be able in every instance to form just conclusions, who are righteous and who are wicked, is impossible. The wise man hath a beautiful observation on this same doctrine, and draws the same conclusion as Job doth. Though a sinner do evil an hundred times, and his days be prolonged, yet surely I know that it shall be well with them that fear God. Eccles. viii. 12, 13.

25 And if *it be* not so now, who will make me a liar, and make my speech nothing worth.

Job having finished his sermon, demands of his friends to confront it if they could. The man of Uz, it is evident all along, had his eye to himself, and their unjust censuring of him: therefore he makes from a long discourse, a short but striking application, that, if they could disprove what he had said, and shew the reverse, agreeable to what they had insisted upon, that no good man was made to mourn, nor the wicked to rejoice, then his miseries might be supposed to be the result of his sins.

REFLECTIONS.

WHAT a blessed resource is it, at any time, and at all times, when beholding the seeming prosperity of the wicked, and the apparent misery of the righteous, we take shelter, not only in God's sovereignty, but God's justice. When we lay this down as a sure and unerring maxim, that God is true, let every man be false, we are enabled from thence to draw as sure a conclusion, that however unable we may be to explain what we see, or to reconcile what we behold, yet they are all easy to be explained by God's right standard, and to be reconciled upon his divine principles of truth and justice. *Shall not the judge of all the earth do right?* Reader, make application of this doctrine in every difficult providence with which the Lord may be pleased to exercise you. Behold every thing, and every event, as originating in his all wise appointment. He cannot do iniquity. And when we are enabled to trace, in one point of view, the beautiful order that there is in all his dispensations concerning his church and people; what he hath done, what he is now doing, and what he will do; all the events thus

brought into one connection; then the glory of his wisdom is made in some measure and degree to appear. Such views, as they concern ourselves in the common circumstances of life, serve to reconcile all things we behold in the apparent joy of sinners, and the seeming sorrow of saints.

But to what sublimity of thought doth the subject arise, when beheld with an eye to Jesus! The unequalled sorrows of the Son of God, when he tabernacled among us, and the taunts and reproaches he sustained from the ungodly, unless looked at in this point of view, would involve the mind in endless perplexity. But when I behold thee, thou blessed Jesus, as the sinners' surety, sustaining the curse, being made sin, and standing forth the free-will offering of a righteous, spotless sacrifice for thy people, then, on these precious principles, I can well explain why it should have been, as it really was, that thou shouldst justly endure that wrath which was due to sin; and, having placed thyself in the sinner's stead, to receive all that was the sinner's due, that divine justice might be satisfied, the law of God magnified, and everlasting righteousness brought in, for the salvation of thy people. O sweet and glorious view of Jesus in his sufferings! Here Job, had he lived to these days, might have looked, and from hence drawn all his arguments, that God can be just in afflicting, as in the case of his dear Son, the righteous, and making him to be sin for us, who knew no sin, that we might be made the righteousness of God in him. Precious Jesus! never, never let me lose sight of thee and thy sufferings, when any thing perplexing ariseth. And when under my trifling exercises my mind is giving way, through unbelief; when all refuge fails me, and no man careth for my soul, then Lord be thou my refuge, my portion, and my hope, in the land of the living.

CHAP. XXV.

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This chapter is but short, yet it contains precious truths. It forms the reply of Bildad to what Job had before said. It is not at all in reproof, but only an account of God's holiness, and the uncleanness of all created excellency in his view.

THEN answered Bildad the Shuhite, and said,

2 Dominion and fear are with him, he maketh peace in his high places.

3 Is there any number of his armies? and upon whom doth not his light arise?

These verses form a short but striking description of God's sovereignty. Bildad, it should seem, was grown tired of the controversy, and therefore, instead of contending any longer with Job, he contents himself in joining with Job, in following up what the man of Uz had been dwelling upon, of the greatness and holiness of God, in the preceding chapter. The terms are very striking the *Shuhite* makes use of,

to set forth the brightness and glorious excellency of God. The shining of his light, so universal; the vast and incalculable number of his armies, and, of consequence, the unlimited sovereignty of his government: all these are happily chosen to set forth the infinite majesty of the Almighty. How great must he be, and how glorious, who ruleth in heaven, and among the inhabitants of the earth, who sitteth (as one of the sacred writers represent him) upon the circle of the earth, and the inhabitants thereof are but as grasshoppers: Isaiah xl. 22. If the Reader would see a further account of this High and Lofty One, who inhabiteth eternity, whose name is Holy, he will find more to the same amount, in a stile infinitely sublime and magnificent, from the 12th verse of the same chapter onward. But I beg of him, when he hath so done, to compare with it that illustrious prophecy concerning the Lord Jesus, Dan. ii. 44, 45. and what a flood of light and glory will pour in upon his soul, if so be he hath been taught the truth, as it is in Jesus, that this is He whom both prophets describe; and who is at one and the same moment, in his glorious person, one with the Father, over all, God blessed for ever; and one with his people, their Sovereign Lord and Redeemer. Amen.

4 How then can man be justified with God?
or how can he be clean *that is* born of a woman?

5 Behold even to the moon, and it shineth not;
yea, the stars are not pure in his sight.

6 How much less man, *that is* a worm; and the
son of man, *which is* a worm?

How very sweet and just do these observations follow what went before? After having pointed to God's glory, how proper the transition to man's meanness. What can be more suitable, or profitable, than, in the view of his holiness, to contrast our pollution. Behold, as the Holy Ghost hath commanded in this scripture, behold the brightness of the heavenly bodies, those glorious lights above! Yet even these are not pure in the sight of their Maker. Compared to his glory, they do not shine. And what then must be man, in point of cleanness and purity in the sight of God! who is born of a woman, born in sin, and shapen in iniquity! Reader, have you ever considered this? have you ever laid it to heart? If so, surely your language will correspond to that of the prophet Isaiah, when the Lord favoured him with that glorious vision; the very view of which made him cry out, *Woe is me, for I am undone. I am a man of unclean lips; and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips; for mine eyes have seen the king, the Lord of Hosts.* Isaiah vi. 5.

REFLECTIONS.

PAUSE, my soul, over this short but sweet chapter; for very great and important are the improvements, which, under God the Holy Ghost, may be gathered out of it. And first, mark in strong and solemn characters what is here said, of the greatness, sovereignty, and holiness, of Almighty God. Can any language be stronger in proof, what an infi-

nately great and glorious God, this God is, with whom thou hast to do! This is He, who is of purer eyes than to behold iniquity, neither can any evil dwell with him? Next, ponder over the marked and glaring nature of sin and transgression; for as the Lord is infinitely holy, so thou art altogether vile; and in thee, that is in thy flesh, dwelleth no good thing. Next consider, and let it be a most solemn consideration, what the Shubite here saith, How can man be justified with God? How shall he be clean that is born of a woman? Are these questions, my soul, solemnly, seriously, anxiously, brought home to thee? Dost thou feel their vast importance, as if the Holy Ghost, in his convincing thee of sin, had stamped them upon thee never to be worn out, until an answer of peace be found to them? Pause, my soul, over the inquiry. Wilt thou seek a qualification in any purifications of thine own? Can thy tears and repentance make thee clean? Will these, with all thy best promises of amendment, cause thee to appear justified before God? Wouldest thou trust in these now, much less depend upon them at the bar of God's judgment? No, my soul, these are miserable comforters all, and physicians of no value. Look then to Jesus. His blood is a fountain to cleanse from all sin. And, what endears it still more, it is of God's own appointing. In that day (saith God, speaking of the gospel day) there shall be opened to the house of David, and to the inhabitants of Jerusalem, a fountain for sin, and for uncleanness. Here then, and here only, seek a cleansing. As it is a fountain of God's own appointing, how sure is it that the cleansing in it shall be effectual. And as it is an *open* fountain, why shouldest thou for a moment be prompted to fear that it is not open to thee. Beg of God the Spirit to do by thee as he did by Hagar at the well, and give thee to see that this fountain is both open and nigh to thee; that there thou mayest be cleansed and made white in the blood of the Lamb. And oh! the inconceivable rapture to a soul cleansed in Jesus's blood, and made holy and bright in his righteousness: he shall shine forth (for so the promise runs) as the sun in the kingdom of his Father. Precious Jesus! is this thy grace, thy righteousness, thy favour, to poor guilty sinners? Didst thou, holy Lord, condescend to become a worm, and no man, that thy people, who are sons of men, and but worms indeed, might be made the righteousness of God in thee! Oh! then, I shall behold thy glory, Holy Lord, when clothed in thy holiness: and in that day, as the Prophet hath said, the Moon shall indeed be confounded, and the Sun ashamed, when thou, the Lord of Hosts, shalt reign in Mount Zion, and in Jerusalem, and before thine Antients gloriously.

CHAP. XXVI.

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This Chapter, containing Job's reply, is but short. The man of Uz seems to intimate, that though Bildad had advanced the truth, yet it was nothing to refute what he had before said. Job beautifully dwells upon the infinite and unsearchable power of God.

BUT Job answered and said,
 2 How hast thou helped *him that is with-*
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out power? *how* savest thou the arm *that hath* no strength?

3 How hast thou counselled *him that hath* no wisdom? and *how* hast thou plentifully declared the thing as it is?

4 To whom hast thou uttered words? and whose spirit came from thee?

The chief purport of Job's reply, in these words, seems to be directed to convince Bildad, that he had not answered, because he could not contradict what Job had advanced. And if Bildad thought, by what he had said, that he had benefitted God's cause, he was grossly mistaken. But, beside this, Job intimated also, that had Bildad been directed of God's Spirit, in this discourse, he would not only have taken notice of God's power, but of his grace; and especially as needed so much to be shewn to a poor afflicted creature, like Job. Now, said Job (for that seems the subject of his reply) if the Spirit of the Lord came to thee on this occasion, thou wouldest have seen how needful it is to comfort an afflicted soul, with spreading before him sweet views of God's love and grace; and not so much of his power, when the heart is before so dreadfully alarmed in the contemplation of his greatness. See a sweet precept to this purport, Isaiah xl. 1, 2.

5 ¶ Dead *things* are formed from under the waters, and the inhabitants thereof.

6 Hell *is* naked before him, and destruction hath no covering.

7 He stretcheth out the north over the empty place, *and* hangeth the earth upon nothing.

8 He bindeth up the waters in his thick clouds; and the cloud is not rent under them.

9 He holdeth back the face of his throne, *and* spreadeth his cloud upon it.

10 He hath compassed the waters with bounds, until the day and night come to an end.

11 The pillars of heaven tremble and are astonished at his reproof.

12 He divideth the sea with his power, and by his understanding he smiteth through the proud.

13 By his spirit he hath garnished the heavens; his hand hath formed the crooked serpent.

14 Lo, these *are* parts of his ways: but how

little a portion is heard of him? but the thunder of his power who can understand?

Beautiful as this relation is, concerning God and his glorious attributes, yet certainly it was nothing but what might have been as well discoursed, without an eye to the dispute between Job and his friends, as with it. It forms a grand subject in the display of God's power. His omnipotency in creating; his omniscience in beholding. Hell naked before him, is a solemn description, in few words, of every thing awful and alarming. But these things, read in a spiritual point of view also, as referring to his gracious power in re-creating the souls of his people, observing the sorrows of hell in their struggles with the kingdom of darkness; holding back the face of his throne, when dark seasons oppress them; spreading his cloud upon it, when there seemeth no answer to prayer: these are beautiful illustrations of God's ways, though, as Job saith, these are but parts of his ways: and how little a portion, after all, can the wisest discover of him. Reader! it is profitable to eye these things with reference to ourselves. Beautiful and instructive as all scriptures are, when seen as exemplified in the history of others, yet, to our own experience, those come home nearest and closest to the heart, which speak to a man's own mind. David hath made a very striking and just observation on this ground when he saith, *I will never forget thy precepts, for with them thou hast quickened me.* Psalm cxix. 93.

REFLECTIONS.

An interesting subject ariseth here, from the perusal of this chapter, in the departure of Bildad's discourse from the main point in question, by the instruction it gives to the ministers of God's word and ordinances, that they always regard the express wants of their people. That subject may be very profitable at another season, which, in a moment of sorrow, would be ill-suited, and ill-timed. What the Apostle calls, in season, and out of season, implies, that those who visit souls in distress, as Job's three friends were supposed to have done, should suit their discourse to the alleviation of their misery. Dry argument, even though the subject itself be true, will not assuage the want of a poor thirsty sinner. Oh! how sweet is that sermon, which God the Holy Ghost commissions to the heart, when a weary, heavy laden, and sorrowful soul feels encouragement to come to Jesus, and to cast all his burden upon him, who alone can sustain him. This is indeed to have the tongue of the learned, when a minister is enabled to speak a word, in season, to him that is weary.

But here, precious Jesus, as in every other instance of mercy, so in this, how can my soul ever think of the sweetness of the lips of consolation without calling to mind how thou, in the day of thy flesh, didst go about binding up the broken heart; and, like the good Samaritan, didst pour in oil and wine into the deadly wounds of our robbed and ruined nature. Thou art indeed the consolation itself of thy people, for there is no other; and thou speakest to the wants and necessities of thine, in all their multiform shapes. Thou art, as thy Prophet described thee, *the rest, wherewith thou wilt cause the weary to rest, and thou art their*

refreshing. Be thou then, O Lord, now in the day of thy power, the unceasing comforter of thine heritage: visit distressed souls of thine in their affliction: graciously propose before them such sweet and constraining subjects, to manifest thy love; and proclaim thyself, O Lord, under that endearing character, *I am the Lord, that teacheth thee to profit.*

CHAP. XXVII.

CONTENTS.

Job's discourse is continued through this chapter. He still contendeth for his sincerity; points out the difference of the hypocrite from himself; and sheweth, that even the blessings of the wicked, are by them converted into curses.

MOREOVER Job continued his parable, and said,

Whether the whole of Job's discourses are to be considered as parables, I do not venture to determine; but it is worthy the Reader's remark, that his discourse is here, for the first time, called a parable. It is the same word as the Proverbs of Solomon are distinguished by; and those are divine things, in which much of Jesus is found. This verse, therefore, is highly important on this account.

2 As God liveth, *who* hath taken away my judgment; and the Almighty, *who* hath vexed my soul;

3 All the while my breath *is* in me, and the spirit of God *is* in my nostrils;

4 My lips shall not speak wickedness, nor my tongue utter deceit.

5 God forbid that I should justify you: till I die I will not remove mine integrity from me.

6 My righteousness I hold fast, and will not let it go: my heart shall not reproach *me* so long as I live.

7 Let mine enemy be as the wicked, and he that riseth up against me as the unrighteous.

The opening of this sequel to Job's parable, carries with it the nature of an oath. It is a solemn asseveration of the truth. What Job means by God's taking away his judgment, if I apprehend right, intimates, that he himself (in consequence of his sharp exercises, and his ignorance at the same time of God's design), is prevented from forming a clear judgment, wherefore his soul is sore vexed. But, saith Job, let my God deal with me as seemeth him good; my faithfulness and integrity to him shall abide by me. Sweet and gracious determination, when a believing soul can and doth say, I know not how my God is

leading me; but I know, that all his leadings are what they should be. Reader! see to it in your own experience, that path must be right which is marked out by infinite wisdom. And when our will is truly brought down to the Lord's will, then the soul cannot but approve, however unable to explain, all that the Lord is doing.

8 ¶ For what *is* the hope of the hypocrite, though he hath gained, when God taketh away his soul?

9 Will God hear his cry when trouble cometh upon him?

10 Will he delight himself in the Almighty? will he always call upon God?

This is a fine unfolding of the hypocrite's character. It is but short, but it is unanswerably striking and conclusive. The questions rise out of one another; and the last serves to unfold the whole, and finally to determine the point. What can be the hope of the hypocrite! Surely, having acted but as a deceiver, he only finds his hope a deception, when God enters into judgment. But will he cry unto God? Yes, he may; for hypocrisy doth not prevent this. The Prophet hath pointed out such characters as remarkable for prayer. Thou art near, saith the Prophet (speaking to the Lord), in their mouth, and far from their reins: Jerem. xii. 2. Here the hypocrite is described under a double view: first, in what he is; and then, in what he is not. He is near to God in mouth, but he is far from God in his heart. Therefore the hypocrite *may*, and the hypocrite *will*, cry unto God when trouble cometh upon him. But another question ariseth out of this. Will he always call upon God? Yes, when trouble is upon him: for so saith the Prophet. 'Lord, in trouble have they visited thee: they poured out a prayer when thy chastening was upon them:' Isaiah xxvi. 16. But the third question settles the matter: Will he delight himself in the Almighty? No: that is impossible. He may pray, he may cry unto God with the mouth when the arrows of God are in him; but to take pleasure in God, never did a hypocrite do this, nor ever will to the end of the world. So that Job in these verses decidedly settles the matter.

11 ¶ I will teach you by the hand of God; *that* which *is* with the Almighty will I not conceal.

12 Behold, all ye yourselves have seen *it*; why then are ye thus altogether vain?

13 This *is* the portion of a wicked man with God, and the heritage of oppressors, *which* they shall receive of the Almighty.

14 If his children be multiplied, *it is* for the

sword: and his offspring shall not be satisfied with bread.

15 Those that remain of him shall be buried in death: and his widows shall not weep.

16 Though he heap up silver as the dust, and prepare raiment as the clay;

17 He may prepare *it*, but the just shall put *it* on, and the innocent shall divide the silver.

18 He buildeth his house as a moth, and as a booth *that* the keeper maketh.

19 The rich man shall lie down, but he shall not be gathered: he openeth his eyes, and he *is* not.

20 Terrors take hold of him as waters, a tempest stealéth him away in the night.

21 The east wind carrieth him away, and he departeth; and as a storm hurleth him out of his place.

22 For *God* shall cast upon him, and not spare: he would fain flee out of his hand.

23 *Men* shall clap their hands at him, and shall hiss him out of his place.

If the Reader will compare what Job here saith in several instances, with what his friends had before observed, he will find that they agree in certain points. Job prefaceth this part of his discourse with observing, that being under divine teaching, he hath no cause to conceal truth. He therefore allows several things which they had said to be true, that wicked people must be miserable; but then the issue of their wickedness is not always induced presently. Eliphaz had said (chap. xv. 29, 30.) that the riches of the wicked should not continue, and that the flame should dry up his branches. And Job confirms this in saying, that if his children, which are his branches, be multiplied, it shall be for the sword; and though he heap up silver as the dust, the innocent shall divide it. So again Bildad had said (chap. xviii. 11:), that terrors should make the wicked afraid on every side. Now Job makes the same observation, that terrors should take hold on him as waters. But while they agree in one point, that wickedness is sure in the end to meet its just reward, Job still maintains his point, that it is not by outward circumstances of this world's goods, conclusion is to be drawn of God's favour. Many a precious soul may be sharply exercised, and be in great affliction; and many a prosperous villain may seem to enjoy great riches. And this was the contest between Job and his friends from beginning to end. They argued, from his uncommon calamities, that not-

withstanding all his profession of piety, he was an hypocrite. Job takes up the subject on this ground, and after again and again contending for his sincerity, he goes on to shew, that though wickedness must terminate fatally, yet it may for a while prosper and flourish. Reader! it is remarkable how much in all ages the faithful have been puzzled to explain these things. Jeremiah sets it down as an incontrovertible truth, that all the ways of God are righteous: yet, saith the Prophet, though I know this, I want to know why it is that the way of the wicked should prosper: Jerem. xiii. 1—3. And Asaph doth exactly the same. Psm. lxxiii. 1. to the end.

REFLECTIONS.

READER! we have gone over many chapters now of the patriarch Job's controversy, and heard much on both sides. What conclusions have we drawn from all that hath been said? Certainly the reasoning of Job is unanswerable, and as he expressed it in one of the chapters, *It is meet to be said unto God I have borne chastisement. I will not offend any more. That which I see not teach thou me.* Job xxxiv. 31, 32. Sin and sorrow are twins and are born together. So that they are inseparable. It ought to be no wonder, that a sinful creature is a sorrowful creature. For man that is born in sin, is born to trouble as the sparks fly upward. And if the best of men were to converse more with themselves, and compare self with the law of an holy God; this would lower all presumptuous reasonings in the seasons of our afflictions. Reader! let us from Job's sorrows make these improvements. Methinks while I read this man's trials, I would learn to consider more God's holiness and my unworthiness; and while I keep in view the divine law and human transgression; as sin then appears what it really is, exceeding sinful, the burthen of it will be heavy, and the affliction grow lighter; till at length the confession of the church in Babylon, or what is to the same amount, the prophet for the church will be found to suit every case: *Wherefore should a living man complain; a man for the punishment of his sins?* In an ocean of trouble there is not a drop of injustice. *Thou art righteous, O Lord, in all that is come upon us* (saith the church) *thou punisheth us less than our iniquities deserve.* Every thing short of hell is mercy.

Precious Jesus! oh how sweet is it to fly to thee, who hast both borne our sins and carried our sorrows. Thou drankest the cup of trembling dear Lord; and hast wrung it all out. One view of thine agony in the garden and on the cross is enough, when God the Holy Ghost opens the eye to see, to silence every complaint and to dry up every tear, which falls for our sufferings, and to cause them to fall in showers, in the contemplation of thine. Blessed Lamb of God! I would say, as I view by faith thine agonies, Why Lord didst thou die for me? and whence this bloody sweat? Was it for me? Oh! for grace to look, and love, and make the apostle's conclusion mine: *If one died for all, then were all dead. And that he died for all, that henceforth they that live should not live to themselves, but to him that died for them, and rose again.* Oh Lord! let my life be wholly thine. May I glorify thee in my body, and in my spirit, for ever.

CHAP. XXVIII.

CONTENTS.

Job's discourse is still prosecuted through this Chapter. The man of Uz makes many striking observations in the display of the divine glory.

SURELY there is a vein for the silver, and a place for gold *where they fine it.*

If I do not greatly mistake, here is much of Jesus in this chapter, and under this idea I would bespeak the Reader's attention with me to be searching for Jesus, as for more than veins of silver or the place of fine gold. And conscious that after all our search, unless that Holy Spirit which guided the eastern sages to Jesus at his birth, go before us, and point, as the star did, to the very spot where Jesus was, we shall make no discovery of him; I would look up at the opening of each chapter, and pray the Holy Spirit, whose gracious office it is to lead to Jesus, that he would direct both the hand that writes, and the eye that reads, and the ear that hears, that we may have the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of him, who is the sum and substance of all the Bible, the Alpha and Omega, the first and the last, one with the Father, over all God, blessed for ever. Amen.

2 Iron is taken out of the earth, and brass is molten *out of the stone.*

3 He setteth an end to darkness, and searcheth out all perfection: the stones of darkness, and the shadow of death.

4 The flood breaketh out from the inhabitants; *even the waters* forgotten of the foot: they are dried up, they are gone away from men.

5 *As for* the earth, out of it cometh bread: and under it is turned up as it were fire.

6 The stones of it *are* the place of sapphires: and it hath dust of gold.

7 *There is* a path which no fowl knoweth, and which the vulture's eye hath not seen:

8 The lion's whelps have not trodden it, nor the fierce lion passed by it.

9 He putteth forth his hand upon the rock; he overturneth the mountains by the roots.

10 He cutteth out rivers among the rocks; and his eyes seeth every precious thing.

11 He bindeth the floods from over-flowing;

and *the thing that is hid* bringeth he forth to light.

In those verses the sacred writer points out to what a vast extent in things of nature and of art, the faculties of the human mind are capable of being carried. How beautiful the language is! how strikingly magnificent! The discoveries which men have made in things of the earth; and the vast improvements made by the wisdom of man for the splendor and conveniency of life, are among the most incontestible testimonies, how great are the faculties of the mind of man. In *natural* things to what an height hath the human intellect soared? And if we pass on from the days of Job to the present age of the world, and take but the most slight and superficial view of things, how noble, how endowed, how intelligent is man: But Reader! do not fail to recollect at the same time, and connect with it into the same point of view, that with all man's boasted wisdom in things of nature and art; yet in respect of *divine* things, since the fall, the wisest of men, and the most learned, have uniformly been living witnesses to that divine truth, *the world by wisdom knew not God*: 1 Cor. i. 21. And it should seem indeed as if God had been pleased, in order to draw a line of dissination between natural and revealed knowledge, to furnish certain of his creatures with greater insight, larger abilities, than others; and to have enabled them to investigate to the utmost point of human science: but by withholding, at the same time, from the wise and prudent, and revealing unto babes, things of a divine nature, to shew at once the greatness and littleness of mere human knowledge. Job, in these several verses, is engaged to display the extent of natural discoveries, and hereby to lay a stronger foundation for reasoning on the subject of those which are divine.

12 ¶ But where shall wisdom be found? and where *is* the place of understanding?

This is a sweet verse, and a question involving in it every thing important. What wisdom can it be supposed Job means? Not human wisdom, or the discovery of things around. For Job had before laid it down, that the vein of silver was found, and the place of gold. Is it not Jesus that is here folded up in the word Wisdom? The Apostle was commissioned by the Holy Ghost to tell the church, that Christ is the wisdom of God, and the power of God; for in him are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge: 1 Cor. i. 24. Coloss. ii. 3. Neither is this all: for in that most sublime chapter, in the book of the Proverbs, under the character of Wisdom, there is a character introduced which can be applied to none but the Son of God: Prov. viii. 1, to the end. Reader, pray turn to those scriptures, and, after diligent perusal, beg of Him, who alone knoweth the Son, to be your teacher on this precious subject. Matt. xi. 27.

13 Man knoweth not the price thereof: neither is it found in the land of the living.

14 The depth saith, *It is* not in me: and the sea saith, *It is* not with me.

15 It cannot be gotten for gold, neither shall silver be weighed *for* the price thereof.

16 It cannot be valued with the gold of Ophir, with the precious onyx, or the sapphire.

17 The gold and the crystal cannot equal it : and the exchange of it *shall not be for* jewels of fine gold.

18 No mention shall be made of coral, or of pearls : for the price of wisdom *is* above rubies.

19 The topaz of Ethiopia shall not equal it, neither shall it be valued with pure gold.

Supposing (what the Reader will plainly perceive is the humble, but firm belief of the writer) that Jesus be indeed the wisdom the sacred writer was speaking of before, how sweetly corresponding to the other parts of the Bible, concerning the invaluable and unpurchaseable blessings of Jesus, and redemption by him, do these comparative statements appear? Gospel mercies are too costly to be sold, or indeed to come within the purchase of all creation. They are bought without money, and without price. Ye are redeemed (saith the Holy Ghost by Peter) not with corruptible things, as silver and gold, but with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot. What pearl, what topaz, what onyx, or all the golden wedges of Ophir, can bear mentioning, in the contemplation of the blood of Jesus! Oh! thou Lamb of God! thou precious gift of thy Father, and of thyself, who shall appreciate thy worth, or count thy love, or speak thy value! Reader, Is this Jesus thine? Ask then thine heart, Were he to be sold, what wouldest thou part with for him? Were he to be bought, what shouldest thou think too much for him? And hath God thy father given then this Jesus to thee?—*to thee?*—Given him too in such a way as never, never to be recalled. There is nothing else thy God hath given to thee, but what the Lord may, whenever he thinks fit, recall again; for it is only in reality lent. Health, strength, faculties, wealth, children; all these are only held during a term. But Jesus, once given, is for ever given, and never, never to be taken back. Reader! pause again. Is Jesus thine? Blessed Lord! how lost in wonder, love, and praise!

20 Whence then cometh wisdom? and where *is* the place of understanding?

21 Seeing it is hid from the eyes of all living, and kept close from the fowls of the air.

22 Destruction and death say, We have heard the fame thereof with our ears.

23 God understandeth the way thereof, and he knoweth the place thereof.

24 For he looketh to the ends of the earth, *and* seeth under the whole heaven ;

25 To make the weight for the winds : and he weigheth the waters by measure.

26 When he made a decree for the rain, and a way for the lightning of the thunder.

27 Then did he see it, and declare it ; he prepared it, yea, and searched it out.

28 And unto man he said, Behold, the fear of the Lord, that *is* wisdom ; and to depart from evil *is* understanding.

These are all so many sweet verses to the same effect. It should seem as if the mind of Job himself was so led out in the contemplation, that he knew not how to answer his own question, nor how to give it over unanswered. The manner in which he concludes gives the whole, if possible, more of a gospel form than any thing which went before. By comparing scripture with scripture, as we are commanded, 1 Cor. ii. 13. we can best form our conclusions of the several expressions we meet with. Job saith in this place, That ' the fear of the Lord, that is wisdom ; and to depart from evil is understanding.' Now as in other scriptures we are told, That the fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom ; and that Christ is made of God, to us, wisdom ; it should seem to follow, that in the knowledge of Christ, as the wisdom of God, for salvation, consists the whole of what is here expressed in this holy and childlike fear. I refer to those scriptures : 1 Cor. i. 24. 30. Psm. cxi. 10. Jerem. xxxii. 40. And, as a collateral proof, the prophet Isaiah had it in commission to tell the Church, that the ' people of no understanding' would have no mercy nor favour shewn them : Isaiah xxvii. 11. Is not this want of understanding an ignorance and despising of that wisdom of God in salvation by his dear Son ?

REFLECTIONS.

PRECIOUS Lord Jesus ! art thou not the wisdom of God, and the power of God, for salvation to every one that believeth ? And hath not every child of thine, who hath found thee, discovered that wisdom, whose value the topaz of Æthiopia, and all the gold of Peru, could not be compared to ? And hast thou really and truly taught thy people this lesson of wisdom, which all the learning of men, or angels ; untaught of thee, never could have discovered ? Yes, blessed Lord ! though these things are hidden from the wise, and prudent, yet are they, by thy blessed Spirit, revealed unto babes. Oh ! give me to trace the outlines of that wisdom which is manifested in thee ; for in thee are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge. Every thing connected with thee in thy redemption work, opens a new source of riches in this treasury. What wisdom was manifested in thee, as setting thee up our glorious Mediator ! What wisdom, in the constitution of thy glorious

person! What volumes of wisdom in all thy ways, and words, and works; in all thy saving offices, and relations, and characters! What manifold wisdom of God was that, blessed Jesus, when thou wast made sin for thy people, when thy holy soul knew no sin, that they might be made the righteousness of God in thee! What manifold wisdom is displayed in the glories of thy person, work, and righteousness! What wonders of wisdom, that justice should be satisfied, in the very nature that sinned; and yet that punishment should lay the foundation for everlasting honour and glory. Oh, precious Emmanuel! be thou to me every thing of wisdom and knowledge; for every thing out of thee, and without thee, is blindness and ignorance. And though thou art now, as much as ever, to men of carnal reasoning and human pride, as thou wert of old to the Jews, a stumbling block, and to the Greeks foolishness; yet art thou made of God, to all thy people, wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption; that he that glorieth may glory in the Lord.

CH A P. XXIX.

CONTENTS.

Job continueth his discourse yet farther, through the whole of this chapter. He draws a pathetic picture of his former prosperity.

MOREOVER Job continued his parable, and said,

2 Oh that I were as *in* months past, as *in* the days *when* God preserved me;

3 When his candle shined upon my head, *and when* by his light I walked *through* darkness;

4 As I was in the days of my youth, when the secret of God *was* upon my tabernacle;

5 When the Almighty *was* yet with me, *when* my children *were* about me;

It should seem very evident from these expressions, for they are all gracious expressions, that the Patriarch was chiefly lamenting, not that he was in distress, but that the presence of the Lord was not with him as heretofore he had enjoyed it. I need not, I hope, remind the Reader, how much in this instance Job was a type of the Lord Jesus. The agonies of Jesus in the garden and on the cross, were all on this account. "O my God (was the prophetic language concerning Christ, as well as by Christ), I cry in the day-time, but thou hearest not." Psm. xxii. 2. The several expressions here are all of a gracious kind. God's punishment of Job, and his consciousness of it: The candle of the Lord shining upon him; meaning, no doubt, his Holy Spirit: And the secret of God upon his tabernacle. Was not this secret of God another expression for what another servant of the Lord meant, when he said, The secret of the Lord is with them that fear him, and he will shew them his covenant? Psalm. xxv. 14. I do not presume to say so, but

yet I venture to ask, Is there not, in those several expressions, somewhat that hath reference to the glorious doctrine of the joint work and love of that Holy Three, which bear record in heaven? The preservation and keeping of the believer is peculiarly referred unto the favour and mercy of the Father. John xvii. 11. 1 Peter i. 5. The candle shining, is a well-known metaphor, for the lifting up the light of the Holy Spirit on the head of God's people. Numbers vi. 26. Psalm iv. 6. And is it not Jesus meant here, he whose name was Secret, and who is the whole of the covenant to his people? Judges xiii. 18. Isaiah xlii. 6.

6 When I washed my steps with butter, and the rock poured me out rivers of oil;

7 When I went out to the gate through the city, *when* I prepared my seat in the street!

8 The young men saw me, and hid themselves: and the aged arose, *and* stood up.

9 The princes refrained talking, and laid *their* hand on their mouth.

10 The nobles held their peace, and their tongue cleaved to the roof of their mouth.

11 When the ear heard *me*, then it blessed me; and when the eye saw *me*, it gave witness to me:

12 Because I delivered the poor that cried, and the fatherless, and *him that had* none to help him.

13 The blessing of him that was ready to perish came upon me: and I caused the widow's heart to sing for joy.

14 I put on righteousness, and it clothed me: my judgment *was* as a robe and a diadem.

15 I was eyes to the blind, and feet *was* I to the lame.

16 I *was* a father to the poor: and the cause *which* I knew not I searched out.

17 And I brake the jaws of the wicked, and plucked the spoil out of his teeth.

It is a very interesting account Job here gives of himself, and related in such a beautiful simplicity as cannot be equalled. It should seem, from the several expressions in it, that Job was a magistrate, who sat in the gate, as Moses had in his days, appointed for giving judgment. But I think, if we pass over Job, and behold him as a type of Jesus; then the several expressions rise in beauty, and are abundantly

more blessed and delightful. None among the children of fallen Adam can well lay claim to the exalted account here given. No robe of righteousness can be found but that of Jesus. None were ever, in the strict sense of the word, eyes to the blind, and feet to the lame, but the Lord Jesus. But if we eye Jesus, as here shadowed forth, how every word then tells. By Jesus did kings reign, and princes decree justice. Prov. viii. 15. Righteousness was indeed the girdle of his loins, and faithfulness the girdle of his reins. Isaiah xi. 5. For Jesus put on righteousness, as a breast plate, and an helmet of salvation upon his head. Isaiah lix. 17. Jesus was, in every sense of the word, eyes to the blind, and feet to the lame. He broke the jaws of the wicked when he triumphed over hell and the powers of darkness, and when he plucked our poor nature, as the spoil, from the teeth of Satan. Then it might be truly said, the blessing of him that was ready to perish came upon Jesus, when the trumpet of his gospel was blown. Isaiah xxvii. 13.

18 Then I said, I shall die in my nest, and I shall multiply *my* days as the sand.

19 My root *was* spread out by the waters, and the dew lay all night upon my branch.

20 My glory *was* fresh in me, and my bow was renewed in my hand.

21 Unto me *men* gave ear, and waited, and kept silence at my counsel.

22 After my words they spake not again; and my speech dropped upon them.

23 And they waited for me as for the rain; and they opened their mouth wide *as* for the latter rain.

24 *If* I laughed on them, they believed *it* not; and the light of my countenance they cast not down.

25 I chose out their way, and sat chief, and dwelt as a king in the army, as one *that* comforteth the mourners.

Here we find Job, in his own character, speaking of himself, and giving proofs of belonging to the fallen race of men, of like passions with ourselves: many favourable accounts of himself, mingled with much self-confidence and taking complacency, in what he had been and what he had done. Precious Jesus! how refreshing is it to see, that all thy people, after all their attainments, and all the bestowed grace upon them, plainly testify the hole of the pit from whence they are taken. Yes, blessed Redeemer! as the word of thy grace represents, and the experience of thy people confirms, it is thou, and thou only, that art

holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners, and made higher than the heavens. Hail, thou Holy One of Israel, the Lord our righteousness!

REFLECTIONS.

READER! in this representation of Job, let you and I look beyond the man of Uz, and behold some of the sweet sketches of Him, who is all that is here said, and infinitely more, to all his people. Jesus is indeed our Lawgiver, our King, our Ruler. Who, when hearing him speak, but must refrain talking, and lay their hands upon their mouth! His government is universal; his power unlimited. To him it belongs to appoint laws in the gate, and to cloathe his people with his own robe of righteousness, and his garment of salvation. Yes, blessed Jesus! it is thou that must solve all doubts; clear up all difficulties; and against thy judgment there can be no appeal; and there needeth none. Surely, dear Lord, thou art, and ever hast been, eyes to the blind, and feet to the lame. Who is there to comfort thy poor, and thy needy, but thee? Who to be with us in trouble, to console us with thy presence when afflicted, and to pluck thy poor captives from the hand of him that is stronger than we? Yes, yes! thou Almighty Samaritan, the blessing of them that are ready to perish shall come upon thee: for with the oil and wine of thy grace, and Holy Spirit, thou hast visited them; with the robes of thy righteousness, and with the garments of thy salvation, thou hast clothed them in their perishing circumstances; with thy precious body and blood thou hast fed and sustained them; and through all these manifestations of grace and favour, thy love hath been better than wine! Hail, gracious Lord! the helper of the poor, when he crieth, the hope of Israel, and the Saviour thereof. Be thou everlastingly praised, and everlastingly beloved; give us grace, Lord, to love thee, who hast so loved us.

CHAP. XXX.

CONTENTS.

Job is still prosecuting his discourse in this chapter. Having in the former, pointed out the day of his prosperity, he here draws a melancholy contrast, in a view of the state of adversity to which he is now brought.

BUT now *they that are* younger than I have me in derision, whose fathers I would have disdained to have set with the dogs of my flock.

2 Yea, whereto *might* the strength of their hands *profit* me, in whom old age was perished?

3 For want and famine *they were* solitary; fleeing into the wilderness in former time desolate and waste.

4 Who cut up mallows by the bushes, and juniper roots *for* their meat.

5 They were driven forth from among *men* (they cried after them as *after* a thief;)

6 To dwell in the cliffs of the vallies, *in* caves of the earth, and *in* the rocks.

7 Among the bushes they brayed; under the nettles they were gathered together.

8 *They were* children of fools; yea, children of base men: they were viler than the earth.

9 And now am I their song, yea, I am their byword.

10 They abhor me, they flee far from me, and spare not to spit in my face.

11 Because he hath loosed my cord, and afflicted me, they have also let loose the bridle before me.

12 Upon *my* right *hand* rise the youth; they push away my feet, and they raise up against me the ways of their destruction.

13 They mar my path, they set forward my calamity, they have no helper.

14 They came *upon me* as a wide breaking in of waters: in the desolation they rolled themselves upon me.

15 ¶ Terrors are turned upon me: they pursue my soul as the wind: and my welfare passeth away as a cloud.

16 And now my soul is poured out upon me; the days of affliction have taken hold upon me:

17 My bones are pierced in me in the night season: and my sinews take no rest.

18 By the great force of *my* disease is my garment changed: it bindeth me about as the collar of my coat.

I include the complaint of Job through all these verses in one point of view, not only for shortness sake, but also because general observations upon them will equally suit the whole. In this lamentation, the patriarch is reasoning with his three friends. Having taken a view, in the

preceding chapter, of his high exaltation, what he once was, he now directs them to behold, what he now is. And from both, the Patriarch desired to make an appeal to their feelings and compassion. But I hope that the reader hath not failed, while perusing those verses, to look beyond Job, and to have had his mind led out, in contemplating an infinitely greater than Job, concerning whom many of the expressions here made use of can hardly, I should think, be read, without beholding him in them. Indeed so strikingly do they set forth the Lord Jesus, in several parts of his humiliation in the days of his flesh, that one might be led to think, even if not found in the word of God, that the several expressions were intended principally to point to him. Was not Jesus, when he had left the realms of glory, and condescended to tabernacle in our flesh, for the redemption of our nature, was he not held in derision, and made the drunkard's song? Doth Job complain of want and famine, and solitary places; and can the believer overlook Him, who in the very moment he had been baptized with the fulness of the Spirit, was led up into the wilderness, to dwell with wild beasts, and to be tempted of the devil? Did Job complain of being spit upon, of being abhorred and forsaken; and can we forget how Jesus was buffeted, and thus treated, and how all his disciples forsook him, and fled? Was Job's soul pursued, terrors turned upon him; his soul poured out, and his bones pierced; and can any one omit to call to mind, how the Lamb of God was overwhelmed with terrors in the garden, and on the cross, when he poured out his soul unto death, and was numbered with the transgressors; his hands and his side pierced; and, as was said of him by the spirit of prophecy, he was poured out like water, and all his bones were out of joint; his heart, like wax, melted in the midst of his bowels? Oh, thou bleeding, dying, reviled Saviour! never may my soul forget thy sufferings, nor lose sight of thee, and thine unequalled sorrows, while reading the sorrows of thy people. Thou hast thyself, dearest Jesus, marked the vast difference: when speaking of the afflictions of thine afflicted, thou pointedst to their deliverance in God. Our fathers trusted in God; they trusted, and thou didst deliver them: But I am a worm, and no man, a reproach of men, and despised of the people. Psalm xxii. 4—6.

19 He hath cast me into the mire, and I am become like dust and ashes.

20 I cry unto thee, and thou dost not hear me: I stand up, and thou regardest me *not*.

21 Thou art become cruel to me: with thy strong hand thou opposest thyself against me.

22 Thou liftest me up to the wind; thou causest me to ride *upon it*, and dissolvest my substance.

23 For I know *that* thou wilt bring me *to death*, and *to the house appointed for all living*.

24 Howbeit he will not stretch out *his* hand to the grave, though they cry in his destruction.

25 Did not I weep for him that was in trouble? was *not* my soul grieved for the poor?

26 When I looked for good, then evil came *unto me*: and when I waited for light, there came darkness.

27 My bowels boiled, and rested not: the days of affliction prevented me.

28 I went mourning without the sun: I stood up, *and* I cried in the congregation.

29 I am a brother to dragons, and a companion to owls.

30 My skin is black upon me, and my bones are burned with heat.

31 My harp also is *turned* to mourning and my organ into the voice of them that weep.

Job is here changing his manner of complaint. In the former part of the chapter, he was reasoning with his friends; in this latter part, he seems speaking of God, and complaining to God. No doubt Job's sorrows were very great and oppressive, when we consider how he was smitten with sore boils. But, added to his bodily ailments, his mind was deeply exercised. And what lay chiefly upon Job's heart was, that the Lord did not comfort him; nay, so far from comforting him, that he seemed to be coming forth against him as an enemy. But we lose all the beauty of this scripture, if we look no further than to Job, the man of Uz, in all that is here said. If we are led by this scripture to have our minds exercised in beholding Him, who, by way of striking distinction, is called the Man of Sorrows, and acquainted with grief, then, I conceive, we shall come nearer to the design of the Holy Ghost, in giving this scripture. Job complaineth of the force of his disease, as a garment binding him about. But Jesus, though he complained not, had the disease, and whole weight and burden of our sins laid upon his precious soul, as a burden which none short of God could bear. Job complains of being cast into the mire, and that he is become like dust and ashes. Jesus speaks of all the billows, and water-spouts of divine wrath, when he stood forth the surety of his people, going over him. Psalm xlii. 7. Job looked forward to the grave, as the house appointed for all living; but Jesus voluntarily gave his life for the redemption of his people, when his strength was dried up like a potsherd, and his tongue cleaved to his jaws, and he was brought into the dust of death. Psalm xxii. 15. See, Reader, and mark with me, while consulting these precious scriptures, how gracious Jesus stood forth, and what he endured, without a complaining thought, when passing through these unequalled sorrows, for the salvation of his people. Psalm lxix. Psalm xxii. I

cannot close this chapter without once more desiring the Reader to pause over it, and to ask his own heart, for I presume not to decide the question, whether we may not safely conclude, that the Holy Ghost had an eye to Jesus, when setting forth the man of Uz, in this representation made of him? and whether he is not, in this light, an illustrious type of the ever blessed Jesus?

REFLECTIONS.

MY soul, behold in the sufferings of Job, what is, and deservedly ought to be, the lot of human nature. Born in sin, and therefore born to sorrow. *And shall a living man complain, a man for the punishment of his sins?* Job stands forth, in this instance, a living monument of what our nature, universally speaking, is exposed to. And but for the interposition of grace, in the mercy and love of God our Father, in giving his dear Son, and the Son of God in coming, and the Holy Spirit in bringing poor sinners acquainted with this rich salvation, all the temporal distresses of Job, aggravated by everlasting sorrows to have followed, would have been our portion for ever. Oh! what shall we render to God for his mercies! *Thanks, thanks be unto God for his unspeakable gift!*

But my soul, while contemplating the sorrows of Job, and the gracious interposition of heaven to soften and remove them, wilt thou not again and again look at Jesus; while reading Job's misery, and, in so lively a type of thy suffering Redeemer, feel all thy tender and affectionate powers going forth in love, and praise, and attachment, and obedience to thy blessed and adored Saviour? Did Jesus, in the days of his flesh, endure the contradiction of sinners against himself, that his people might not be weary, and faint in mind? Oh! thou Lamb of God! how didst thou, in thy debased and low estate, submit to all indignities, griefs, sorrows, wounds, bruises! Who shall describe the dreadful pangs, and agonies like those of a travailing woman when bringing forth, in the garden and on the cross, the delivery of thy people from everlasting slavery and eternal death. Oh, precious God! thou shalt see the travail of thy soul, for so the Father promised, and be satisfied. Thou shalt justify many. The dew of thy birth shall be as the womb of the morning. And now, blessed Redeemer, having by thy death delivered thy redeemed from death, and by rising to life again having begotten them to everlasting life: now thou rememberest no more the anguish of thy travailing pains in redemption work, for joy that thy children are born into the world of grace, and shall hereafter be with thee in glory. Amen.

CHAP. XXXI.

CONTENTS.

The subject of Job's defence is still prosecuted. He enters, somewhat more largely, into the particular justification of himself from that sin which he seemed so much hurt at having been charged with, hypocrisy, and closes the subject with this defence.

I Made a covenant with mine eyes; why then should I think upon a maid?

This chapter deserves our attention the more, because, though Job takes no pride in what he here saith, in the justification of himself, yet in those secret sins, which are known only to the Lord, on numberless occasions of evil, the Patriarch pleads not guilty; and which therefore serves to confirm the divine testimony which the Lord gave concerning his servant, in the opening of the book itself, that there was none like him in the earth, a perfect and an upright man, one that feared God, and eschewed evil. Chap. ii. 3. There is a great beauty in Job's expression in this verse, of having made a covenant with his eyes, to preserve, under grace, the chastity of the mind and body. By the eye, the lust of the flesh is frequently excited: and our adored Redeemer hath set it down as uncleanness and adultery already committed, if a man so looks on a woman as to lust after her. Matt. v. 28. There may be many causes, in the difficulty of attainment, or the shame and punishment which might attend the gratification of unlawful passions, which restrain the actual commission of the sin; but nothing but the grace of God can preserve the chastity of the mind from so much as wishing it, or thinking upon it. Joseph's views of this subject was similar to Job's, that wickedness is against God. Gen. xxxix. 9. Reader, though I have made this long note upon this verse, yet it is so very important, that I venture to make it a little longer, and to observe, that since from the corruption of our poor fallen nature, evil thoughts, and the whole train of the imaginations of the heart arise, how infinitely precious ought it to be to us, to eye the grace of Jesus as our preservative against this, and every evil; and, conscious of the uncleanness within, to keep the heart with all diligence, and to beg of God to keep it for us, since out of it are the issues of life. Prov. iv. 23.

2 For what portion of God *is there* from above? and *what* inheritance of the Almighty from on high?

3 *Is* not destruction to the wicked? and a strange *punishment* to the workers of iniquity?

4 Doth not he see my ways, and count all my steps?

5 If I have walked with vanity, or if my foot hath hastened to deceit;

6 Let me be weighed in an even balance, that God may know mine integrity.

7 If my step hath turned out of the way, and mine heart walked after mine eyes, and if any blot hath cleaved to mine hands;

8 *Then* let me sow, and let another eat; yea, let my offspring be rooted out.

In these verses, Job points out the cause which operated upon his mind, to preserve from the lust of the flesh, as before mentioned. It was from an eye to God, whose eye was upon him. He lived, as always under the divine inspection. It was God that prohibited the sin of uncleanness, injustice, and the like; and, therefore, here was the grand motive that swayed with Job's mind, not what man thought, but what God would think. Similar to the precept of the law, Thou shalt not curse the deaf, nor put a stumbling-block before the blind, but shalt fear thy God. I am the Lord. Levit. xix. 14. What if a man did curse the deaf, they could not hear it: neither the blind see who put the stumbling-block in his way. But what of that? the Lord would hear the one, and see the other: and the offence is levelled against God.

9 If mine heart have been deceived by a woman, or *if* I have laid wait at my neighbour's door;

10 *Then* let my wife grind unto another, and let others bow down upon her.

11 For this *is* an heinous crime; yea, it *is* an iniquity *to be punished by* the judges.

12 For it *is* a fire *that* consumeth to destruction, and would root out all mine increase.

13 If I did despise the cause of my manservant or of my maidservant, when they contended with me;

14 What then shall I do when God riseth up? and when he visiteth, what shall I answer him?

15 Did not he that made me in the womb make him? and did not one fashion us in the womb?

16 If I have withheld the poor from *their* desire, or have caused the eyes of the widow to fail;

17 Or have eaten my morsel myself alone, and the fatherless hath not eaten thereof:

18 (For from my youth he was brought up with me, as *with* a father, and I have guided her from my mother's womb:)

19 If I have seen any perish for want of clothing, or any poor without covering;

20 If his loins have not blessed me, and *if* he were *not* warmed with the fleece of my sheep;

21 If I have lifted up my hand against the fatherless, when I saw my help in the gate:

22 *Then* let mine arm fall from my shoulder blade, and mine arm be broken from the bone.

23 For destruction *from* God *was* a terror to me, and by reason of his highness I could not endure.

24 If I have made gold my hope, or have said to the fine gold, *Thou art* my confidence;

25 If I rejoiced because my wealth *was* great, and because mine hand had gotten much;

26 If I beheld the sun when it shined, or the moon walking *in* brightness;

27 And my heart hath been secretly enticed, or my mouth had kissed my hand:

28 This also *were* an iniquity *to be punished by* the judge: for I should have denied the God *that is* above.

29 If I rejoiced at the destruction of him that hated me, or lifted up myself when evil found him;

30 Neither have I suffered my mouth to sin by wishing a curse to his soul.

31 If the men of my tabernacle said not, Oh that we had of his flesh! we cannot be satisfied.

32 The stranger did not lodge in the street: *but* I opened my doors to the traveller.

I shall not in a work of this nature enter into the investigation of the several particulars of sin Job here enumerates, and of the commission of which he pleads his innocency; for general observations will suit the whole. Job's friends had been particular in their accusations against him. Eliphaz had charged him with having withheld his bread from the hungry; that his wickedness was great, and that he had taken a pledge from his brother for naught, and stripped the naked of their cloathing. Chapter xxii. 5—7. Job therefore enters into a particular defence of himself from all these charges; and shews here, as in the former instances, that not only a consciousness of the common equality in nature, between himself and his servant, would have induced tenderness, but a consciousness of God that was above, his love and reverence for his highness, would have suppressed such evils. And the good man, in a most beautiful and interesting manner, enters into an appeal

against these charges, and desires punishment, suited to the enormity of such offences, if he had, in any instance, exercised such cruelty. Reader, how sweet is it to have our nature brought under the traiment of grace, and to behold, under Jesus's example of meekness and lowliness of heart, the Spirit of Jesus ruling our hearts and minds, in the following his blessed steps.

33 If I covered my transgressions as Adam, by hiding mine iniquity in my bosom:

34 Did I fear a great multitude, or did the contempt of families terrify me, that I kept silence, *and* went not out of the door?

35 Oh that one would hear me! behold, my desire *is*, *that* the Almighty would answer me, and *that* mine adversary had written a book.

36 Surely I would take it upon my shoulder, *and* bind it *as* a crown to me.

37 I would declare unto him the number of my steps; as a prince would I go near unto him.

38 If my land cry against me, or that the furrows likewise thereof complain;

39 If I have eaten the fruits thereof without money, or have caused the owners thereof to lose their life:

40 Let thistles grow instead of wheat, and cockle instead of barley. The words of Job are ended.

This close of the chapter is very striking, and merits more particular attention. From man, Job appeals to God. Now this brings the matter to a decision. Job's friends had accused him of hypocrisy. Then saith Job, let the Almighty Searcher of hearts determine it. I beg the Reader to be particularly attentive, to have a clear sense of Job's meaning. Let not the Reader suppose that Job, in this appeal, was looking up to God's judgment seat, as one unconscious of sin. The opposite from this was Job's meaning. It was the sin of hypocrisy only he dared justify himself against the charge of. He had not covered, he saith, his transgressions, as his forefather Adam had done, seeking to hide himself from the presence of the Lord, amidst the trees of the garden. But he had told God his sins, and opened to him, in a full confession, his iniquity.

Yet at the same time, against what his three friends had observed, that his afflictions were the fruit of his hypocrisy, and God was now punishing him for that, here Job put in his appeal, and, in this point, desired to look up to God. If the Reader will compare this passage

with that which we have before gone over, chap. ix. 20, 21, he will be led to see, that it is in this sense the Patriarch all along is making his appeal to the justice of God. In no other light can we possibly look at the case, for the infinite holiness, and the infinite majesty of God, make it a solemn concern for any of the fallen race of Adam, even though brought into a state of justification through the blood and righteousness of the Lord Jesus Christ, to come before the Lord, and much less to make an appeal to the tribunal of his justice. And Job having thus given in his defence, declares his discourse to be ended.

R E F L E C T I O N S.

READER! while we behold the man of Uz in this chapter justifying himself against the unjust charges of his friends, and making appeal to the Lord to plead his cause, let not you and I mistake the Patriarch's meaning. It is one thing to justify our conduct against the unjust reproaches of men, and another to attempt palliating our offences committed against the sovereign majesty of Almighty God. At that throne of God's justice, Job pleaded always guilty. He repeatedly confessed himself to have been a sinner. When he looked at the holiness of God's law, he had nothing to say in his own justification. *I have sinned* (said Job), *what shall I say unto thee, O thou Preserver of men.* In our view of Job's justification of himself, therefore, let us not fail to have this in remembrance.

But Reader! how sweet a relief is it to every mind conscious of the manifold offences there dwelling, and seen perhaps to no eye but to His that seeth in secret, that blessed scripture which saith, 'If we confess our sins, God is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.' Here, Reader, let you and I seek justification before God in that blood which cleanseth from all sin, and that righteousness which justifieth the ungodly which believe in Jesus. Though the patriarch Job was evidently taught concerning these precious means of saving and justifying poor sinners, and undoubtedly had strong faith in his kinsman Redeemer, the Lord Jesus, yet, had he lived to know of that blessed Holy One what you and I know, and to read, what you and I may read, of the compleat redemption wrought by him, how would his soul have rejoiced in the vast consolation! Precious Lord Jesus! let thy righteousness, as my glorious Mediator and Surety, be the everlasting comfort, confidence, and joy of my heart. Then shall I be enabled to stand out against all the accusations of Satan, of false friends or open foes; and cry out with the Apostle in the holy triumph of the believer, *It is God that justifieth; who is he that condemneth? It is Christ that died, yea rather that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us.*

CHAP. XXXII.

CONTENTS.

This chapter opens with a new speaker, one whose name is Elihu. His discourse is in reproof, not only of Job, but of his three friends:

and he prosecutes the subject through the whole of this and several succeeding chapters.

SO these three men ceased to answer Job, because he *was* righteous in his own eyes.

The reason of Job's three friends forbearing any further dispute, was rather ill-founded. Job had only endeavoured to clear himself from their charge, and not to assert that he was righteous.

2 Then was kindled the wrath of Elihu the son of Barachel the Buzite, of the kindred of Ram: against Job was his wrath kindled, because he justified himself rather than God.

The wrath of man worketh not the righteousness of God. Yet Elihu's anger was not altogether out of place. It seems that Elihu's anger was not so much against Job for justifying himself, as for justifying himself rather than God. And certain it is, that if Job had only made use of the arguments he brought forward to shew God's righteousness was not at all impeached by his afflictions, instead of endeavouring to shew that his unrighteousness was not the cause wherefore he was thus visited, though the issue would have been the same, yet the method would have been more suitable and becoming. Elihu's anger therefore was excited against Job, because he seemed to have manifested a greater jealousy for his own character than for the glory of God. The name of Elihu is striking. *Eli* signifies *my God*;—*hu*, is *he*. Perhaps a *Buzite* might mean, that he was a descendant from that *Buz* which is spoken of, Gen. xxii. 21.

3 Also against his three friends was his wrath kindled, because they had found no answer, and yet had condemned Job.

Certainly Elihu's anger was well founded against Job's three friends: for they came forth to comfort him, and had added to his affliction. They charged him with being an hypocrite, but neither could make good the charge. Elihu stood as the umpire, and condemned the whole. So far he acted impartially.

4 Now Elihu had waited till Job had spoken, because they *were* elder than he.

5 When Elihu saw that *there was* no answer in the mouth of *these* three men, then his wrath was kindled.

Elihu modestly considered his youth, and therefore waited the proper time to speak. He did not begin until the whole had ended. But if a thing be well spoken, and rightly spoken, this is what Solomon calls *like apples of gold in pictures of silver*. Prov. xxv. 11.

6 And Elihu the son of Barachel the Buzite answered and said, *I am* young, and ye *are* very

old; wherefore I was afraid; and durst not shew you mine opinion.

7 I said, Days should speak, and multitude of years should teach wisdom.

8 But *there is* a spirit in man; and the inspiration of the Almighty giveth them understanding.

9 Great men are not *always* wise: neither do the aged understand judgment.

10 Therefore I said, Hearken to me; I also will shew mine opinion.

11 ¶ Behold, I waited for your words: I gave ear to your reasons, whilst ye searched out what to say.

12 Yea, I attended unto you, and, behold, *there was* none of you that convinced Job, or that answered his words:

13 Lest ye should say, We have found out wisdom: God thrusteth him down, not man.

14 Now he hath not directed *his* words against me: neither will I answer him with your speeches.

15 They were amazed, they answered no more: they left off speaking.

16 ¶ When I had waited, (for they spake not, but stood still, *and* answered no more;)

17 *I said*, I will answer also my part, I also will shew mine opinion.

18 For I am full of matter, the spirit within me constraineth me.

19 Behold, my belly *is* as wine *which* hath no vent; it is ready to burst like new bottles.

20 I will speak, that I may be refreshed: I will open my lips and answer.

21 Let me not, I pray you, accept any man's person, neither let me give flattering titles unto man.

22 For I know not to give flattering titles; *in so doing* my maker would soon take me away.

The whole of these verses seems to be but as the preface to Elihu's discourse. He bespeaks the favour of his hearers, and apologizeth for what he might offer; but, to conciliate their minds, he tells them, that he is bursting to deliver what he had to say, so important it is in his view. The frame of mind in Elihu, and the earnestness he felt to be useful in this controversy, may serve to teach how much a soul that is full of Jesus, and longs to go forth in his name and salvation, for the good of others, may be supposed to feel in his labour of love. To be shut up in a corner, and prohibited from speaking of the Lord, when we see souls perishing for lack of knowledge, what a grief must this be to faithful servants of the Lord Jesus! Jeremiah describes his state under this affliction, and saith, That the word of the Lord was in his heart, *as a burning fire shut up in his bones, so that he was weary with forbearing, and could not stay.* Jeremiah xx. 9.

REFLECTIONS.

THE zeal of Elihu, his impartiality, his diligence, his faithfulness, modesty; how graceful they make him appear, even before he enters upon the great subject he hath to propose to Job and his three disputants. Such methinks should be the servant of Jesus. The apostle describes him when he saith, The servant of the Lord must not strive, but be gentle unto all men, apt to teach, patient in meekness, instructing those that oppose themselves. He that winneth souls is wise. And when the great difficulty of the ministerial employment be considered, and in what a diversity of ways it may and must be administred, so as to suit the various minds, tempers, state, and dispositions, of the several hearers, certainly it requires the zeal of Elihu, and his mildness and earnestness also, to know how rightly to divide the word of truth, and to shew men that he is a workman that needeth not to be ashamed. And when we look on, and behold any congregation assembled, and consider them as they really are; some to be fed with milk, others with meat: the insensible and unawakened sinners to be roused; the trembling to be comforted; wanderers reclaimed; backsliders reprov'd; surely such a diversity requires all that prudence, wisdom, and grace, which Elihu appears in this chapter to be anxious in the exercising; so that the great purposes of the ministry might be accomplished. Happy the man that ministers in divine things, who, like the Apostle, in the close of his labours, can look up with humble confidence to the Lord, while taking a farewell of his people, and say, that he had kept nothing back that was profitable, neither had shunned to declare the whole counsel of God. But who is sufficient for these things? Lord Jesus! do thou graciously impart suited strength to all thy sent servants, and let their weakness be made perfect in thy strength; that, like one of old, they may determine to know nothing among men but Jesus Christ, and him crucified, having themselves experienced thee to be the power of God, and the wisdom of God for salvation to every one that believeth.

CHAP. XXXIII.

CONTENTS.

Elihu in this chapter enters upon his subject. It is directed to Job. He begs Job's attention: and, as Job had desired, in the eagerness of dispute with his friends, that he had some day's-man, or mediator, to judge for him, Elihu humbly proposeth himself, under this character. He makes a long discourse, and, at the close of the chapter, desires permission to proceed yet further.

WHEREFORE, Job, I pray thee, hear my speeches, and hearken to all my words.

2 Behold, now I have opened my mouth, my tongue hath spoken in my mouth.

3 My words *shall be of* the uprightness of my heart: and my lips shall utter knowledge clearly.

By this beginning Elihu seems to intimate, that what he had to say differed from the speeches of the former speakers, which might seem to incline Job to give the more favourable attention.

4 The spirit of God hath made me, and the breath of the Almighty hath given me life.

5 If thou canst answer me, set *thy words* in order before me, stand up.

There is another great strength Elihu gathers to induce Job to hear, from what is said also, that he was conscious of being under divine teaching: so that if Job knew the same he might then answer under the like direction. What could equal such a claim as this?

6 Behold, I *am* according to thy wish in God's stead: I also am formed out of the clay.

7 Behold, my terror shall not make thee afraid, neither shall my hand be heavy upon thee.

Here again Elihu subjoins another motive for Job's attention. Job had desired a mediator; and in Elihu he had such an one as could call forth no fear, being of the same human form as himself. But Reader, ought we not to lose sight of Job, and all his personal afflictions, that we may the better and more fully discover the outlines of that precious Jesus, whose gracious office is here so beautifully drawn. Can we behold Elihu coming forth to arbitrate the cause of Job and his friends; and shall we forget Him who came forth to make up the deadly breach of sin, when our whole nature was reduced, and sunk down to infinitely greater misery than Job was, with all his sores, and all his sorrows, both of mind and body? Can we read what Elihu saith of the Spirit of God, and the breath of the Almighty, and not call to mind how the Lord Jehovah anointed the Lord Jesus to preach the gospel to the poor, and gave him the Spirit without measure? Can we behold Elihu telling Job, that he was come a day's man according to his wish, and so come,

that his terror, being his equal, could not make him afraid; and are we not irresistibly led in thought and mind immediately to call to our remembrance, the ever blessed, ever gracious Jesus, who at the call of God his Father, came forth, and stood up our glorious Mediator, in our nature, united to the Godhead, that in him we might again return to the Lord, from whom, by sin and rebellion, we had departed; and never should have seen his face—never could have approached him, had not the Son of God opened a way by his blood, who also ever liveth to keep it open, for our approaching to God here by grace, and hereafter in glory? Oh! who can read this passage concerning Elihu, and view him in the endearing character here represented, and not feel his whole soul going forth in the rapturous contemplation of the Lord Jesus Christ, as our all-prevailing Mediator! Hail thou holy, blessed, precious Jesus! Thou art indeed that One, that only One, to mediate between an offended God and wretched sinners; and thou hast made our peace in the blood of thy cross.

8 ¶ Surely thou hast spoken in mine hearing, and I have heard the voice of *thy* words, *saying*,

9 I am clean without transgression, I *am* innocent; neither *is there* iniquity in me.

10 Behold, he findeth occasions against me, he counteth me for his enemy.

11 He putteth my feet in the stocks, he marketh all my paths.

12 Behold, *in this* thou art not just: I will answer thee, that God is greater than man.

13 Why dost thou strive against him? for he giveth not account of any of his matters.

14 For God speaketh once, yea twice, *yet man* perceiveth it not.

15 In a dream, in a vision of the night, when deep sleep falleth upon men, in slumberings upon the bed;

16 Then he openeth the ears of men, and seal-eth their instruction.

17 That he may withdraw man *from his* purpose, and hide pride from man.

This is a precious sermon of Elihu, independent of the connection it hath with Job's history. It will be highly profitable to view every part of it, as it concerns every exercised, every afflicted soul. It forms a beautiful account, indeed, in the general, how the Lord is dealing with his people, to open their ear to discipline, and to bring them into an acquaintance with himself. If we behold it in a gospel dress, as the work of God the Spirit in the heart, convincing of sin, and convincing of the

righteousness of Jesus, every word in the passage may be sweetly explained, with an eye to the Redeemer's glory and the sinner's conversion. The Church in Babylon, when delivered from their captivity, thought it more like a dream than a reality; the blessing seemed to be too great to be true. And is it not the same with the awakened, convinced, converted, liberated sinner? Psalm cxxvi. 1—4:

18 He keepeth back his soul from the pit, and his life from perishing by the sword.

19 He is chastened also with pain upon his bed, and the multitude of his bones with strong *pain*:

20 So that his life abhorreth bread, and his soul dainty meat.

21 His flesh is consumed away, that it cannot be seen? and his bones *that* were not seen stick out.

22 Yea, his soul draweth near unto the grave, and his life to the destroyers.

23 If there be a messenger with him, an interpreter, one among a thousand, to shew unto man his uprightness;

24 Then he is gracious unto him, and saith, Deliver him from going down to the pit: I have found a ransom.

25 His flesh shall be fresher than a child's: he shall return to the days of his youth:

26 He shall pray unto God, and he will be favourable unto him: and he shall see his face with joy: for he will render unto man his righteousness.

27 He looketh upon men, and *if any* say, I have sinned, and perverted *that which was* right, and it profited me not;

28 He will deliver his soul from going into the pit, and his life shall see the light.

29 Lo, all these *things* worketh God oftentimes with man,

30 To bring back his soul from the pit, to be enlightened with the light of the living.

31 ¶ Mark well, O Job, hearken unto me: hold thy peace, and I will speak.

32 If thou hast any thing to say, answer me: speak, for I desire to justify thee.

33 If not, hearken unto me: hold thy peace, and I shall teach thee wisdom.

Elihu here describes another plan by which the Lord graciously works. He had before said, that God spake once, yea twice, and men perceived it not. And here he shews, that when neither visions, nor the instructions from the ministry of his word, prove effectual to awaken the senseless and unthinking sinner, the Lord goes on in his gracious work of mercy, to bring him to his better senses by another process of love. He lays the unthinking creature down upon a bed of sickness; visits him with pains, wakeful nights, wearisome days, such as Job had before complained of (chap. vii. 3.); rouseth him to a sense of inquiry; puts a cry in his heart, Wherefore is this evil come upon me? What have I done to deserve it? and the like. And if, when solemn questions of this nature arise in the mind, the Lord sends to him an interpreter, one among a thousand, to unfold to him the gracious design of God, and to point to him Jesus for salvation, then the whole process of divine love is unfolded: God's mercy in the affliction, the sinner's profit under it, and the glory of Jesus in redeeming him; all appear glorious to his view; and his ravished soul hears the sweet voice of pardon speaking concerning him: Deliver him from going down to the pit, saith the Lord, I have found a ransom. Reader, what knowest thou of this Interpreter from God, One among a thousand? Jesus, surely, by his Holy Spirit, is the One, the only One: and, as he himself hath said, and all his people know, every one that hath heard, and hath learned of the Father, cometh unto him, for so it is said in the prophets. John vi. 45. Isaiah liv. 13.

REFLECTIONS.

READER, let the sermon of Elihu call forth your most earnest attention. I pray God to render it profitable to us both. Surely it is a sermon full of gospel, full of grace, full of divine teaching; in which is set forth the tender mercies of God our Father, the preciousness and importance of salvation by the Lord Jesus Christ, and the blessedness of that instruction which God the Holy Ghost graciously gives his people, whether by vision or by dream, by private call or public teaching, in his dispensations and his providences, in trouble or in joy, in sickness or in health.

Oh! for grace to profit under all the various mercies by which God is for ever calling upon the inattentive and ignorant minds of his people. Holy Spirit! condescend to be the teacher, both of writer and reader: and though thou art so gracious as to speak once, yea twice, and our hearts regard it not; yet, oh! thou condescending Lord, go on we beseech thee, notwithstanding all our stubbornness and dulness, and little improvement, under thy various ways, of opening our understanding,

until the great purpose is accomplished, *in making us wise unto salvation, through the faith which is in Christ Jesus.*

And oh! my soul, see to it, that all these gracious calls of thy God, upon thee, commissioned as they every one of them is in so much mercy, see that they have their blessed effect. Look diligently, and examine the foundation of thy hope. Art thou awakened! art thou seriously, truly concerned, for thine everlasting welfare? Hath the exceeding sinfulness of sin most solemnly convinced thee, that there is no salvation out of Christ? and hast thou under this conviction, so earnestly implored pardon, mercy, and peace, in the blood of the cross, that thou hast at length heard those soul-comforting words of God thy Father, saying, concerning thee, Deliver him from going down to the pit, I have found a ransom. Oh! blessed deliverance; precious, precious salvation! Then *shall my flesh be fresher than a child's, and my life shall see the light.*

CHAP. XXXIV.

CONTENTS.

Elihu still prosecutes his animated discourse, through this chapter. He is still reproving Job, but in such a way of gentleness, that the Patriarch makes no appeal against it.

FURTHERMORE Elihu answered and said,
 2 Hear my words, O ye wise men; and give ear unto me ye that have knowledge.

3 For the ear trieth words, as the mouth tasteth meat.

4 Let us choose to us judgment: let us know among ourselves what *is* good.

5 For Job hath said, I am righteous: and God hath taken away my judgment.

6 Should I lie against my right? my wound *is* incurable without transgression.

7 What man *is* like Job, *who* drinketh up scorning like water?

8 Which goeth in company with the workers of iniquity, and walketh with wicked men.

9 For he hath said, It profiteth a man nothing that he should delight himself with God.

10 ¶ Therefore hearken unto me, ye men of understanding: far be it from God, *that he should do* wickedness; and *from* the Almighty, *that he should commit* iniquity.

11 For the work of a man shall be rendered unto him, and cause every man to find according to *his* ways.

12 Yea, surely God will not do wickedly, neither will the Almighty pervert judgment.

It is beautiful to trace the order and plan of Elihu's reasoning. He setteth out with laying it down as a truth perfectly incontrovertible, that the Lord of Heaven and Earth can never do wrong. *Shall not the Judge of all the Earth do right?* And, in addition to this, Elihu contendeth further, that, in all his righteous dispensations, he is everlastingly pursuing the welfare of his people: and that, whatever outward providences may seem to say, yet his love is always the same. Far be it from God, saith he, that he should do wickedness. And hence the conclusion is obvious. Job's impatience under suffering was unsuitable and unbecoming. Here indeed seems to lie the great difference between Job's arguments and Elihu's. Job was anxious to justify his own integrity, more than the glory of God; but Elihu, in his judgment, evidently thought with the Apostle: *Let God be true, but every man a liar.* Rom. iii. 4.

13 Who hath given him a charge over the earth? or who hath disposed the whole world?

14 If he set his heart upon man, *if* he gather unto himself his spirit and his breath;

15 All flesh shall perish together, and man shall turn again unto dust.

16 If now *thou hast* understanding, hear this: hearken to the voice of my words.

17 Shall even he that hateth right govern? and wilt thou condemn him that is most just?

18 *Is it fit* to say to a king, *Thou art* wicked? and to princes, *Ye are* ungodly?

19 *How much less* to him that accepteth not the persons of princes, nor regardeth the rich more than the poor? for they all *are* the work of his hands.

20 In a moment shall they die, and the people shall be troubled at midnight, and pass away: and the mighty shall be taken away without hand.

21 For his eyes *are* upon the ways of man, and he seeth all his goings.

22 *There is* no darkness, nor shadow of death,

where the workers of iniquity may hide themselves.

23 For he will not lay upon man more *than right*; that he should enter into judgment with God.

24 He shall break in pieces mighty men without number, and set others in their stead.

25 Therefore he knoweth their works, and he overturneth *them* in the night, so that they are destroyed.

26 He striketh them as wicked men in the open sight of others;

27 Because they turned back from him, and would not consider any of his ways:

28 So that they cause the cry of the poor to come unto him, and he heareth the cry of the afflicted.

This is a very striking account of the right of God's sovereignty; and the scope of Elihu's argument, in these verses, is to shew, that a sense of our creatureship, and more especially when connected with a due apprehension of our guilt and corruption, would induce in every man, even the very greatest and best of men, a patient and humble submission to the divine will in all things. And what Elihu hath observed upon this occasion, must be the cool determination of every enlightened mind: for, where sin sits heavy, sorrows will sit light. And a deep sense of our nothingness, as creatures, and our being worse than nothing, as sinful creatures, will cause every man to put his hand to his mouth, and say with the Church of old, *Thou hast afflicted us less than our sins deserve.* Ezra. ix. 13.

29 When he giveth quietness, who then can make trouble? and when he hideth *his* face, who then can behold him? whether *it be done* against a nation, or against a man only:

30 That the hypocrite reign not, lest the people be ensnared.

31 ¶ Surely it is meet to be said unto God, I have borne *chastisement*, I will not offend *any more*:

32 *That which* I see not teach thou me: if I have done iniquity, I will do no more.

33 *Should it be* according to thy mind? he will

recompense it, whether thou refuse, or whether thou choose; and not I: therefore speak what thou knowest.

34 ¶ Let men of understanding tell me, and let a wise man hearken unto me.

35 Job hath spoken without knowledge, and his words *were* without wisdom.

36 My desire *is that* Job may be tried unto the end because of *his* answers for wicked men.

37 For he addeth rebellion unto his sin, he clappeth *his hands* among us, and multiplieth his words against God.

How just is the reasoning of Elihu, on this ground, that when a man is visited, he should patiently bear it. This is an exact correspondence to what the Lord himself had appointed; that, with a free acknowledgment of sin, there should be what is called, a free acknowledgment of the rights of God's justice; or, in the language of the Bible, *the accepting by the sinner of the punishment of his iniquity.* Lev. xxvi. 41. For this carried with it both the idea of justifying God when man is thus judged, and being themselves humbled under a due sense of their undeservings. Reader, mark it down as one of the truest evidences, that a life of grace is wrought in the soul, when a man's own heart takes part with God's justice against himself, and confesses that without an eye to Christ, and the covenant engagements of Jehovah in him, though the sinner were cast out of the divine presence for ever, there would be nothing more than what his sins had deserved. The close of Elihu's discourse in this chapter, that his desire was that Job might be tried unto the end, means, that as the afflictions he was exercised with had a gracious design in them, as the real friend to Job he could not but hope that they might be so long continued, until that God's glory was fully manifested, by the issue of them, and Job himself brought to that blessed and gracious conclusion, that God is righteous in all his ways, and holy in all his works. Psalm cxlv. 17.

REFLECTIONS.

READER, let not this interesting discourse of Elihu pass away from us without leaving behind it upon our minds the many precious instructions it is so eminently calculated to impart; nor, in the view of the suitableness of it to Job, overlook the interest we ourselves have in it. Every perfection of Jehovah preacheth to us the same blessed truths as Elihu here contends for; namely, that God's sovereignty, and God's justice, independent of his covenant love and wisdom, have unanswerable claims upon all his creatures, for the most extensive and unqualified submission to his holy will in all things. That conclusion of Eli is, or ought to be, the conclusion of every one: *It is the Lord, let him do what seemeth him good.* But when we add to this view of God's power

and authority, the sense also of his wisdom and his love, while the *former* demands our dutiful submission, as to the Lord's right, this *latter* adds another claim to this becoming frame of mind, because we know these glorious perfections are both engaged, and always in exercise, to arrange and order all things, as shall best and ultimately promote the happiness of his redeemed people, whatever outward events may be appointed for the accomplishment. And the consciousness of this brings the mind into the sweetest of all frames, when the heart is once fully established in the firm faith and assurance of it. For the soul of the faithful will then arrive at this happy conclusion, Wherefore should I be anxious at any one circumstance that occurs, when my God's power and sovereignty, and my God's wisdom and love, are all in exercise to do that for me which may best promote my God's glory, and my welfare? No, saith the believer, let my God, my Jesus, my wise and loving Lord, choose every thing for me; for sure I am it will then not only be the wisest and best chosen, but that which ought to be, for his glory and my good. Reader, I pray God that both you and I may find grace thus to act, and thus to refer every thing into his hands that concerns our present and everlasting welfare, from a perfect conviction of that unerring truth, *All things work together for good to them that love God, to them that are the called according to his purpose.*

CHAP. XXXV.

CONTENTS.

We have a continuation of the speech of Elihu in this chapter. He is still prosecuting the same theme, in holding forth to Job's view the perfectness and glory of the Lord, in all his dispensations.

ELIHU spake moreover, and said,
 2 Thinkest thou this to be right, *that* thou saidst, My righteousness is more than God's?

3 For thou saidst, What advantage will it be unto thee? *and*, What profit shall I have, *if I be cleansed* from my sin?

4 I will answer thee, and thy companions with thee.

5 Look unto the heavens, and see; and behold the clouds *which* are higher than thou.

6 If thou sinnest, what doest thou against him: or *if* thy transgressions be multiplied, what doest thou unto him?

7 If thou be righteous, what givest thou him? or what receiveth he of thine hand?

8 Thy wickedness *may hurt* a man as thou art; and thy righteousness *may profit* the son of man.

Nothing can be more just and beautiful than this comparative statement between man's righteousness, as extended towards man, and the same, as manifested towards God. We may be very helpful to one another, but when this kind of reasoning is brought forward, as it refers to God, it loseth its very name. There is a beautiful expression of David, with an eye to Christ, in his prophetic character, in one of the Psalms, which throws a light to illustrate this reasoning of Elihu's very strikingly: *O my soul, thou hast said unto the Lord, Thou art my Lord, my goodness extendeth not to thee; but to the Saints that are in the earth, and to the excellent, in whom is all my delight.* Psalm xvi. 2, 3. This may be said of David, King of Israel, and of every man like David. All the goodness of the world is unprofitable to the Lord; for whether men bless God, or revile God, the one neither can add to his glory, nor the other tend to the lessening of it. The glory of the sun is never the less for any dark or bright clouds below. The Lord hath no need of our services. And indeed, all the good that any man is enabled to do, the ability must be derived from God to do it. So that in fact, in the very act of doing good (if there be any thing among poor sinners which can deserve the name) there is a debt to God for being enabled to do it, instead of God being indebted to any to whom he gives that ability for doing it. But I rather would read the passage with an eye to Jesus, concerning whom, if I mistake not, David spake these words by the spirit of prophecy. And here how precious is it to hear Jesus addressing our God and Father in these sweet words, That his goodness, in the redemption he wrought for poor sinners, extended not to the Father. His glory was and is eternally the same. But, saith Jesus, it is to the saints, to my redeemed, the excellent in me, for there is no excellency otherwise in themselves, but as they are related to me. In these, saith the Lord, is all my delight. Precious Lord! thy delights were with thy people from everlasting. And notwithstanding all our unworthiness, and baseness, thy delights are with us still; for having loved thine own, which are in the world, thou lovest them unto the end. John xiii. 1. Elihu's reasoning on this subject, as it refers to Job, is most decisive. The great defect all along of Job's discourse had been, in seeking more his own justification than the divine glory. This therefore Elihu unanswerably refutes. He also reproves Job for denying the profitableness of affliction, and plainly shews that in all dispensations the grace of God is directed to man's profit, not the Lord's advantage, for that is impossible: neither our righteousness or unrighteousness can do any thing to God.

9 ¶ By reason of the multitude of oppressions they make *the oppressed* to cry: they cry out by reason of the arm of the mighty.

10 But none saith, Where is God my maker, who giveth songs in the night;

11 Who teacheth us more than the beasts of the earth, and maketh us wiser than the fowls of heaven?

12 There they cry, but none giveth answer, because of the pride of evil men.

13 Surely God will not hear vanity, neither will the Almighty regard it.

14 Although thou sayest thou shalt not see him, *yet judgment is before him*; therefore trust thou in him.

15 But now, because *it is not so*, he hath visited in his anger; yet he knoweth *it* not in great extremity.

How awfully is this scripture verified in the daily experience of mankind. Men under the various oppressions of life will cry out; some under sickness, some under want; some under one affliction, and some under another. But none of their cries are directed unto the Lord. Go wheresoever you may, in prisons, in sick rooms, in poor houses, or even among the rich under disappointment or trouble, yet, though you may hear one saying, O my child, my brother, my husband, my father, my friend! O my head, my heart, my body; or, O the cruelty of this or that; yet, amidst all these wailings and bitter lamentations, which are all the cry of nature, not of grace, you never heard among them the voice of an awakened soul, crying out, Where is God my maker, who giveth songs in the night? What an awful blindness hath the fall induced in the circumstances of all mankind by nature! To behold men thrown into prison, on dying beds, under bereaving providences; and all complaining, yet none crying to God, though all disposed to complain of God. Reader, do mark the difference. The people of God, if in sorrow, affliction, sickness, on a bed of languishing, they have their songs in the night; and, from the sweet visits of Jesus, can and do say, *In the multitude of the sorrows that I had in my heart, thy comforts have refreshed my soul.* Psalm xciv. 19.

16 Therefore doth Job open his mouth in vain; he multiplieth words without knowledge.

REFLECTIONS.

MY soul, here is a new field opened for thy further improvement in this highly finished reasoning of Elihu. And, surely, the Holy Ghost graciously intended from it that the people of God should learn, that even good men, like Job, need to be perpetually on their guard, lest, in their view of things, they are found more attentive to their own ease than to the promotion of the divine glory. To promote this should be the first and great end of all our pursuit and all our desire. It was for this purpose creation work was first ordained. So the Song in heaven declared, when addressed to Jehovah, 'That the Lord had created all things, and for his pleasure they were and are created.' And, for the same end, redemption-work was accomplished, that God in all things might be glorified, in and through Jesus Christ. And oh! how blessed

it is, and must be, when the believer is enabled by grace to say, It matters not what becomes of such a poor worthless creature as I am; but oh! let my God be glorified, and the work of redemption by the Lord Jesus be eternally praised, by giving glory to God in Christ.

Reader, how are you and I glorifying our God in his dispensations towards us? Can we, do we, bless God in all things, trials as well as enjoyments; dark seasons as well as light ones? Do we rejoice in all, and bless God in all, and thank God for all, and live to him through all? Do our discouragements leave these precious and blessed effects behind them, to endear Jesus the more, and the world the less? Are we more heavenly-minded, more disposed to prayer, less vain, less confident, more humble? Is sin more sinful to our view, more loathsome in itself, and are ourselves more loathsome also, from being the subject of it? Above all, Is Jesus more precious, increasingly dear, increasingly lovely? Are these the blessed effects in our experience? Oh! Sir, if these things be in us and abound, then is our state, be it what it may in outward appointments, or in inward exercises, a blessed state, and every thing is ministering to our good. Then, as the Apostle saith, if these things be so, they shall make us to be neither barren nor unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ.

CHAP. XXXVI.

CONTENTS.

Elihu still prosecuteth his discourse. He gives a better and a more proper reason than Job's friends did, concerning the cause of affliction, and shews, that it is by such providences that the Lord exerciseth his people.

ELIHU also proceeded, and said,
 2 Suffer me a little, and I will shew thee that *I have* yet to speak on God's behalf.

3 I will fetch my knowledge from afar, and will ascribe righteousness to my Maker.

There is somewhat very striking in Elihu's account of himself, in the cause why he speaks. He saith it is on God's behalf, and this he doth by ascribing righteousness unto him. Reader, if the glory of God in Christ was made the one, and the only cause of all our speaking, this would be the standard of every thing that is excellent. The Lord saith, *He that honoureth me, I will honour.* 1 Sam. ii. 30. Now, if the one sole object of all our pursuits, and all our desires, be to honour God, depend upon it, in honouring him we find comfort ourselves. But if my comfort be more the object of my pursuit than the divine glory, I shall want that comfort when most I stand in need of it.

4 For truly my word *shall not be* false: he that is perfect in knowledge *is* with thee.

5 Behold, God *is* mighty, and despiseth not *any*: *he is* mighty in strength *and* wisdom.

6 He preserveth not the life of the wicked: but giveth right to the poor.

7 He withdraweth not his eyes from the righteous: but with kings *are they* on the throne; yea, he doth establish them for ever, and they are exalted.

8 And if *they be* bound in fetters, *and* be holden in cords of affliction;

9 Then he sheweth them their work, and their transgressions that they have exceeded.

10 He openeth also their ear to discipline, and commandeth that they return from iniquity.

11 If they obey and serve *him*, they shall spend their days in prosperity, and their years in pleasures.

12 But if they obey not, they shall perish by the sword, and they shall die without knowledge.

13 But the hypocrites in heart heap up wrath: they cry not when he bindeth them.

14 They die in youth, and their life *is* among the unclean.

15 He delivereth the poor in his affliction, and openeth their ears in oppression.

16 ¶ Even so would he have removed thee out of the strait *into* a broad place, where *there is* no straitness; and that which should be set on thy table *should be* full of fatness.

17 But thou hast fulfilled the judgment of the wicked: judgment and justice take hold *on thee*.

18 Because *there is* wrath, *beware* lest he take thee away with *his* stroke: then a great ransom cannot deliver thee.

19 Will he esteem thy riches? *no*, not gold, nor all the forces of strength.

20 Desire not the night, when people are cut off in their place.

21 Take heed, regard not iniquity: for this hast thou chosen rather than affliction.

Elihu hath here beautifully shewn the gracious design of the Lord in his visitations, and a most delightful chain of reasoning upon the subject he is here making use of, from beginning to end. He first dwells upon that glorious and distinguishing perfection of the Almighty, his power and sovereignty; and, having set this down as the bottom and foundation of what he was going to reason upon, he shews, in a clear manner, some of the causes for which that omnipotency is exercised. As first, by the display of his power, the Lord induceth trouble and affliction, on purpose to lead the mind into a deep sense of sin. This blessed office of the Holy Ghost is not unfrequently preparatory to the experimental knowledge of Jesus, and his salvation: and when the Lord hath thus induced trouble, to make the heart sensible of sin, the next gracious office is, as Elihu expresses it, to open the ear to discipline; that is, by making sin appear what it really is, exceeding sinful; and thereby to make a man out of love with himself; to bring the soul in love with the work of God's righteousness in the redemption of the Lord Jesus. And thus having brought the sinner acquainted with himself, which before he did not know, then in the love of God, and in the hatred of sin, to keep back the heart from iniquity.

22 Behold, God exalteth by his power: who teacheth like him?

23 Who hath enjoined him his way? or who can say, Thou hast wrought iniquity?

24 ¶ Remember that thou magnify his work, which men behold.

25 Every man may see it; man may behold it afar off.

26 Behold, God *is* great, and we know *him* not, neither can the number of his years be searched out.

27 For he maketh small the drops of water: they pour down rain according to the vapour thereof:

28 Which the clouds do drop *and* distil upon man abundantly.

29 Also can *any* understand the spreadings of the clouds, *or* the noise of his tabernacle?

30 Behold, he spreadeth his light upon it, and covereth the bottom of the sea.

31 For by them judgeth he the people; he giveth meat in abundance.

32 With clouds he covereth the light; and com-

mandeth it *not to shine, by the cloud that cometh betwixt.*

33 The noise thereof sheweth concerning it, the cattle also concerning the vapour.

Elihu having, in general terms, spoken of the doctrine, in this latter part of the chapter, seems to make a more particular application of it, as it concerned Job. He had refuted the arguments of Job's friends by what he had said, in clearly proving, that affliction, so far from carrying with it tokens of displeasure, was frequently made, in the hand of the Lord, a gracious means for teaching his people. But having thus shewn the error of Job's friends, he now no less sheweth that Job's conclusions, in many instances, had been wrong also. The dissatisfaction he had manifested, and his wish to get out of the trial before the Lord's appointed time, when the purposes for which the trial had been sent had not been fully answered, these things proved that Job's views were not so clear concerning divine dispensations as a servant of the Lord's ought to be. And therefore he admonisheth Job to magnify the Lord's work, and to have a more settled and steady view of God's goodness. All which corresponds to the testimony the Holy Ghost hath given in scripture concerning divine dispensations, that *the works of the Lord are great, sought out of all them that have pleasure therein. His work is honourable and glorious, and his righteousness endureth for ever.* Psm. cxi. 2, 3.

R E F L E C T I O N S.

READER, let our improvement, from the perusal of this chapter, be to remark, that the glory of God is the great end of man; and by whatever method or way that glory can be exalted, the faith of God's people is to pursue that way, and studiously to desire that purpose. This was and is the great end of all *creation*. Hence the hymn in heaven: *Thou art worthy, O Lord, to receive glory and honour and power; for thou hast created all things, and for thy pleasure they are and were created.* And the same was and is the great purpose and end of *redemption*, that God in all things may be glorified in Jesus Christ. Hence the song among the redeemed in glory is to the same effect: *Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive power and riches, and wisdom and strength, and honour and glory, and blessing.* It matters not what becomes of such poor, trifling, empty, and sinful creatures as we are, if God's glory can be but the more advanced. And hence, Reader, what a sweet thought is it, that, as by the glorious person and work of the Lord Jesus, more glory results to Jehovah than his justice could have received, had it taken vengeance upon our sins, by banishing our whole race from his presence to all eternity; so receiving us in him, and blessing us in him, and making us everlastingly happy in him; this gives all the glory where alone that glory is due. Both the blessings of creation and redemption are then seen to be the result of infinite wisdom, and love, and power; and to open a revenue of praise and glory to the one blessed and eternal Jehovah for evermore.

One thought more, Reader, on this beautiful discourse of Elihu's be-

fore we close the chapter. Let us both seek grace from that Almighty Spirit who thus taught Elihu how to form so just a conclusion of the divine dispensations, that we may also mark for our own exercise, the gracious design of our Covenant God in Christ, in every one that concerns ourselves. Are we exalted in circumstances? See then that Jesus is in every one of them. Are we depressed in trials? Where is the Lord Jesus to sanctify them? Do we hear his voice, can we trace his steps, mark his hand? Oh! how blessed it is when we are enabled to discover him, as the Alpha and Omega, the sum and substance of all our joy, the soother and softener of all our sorrow. Oh! thou dear Redeemer! cause me to eye thee, in my highest enjoyments, giving the finishing relish to all. Oh! grant my dearest Lord, that I may never be so taken up with any of thy gifts, how precious soever they may be in themselves, so as to overlook, or shut out of my remembrance, the Giver. But, oh! let thy fulness, thy beauty, thy glory, be ever uppermost in my view. And if it pleaseth thy wisdom to exercise me with afflictions, yet dearest Lord, if thou art beheld by me, as near to help, when my depressed soul be most in need, then shall I be enabled to esteem that affliction, that brings thee nearer to my view, as more blessed than the highest prosperity without thee. Yes, thou adored Redeemer! be thou all in all, and then in all things thou wilt be my joy, my consolation, my hope, my portion, in grace here; and in glory hereafter. Amen.

CHAP. XXXVII.

CONTENTS.

Elihu in this chapter concludes his sermon, and a noble sermon it is. Having in the preceding part of it shewn the goodness, rectitude, wisdom, and mercy of the Lord, he here closeth with offering some highly finished thoughts upon the unsearchableness of his divine doings in his dispensations towards the children of men.

AT this also my heart trembleth, and is moved out of his place.

2 Hear attentively the noise of his voice, and the sound *that* goeth out of his mouth.

3 He directeth it under the whole heaven, and his lightning unto the ends of the earth.

4 After it a voice roareth: he thundereth with the voice of his excellency; and he will not stay them when his voice is heard.

5 God thundereth marvellously with his voice; great things doeth he, which we cannot comprehend.

Elihu is here reasoning from the wonders of God's works in the world of nature, in bringing the lightning and rains out of his treasures. And

Elihu seems to intimate, that though these are produced, by the Lord's appointment, from natural causes, yet the world ought to hear the voice of God in them, and by them. Witness the Lord's descent on Mount Sinai, which was accompanied with thunders, and lightnings, and other tremendous signs, to intimate the divine presence. Exodus xix. 16—20. And the Apostle was commissioned by the Holy Ghost to teach the Church, that those awful signs were figurative also of the alarming nature of the dispensation of the law, to shew the gracious and mild dispensation, contrasted to it, in the gospel. Heb. xii. 18—24.

6 For he saith to the snow, Be thou on the earth; likewise to the small rain, and to the great rain of his strength.

7 He sealet up the hand of every man; that all men may know his work.

How beautiful an account is this of God's work! and how evident is it from these words, that God expects men should take account of his grace and mercy, in thus sending upon the earth the different weathers, as tokens of his bounty and love. Doth God shut up the windows of heaven? What is this but to bring his people to a mercy seat, as Elias was brought to watch God's appointment, and to ask his mercy. Doth he send us fruitful seasons to fill our hearts with food and gladness; what is this but to fill our souls also with love and praise. Reader, suppose we were to spiritualize these natural blessings, and look through them to Him, who is said to come down upon the minds and hearts of his people, like rain upon the mown grass. Psm. lxxii. 6. And who, after the snow and the frost are gone up from the wintry seasons of his church, invites his people to come away with him, when he hath visited their souls with a renewed spring, because the winter is past, and the rain is over and gone. Song ii. 10, 11.

8 Then the beasts go into dens, and remain in their places.

9 Out of the south cometh the whirlwind: and cold out of the north.

10 By the breath of God frost is given: and the breadth of the waters is straitened.

11 Also by watering he wearieth the thick cloud: he scattereth his bright cloud:

12 And it is turned round about by his counsels: that they may do whatsoever he commandeth them upon the face of the world in the earth.

13 He causeth it to come, whether for corruption, or for his land, or for mercy.

Here are the same traces of God's power pointed to, in the effect and operation of winds, and their constant ministration, by his appointment.

All which, were our minds not dullness itself, would unceasingly lead us to the contemplation of God. Perhaps there is not a subject so general among all ranks and orders of people, as that of weather. It becomes the usual subject as we pass the street, or in the house; what a fine day, or what a rainy day, it is to day. But how seldom do we hear serious observations added to the conversation, how gracious the Lord is in the appointment. Reader, let you and I never converse on the weather without connecting with it our humble and devout acknowledgment of Him and his mercy, in the different appointments of the weather, who gathereth the winds (as the wise man expresseth it) in his fists, and hath bounded the waters in his garment. Prov. xxx. 4. And, in a more spiritual sense, let the winds of the north, and the south, here spoken of, lead our minds to the recollection of the divine breathing of the Holy Ghost, concerning whose gracious operations upon the hearts of his people, the Redeemer calls for the manifestation of his blessed office, in desiring the north wind, and the south wind, to blow upon the garden, which is the church of Jesus, that the spices may flow; and that then the Church's beloved, even Jesus himself, will come into his garden, and eat of his pleasant fruits. Song iv. 16.

14 Hearken unto this, O Job: stand still, and consider the wondrous works of God.

15 Dost thou know when God disposed them, and caused the light of his cloud to shine?

16 Dost thou know the balancings of the clouds, the wondrous works of him which is perfect in knowledge?

17 How thy garments *are* warm, when he quieteth the earth by the south *wind*?

18 Hast thou with him spread out the sky, *which is* strong, and as a molten looking glass?

19 Teach us what we shall say unto him; *for* we cannot order *our speech* by reason of darkness.

20 Shall it be told him that I speak? if a man speak, surely he shall be swallowed up.

21 And now *men* see not the bright light which *is* in the clouds: but the wind passeth, and cleanseth them.

22 Fair weather cometh out of the north: with God *is* terrible majesty.

23 *Touching* the Almighty, we cannot find him out: *he is* excellent in power, and in judgment, and in plenty of justice: he will not afflict.

24 Men do therefore fear him : he respecteth not any *that are* wise of heart.

Elihu having very fully set forth God's sovereignty, wisdom, and goodness, now calls upon Job to pause over the whole, and with a more sober coolness, and dispassion, see how utterly unsuitable and unbecoming it must be, in any of God's creatures, to presume to scan his works, or to become unsatisfied with any of his appointments. There is a vast deal of sound reasoning and argument in the whole of Elihu's discourse both as it is referred to the reproof of Job, and his three friends : and it should seem, from the silence of both Job and them, they were all much more calm and temperate, in consequence of Elihu's sermon, than before.

REFLECTIONS.

READER, it is highly profitable to follow, with our profound meditation, the Lord in all his works of *nature*, and to be ever ready to bless him for all the goodness he is unceasingly bestowing upon the sons of men. He maketh (as our adorable Redeemer teacheth) his sun to rise, upon the evil and upon the good : and sendeth the blessings of his rain both upon the just and upon the unjust. *Oh ! that men would therefore praise the Lord for his goodness, and declare the wonders that he doeth for the children of men !*

But when from the world of *nature* we are enabled to follow the Lord into the world of *grace*; and when, from the common blessings of his providence, in creation, we are led to behold the special blessings of his love, in redemption, this is like passing from the outer courts of his temple into the more immediate apartment of his presence. And, in Jesus, what a vast and unlimited contemplation is thrown open to a poor sinner's view.

Reader, cannot you tell (as Elihu beautifully expresseth it) how your garments make you warm, when the Lord quieteth the earth by the south wind ? And will you any longer wonder that you are not able to explain how it is, that the robe of Jesus's righteousness becomes a complete justifying garment, to warm the soul of a sinner, and to make him, that is in himself unclean, yet now viewed in Christ, holy, blessed, and sanctified ? *Oh that men should be unbelievers in a point of so much mercy, when their daily experience in the most common things of God's providence, compels them to give a cordial assent to what they can no more explain, than how warmth or cold is induced by north and south influences !*

But Reader, let you and I, from the reasoning of Elihu, not only gather improvement, both in the subjects of nature and grace, but look up to the same Almighty Teacher, which teacheth us, to profit, that from both our souls may be led on to the yet higher and more sublime point of all the same precious mercies and dispensations of our Covenant God in Christ, leading to *glory*. All here below is with a view to minister to this end. For this cause the Son of God came down from heaven to raise up our ruined nature from the miseries of the fall. And when by sin, storms and tempests, both in the natural, in the moral, and in the spiritual world, were introduced, Jesus, full of benignity, grace, and

truth, came to repair the desolations of many generations, and to restore perfect order among all the works of God. Hail thou great, thou Almighty Repairer of the breach! the Restorer of the paths to dwell in! We bow down before thee, thou blessed precious Lord Jesus! Oh! do thou give us to see, that both in the kingdom of nature and providence, grace and glory, thou art the All in All, the portion of thy people, here and hereafter, and their life for evermore.

CHAP. XXXVIII.

CONTENTS.

Hitherto, through the subject of dispute, we have been attending to the words of Job and his friends. In this chapter God himself becomes the speaker; and a most solemn address it forms. God challengeth Job, from the whirlwind, on divers subjects, by way of shewing Job's nothingness, and the Lord's sovereignty; and this in such language as manifests the wisdom of the Speaker, beyond all possible conception, of man's weakness, and the Lord's strength.

THEN the LORD answered Job out of the whirlwind, and said,

Reader, let us enter upon the perusal of this chapter with more than ordinary reverence. When God speaks, well may man hear. Job might well have cried out, and you and I ought to cry out in the language of Samuel. *Speak, Lord! for thy servant heareth.* 1 Sam. iii. 9. And, Reader, let us further observe from whence the Lord spake; from the whirlwind: such as the Lord spake to the Prophet Elijah from, 1 Kings xix. 11, 12. The Prophet Ezekiel, and the Evangelist John, were favoured with visions in the same way. Ezek. i. 4. Rev. x. 4.

2 Who is this that darkeneth counsel by words without knowledge?

3 Gird up now thy loins like a man; for I will demand of thee, and answer thou me.

Observe, it is to Job the Lord directeth his speech, Job had, in the haste of his desire to be delivered, said, he would that God would speak to him. Here it is granted. Job xxiii. 3-7.

4 ¶ Where wast thou when I laid the foundations of the earth? declare, if thou hast understanding.

5 Who hath laid the measures thereof, if thou knowest? or who hath stretched the line upon it?

6 Whereupon are the foundations thereof fastened? or who laid the corner stone thereof?

7 When the morning stars sang together, and all the sons of God shouted for joy?

8 Or *who* shut up the sea with doors, when it brake forth, *as if* it had issued out of the womb?

9 When I made the cloud the garment thereof, and thick darkness a swaddling-band for it,

10 And brake up for it my decreed *place*, and set bars and doors,

11 And said, Hitherto shalt thou come, but no further: and here shall thy proud waves be stayed?

12 Hast thou commanded the morning since thy days; *and* caused the day-spring to know his place;

13 That it might take hold of the ends of the earth, that the wicked might be shaken out of it?

14 It is turned as clay *to* the seal; and they stand as a garment.

15 And from the wicked their light is withholden, and the high arm shall be broken.

16 Hast thou entered into the springs of the sea? or hast thou walked in the search of the depth?

17 Have the gates of death been opened unto thee? or hast thou seen the doors of the shadow of death?

18 Hast thou perceived the breadth of the earth? declare, if thou knowest it all.

19 Where *is* the way *where* light dwelleth? and *as for* darkness, where *is* the place thereof?

20 That thou shouldest take it to the bound thereof, and that thou shouldest know the paths *to* the house thereof?

21 Knowest thou *it*, because thou wast then born? or *because* the number of thy days *is* great?

22 Hast thou entered into the treasures of the snow? or hast thou seen the treasures of the hail,

23 Which I have reserved against the time of trouble, against the day of battle and war?

24 By what way is the light parted, *which* scattereth the east wind upon the earth?

25 Who hath divided a watercourse for the overflowing of waters, or a way for the lightning of thunder;

26 To cause it to rain on the earth, *where* no man is; *on* the wilderness, wherein *there is* no man;

27 To satisfy the desolate and waste *ground*; and to cause the bud of the tender herb to spring forth?

28 Hath the rain a father? or who hath begotten the drops of dew?

29 Out of whose womb came the ice? and the hoary frost of heaven, who hath gendered it?

30 The waters are hid as *with* a stone, and the face of the deep is frozen.

31 ¶ Canst thou bind the sweet influences of Pleiades, or loose the bands of Orion?

32 Canst thou bring forth Mazzaroth in his season? or canst thou guide Arcturus with his sons?

33 Knowest thou the ordinances of heaven? canst thou set the dominion thereof in the earth?

34 Canst thou lift up thy voice to the clouds, that abundance of waters may cover thee?

35 Canst thou send lightnings, that they may go, and say unto thee, Here we are?

36 Who hath put wisdom in the inward parts? or who hath given understanding to the heart?

37 Who can number the clouds in wisdom? or who can stay the bottles of heaven,

38 When the dust groweth into hardness, and the clods cleave fast together?

39 Wilt thou hunt the prey for the lion? or fill the appetite of the young lions,

40 When they couch in *their dens*, and abide in the covert to lie in wait?

41 Who provideth for the raven his food? when his young ones cry unto God, they wander for lack of meat.

I presume not to interrupt the progress of the Lord's words. The whole forms one beautiful subject from beginning to end, and it were a pity to separate it. Having gone through, I would beg the Reader to pause with me over it, and observe, with holy solemnity, those strong and unequalled words of God. Job had presumed on much knowledge, therefore the Lord begins with questioning, where he was when creation work began; what he knew of these grand events, and what account he could give how the whole from darkness came forth into light. The Lord goes on to describe, under the beautiful similitude of a new birth, when being was given to the deep, how it broke out from the door of the womb, and how the Lord swaddled it with the binding earth as with a garment; appointed the full bounds of it, and, amidst all its seeming violence, in its waves and billows, determined, by a perpetual decree, how far it should extend, and no further. After this the Lord takes up the subject of light, then of death and darkness, and demands of Job if he can tell where that way is, in which light dwelleth, and where the place of darkness is to be found. After dwelling, in a most unequalled manner, on these subjects, the Lord proceeds to others as strikingly descriptive of man's ignorance and of God's wisdom; of the creation, form, government, and regular ordination of the heavenly bodies; and then, by a sweet transition, calls Job's attention to the creation and power of the beasts of the earth: and demands of him if he can tell how the cry of the ravens is heard, when calling upon their Maker for food, and by what means all their wants are supplied. It would be presumptuous to offer ought upon such sublime representations. It is enough to observe, that the evident design of those words, is to convince Job, by drawing so striking a description of God's sovereignty, and Job's littleness, of God's wisdom, and Job's ignorance: and by representing God's infinite presence and knowledge, the weakness, narrowness, and impotency of man in his highest attainments. For, if man knows nothing of those common works of God in his kingdom of nature, how can he be competent to scan the ways of God in his kingdoms of providence and grace. Every view must only tend to confirm yet more and more, that man, in his highest knowledge, is limited at every step he takes in exploring the ways and works of God before him: and as one of Job's friends had before remarked, *Who by searching could find out God, or who could find out the Almighty to perfection?* Job xi. 7.

REFLECTIONS.

READER, let you and I pause over this chapter, and amidst many other sweet thoughts, which arise out of the solemn review of what is here brought before us, let this strike our minds as among the highest

improvements; I mean, to note down the wonderful grace, and goodness, and condescension, and love; Jehovah here manifested in reasoning with Job in the manner here set forth. Jehovah hath indeed said, that though he is the High and Lofty One who inhabiteth Eternity, and whose name is Holy, yet that he doth humble himself to behold the things which are in heaven and earth. But that God should thus graciously condescend to reason and expostulate with his creature, under the dissatisfied and murmuring state of a repining mind! Oh! how great the mercy! And, yet, Reader, cannot we both find another instance of yet greater tenderness, in which the Lord hath surpassed every other testimony he hath afforded mankind, or ever can afford again, in all the stores of his omnipotency and grace? Did he not indeed perform an act of condescension, at which all Heaven stood amazed, and Angels have long been contemplating with wonder and surprize, when Jesus, the only begotten Son, which lay from all eternity in the bosom of the Father, came at the call of God, and tabernacled in substance of our flesh? Nay more—not only tabernacled in our nature, but in that nature debased himself to the lowest possible degree of humiliation, until, by the accursed death of the cross, he had fully accomplished the redemption of his people! Well might the Prophet exclaim, *Wonder, O heavens! and be astonished, O earth! for the Lord hath done it.*

Reader, over and above this view of divine love and condescension, let you and I learn from what the Lord hath said, what poor, short-sighted, ignorant creatures we are. Let us from henceforth rejoice, that we are under a wiser and better direction than our own. Whatever dispensation it pleaseth God to exercise us with, let our first and great object be, to see the hand of Jesus in it, and to rest in a clear assurance of our interest in him. The christian's, the true believer's motto should be, in every state when in union with Jesus, what the Prophet hath said, *The just Lord is in the midst of Zion; he will not, he cannot, do iniquity.* And oh! when the voice of God is heard in the dispensation, how dark soever it may be, the whole face of the dispensation is changed. Let a poor believer in the Lord Jesus be drenched in the deepest adversity of bodily afflictions, or soul distresses, or both; yet when Jesus is seen directing the event, there can be no room to question or enquire, much less to fret and grow uneasy, under the providence. Let a soul but hear his precious voice; "Be still, and know that I am God." Surely a God in Christ, a God in covenant, a faithful God, a tried God, an approved God, buoys up the soul, like the anchor of a ship in a dark and tempestuous night, and the soul is made more than conqueror through his grace helping us. Reader, let us beg of God for this grace, that it may be to his glory, and our joy.

CHAP. XXXIX.

CONTENTS.

The whole of this chapter, like the former, contains the Lord's solemn, but tender expostulation with Job. In a very beautiful manner the Lord sends his servant to the inferior creation for lessons of instruc-

tion, and in shewing him how merciful the Lord is, in providing for all the wants of the several creatures he hath formed, thereby to convince him, that it is impossible God should overlook the higher order, in his creature man; so that Job's charging God with inattention, and unkindness, was altogether unjust and ill founded.

KNOWEST thou the time when the wild goats of the rock bring forth: or canst thou mark when the hinds do calve?

2 Canst thou number the months *that* they fulfil? or knowest thou the time when they bring forth?

3 They bow themselves, they bring forth their young ones, they cast out their sorrows.

4 Their young ones are in good liking, they grow up with corn; they go forth, and return not unto them.

Under the representation of God's superintending providence over the wild goats of the rock, and the hinds in their calving, who all do well, without the aid of man, or the want of him, the Lord intimates how secure his people may find themselves, who cast themselves upon his grace and love. And I do conceive that this portion of scripture might, under God's gracious teaching, be made helpful to give comfort to every daughter of Eve, when fulfilling the mouths of her pregnancy, and when passing through the hour of nature's extremity. The Apostle had it in commission to tell the Church, that though the woman was in the transgression, whereby she fell under that just sentence of God, that in sorrow she should bring forth children, yet she should be saved in the child-bearing; that is, I apprehend, in the child-bearing of the Lord Jesus, that promised seed of the woman, if her faith in him made her strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might. Gen. iii. 16. 1 Tim. ii. 14, 15.

5 ¶ Who hath sent out the wild ass free? or who hath loosed the bands of the wild ass?

6 Whose house I have made the wilderness, and the barren land his dwellings.

7 He scorneth the multitude of the city, neither regardeth he the crying of the driver.

8 The range of the mountains *is* his pasture, and he searcheth after every green thing.

The Lord next calls Job's attention to the wild ass, who, without owner, without house or home, is yet provided for, and not suffered to want. And can a soul, in the redemption of Jesus, who hath both house and home in Him, be suffered to be less provided for?

9 ¶ Will the unicorn be willing to serve thee, or abide by thy crib?

10 Canst thou bind the unicorn with his band in the furrow? or will he harrow the valleys after thee?

11 Wilt thou trust him, because his strength is great? or wilt thou leave thy labour to him?

Having, from the view of such creatures being provided for, taught Job the unreasonableness of his repining, the Lord next sends him to learn another lesson from the unmanageableness of the larger beasts of the field. And hence as plainly shews the folly of man in being restive to divine government.

12 Wilt thou believe him, that he will bring home thy seed, and gather *it into* thy barn?

13 ¶ Gavest thou the goodly wings unto the peacocks? or wings and feathers unto the ostrich?

14 Which leaveth her eggs in the earth, and warmeth them in dust,

15 And forgetteth that the foot may crush them, or that the wild beast may break them.

16 She is hardened against her young ones, as though *they were* not her's: her labour is in vain without fear;

17 Because God hath deprived her of wisdom, neither hath he imparted to her understanding.

18 What time she lifteth up herself on high, she scorneth the horse and his rider?

From beasts, now the Lord sends Job for instruction to birds, and instanceth in the ostrich plume, and the peacock's wings and feathers, that how improvident soever these creatures are, yet their Maker's care of them never remits. In the carelessness of the ostrich, leaving her eggs in the sand, exposed to many dangers, and yet her race is preserved, how graciously doth the Lord teach, that his mercy and providence is called forth to make up all the deficiencies of the several creatures, which are what they are by his ordination and appointment. But is there not an higher lesson intended here. Are not sinners, like the unthinking ostrich, who leave their grand concerns, like the eggs of this bird in the sand, to peradventures, and live regardless of all consequences? Reader, how many, who are all aive to observe the folly of this bird, are yet foolish in a matter of infinitely higher moment, and neglect the one thing needful, the care of their immortal souls!

19 ¶ Hast thou given the horse strength? hast thou clothed his neck with thunder?

20 Canst thou make him afraid as a grasshopper? the glory of his nostrils *is* terrible.

21 He paweth in the valley, and rejoiceth in *his* strength: he goeth on to meet the armed men.

22 He mocketh at fear, and is not affrighted; neither turneth he back from the sword.

23 The quiver rattleth against him, the glittering spear and the shield.

24 He swalloweth the ground with fierceness and rage: neither believeth he that *it is* the sound of the trumpet.

25 He saith among the trumpets, Ha, ha; and he smelleth the battle afar off, the thunder of the captains, and the shouting.

What a description is here given of the horse, and under what characters doth his Maker here set him forth! In sending Job for lessons to this noble beast, surely the Lord graciously meant to shew, how dull and senseless man must be, whose understanding doth not lead him to such pursuits as may be for the glory of his Creator. Doth the unthinking horse rush carelessly to the battle, and will man be no better than the brute that perisheth? And yet, when the voice of the trumpet, and God's messengers of his gospel, sound an alarm to the holy war, wherein doth the sinner manifest greater wisdom than the horse, in turning not his back from the sword?

26 ¶ Doth the hawk fly by thy wisdom, and stretch her wings toward the south?

This is not the only part of scripture where the Lord makes use of the instinct of nature, in the birds or beasts of the earth, to teach man wisdom. What a beautiful description is given by the Prophet of that peculiar property in the birds of passage, when, on the approach of winter, they collect in parties, and take their flight to warmer climates. *The stork in the heavens knoweth her appointed times; and the turtle, and the crane, and the swallow, observe the time of their coming; but my people know not the judgment of the Lord.* Jerem. viii. 7.

27 ¶ Doth the eagle mount up at thy command, and make her nest on high?

28 She dwelleth and abideth on the rock, upon the crag of the rock, and the strong place.

29 From thence she seeketh the prey, and her eyes behold afar off.

30 Her young ones also suck up blood: and where the slain *are*, there *is* she.

The chapter closes with the relation of the eagle; and, in many parts of the word of God, instruction is conveyed to the church and people of God from this bird. But perhaps the most beautiful and most striking is that wherein the Lord himself condescends to represent his solicitude and care over his people, under the similitude of the eagle. *Ye have seen* (saith the Lord) *what I did unto the Egyptians, and how I bore you on eagle's wings.* Exod xix. 4. *As an eagle stirreth up her nest, fluttereth over her young, spreadeth abroad her wings, taketh them, beareth them on her wings; so the Lord alone did lead him, and there was no strange god with him.* Deut. xxxii. 11, 12.

REFLECTIONS.

READER, let you and I, in the perusal of this chapter of God's tender mercies over all his works, draw the same conclusion from the review of so much love, as the Apostle did on another occasion, and say, *Doth God take care for oxen, or saith he it altogether for our sakes? Doth God so cloathe the grass of the field* (saith our adorable Redeemer when admonishing his people to cast all their care upon God, who careth for them) *which to day is, and to-morrow is cast into the oven? Precious Lord; in the view of such things let our souls be firmly, fully, faithfully established in the unalterable assurance, that in Jesus all our interests are secured; all our concerns are everlastingly provided for. What is there that a believer in Jesus should be anxious about? Hath he not Christ for his portion; and can he fail when anchored here? Can he miscarry when Jesus himself hath said, Because I live, ye shall live also? Reader, oh for faith, in lively exercise to hang upon a Covenant God in Christ, when the outward circumstances of visible comforts seemed dying; for this is the very moment for the exercise. Had Job uniformly done this, and when the streams failed, in sensible comforts, had he removed to the fountain head, he would have found a Covenant God in Christ, whom he knew, and had professed to be his kinsman-Redeemer, sufficient to have borne him all the way through. Reader, let you and I derive this sweet and blessed conclusion from what the Lord hath so conclusively set forth in this chapter. He that caters for the birds of the air; He that affords suited strength to the wild goats of the rock in bringing forth; that provides against the silly unconcern of the ostrich, and the unthinking horse in the battle; He will never be less provident to his own children, that call upon him. They are the gift of his love to his dear Son! they are the purchase of his Son's blood! they are the objects of his grace, and brought under the quickening influence, and divine teaching, of his blessed Spirit; and therefore he will arrange and direct all things for his glory and their welfare. They are brought within a wise appointed covenant, ordered in all things, and sure: they are under his own wise providence; they are encompassed with exceeding great and precious promises; and, to crown all, God is a faithful God, and a sure Covenant God in Christ. Hence begone, I would say, all doubts, all fears, all misgivings. Let nothing so unbecoming in me, and so dishonourable to my God, for a moment arise in my mind. Let*

creatures die; let all my substance, like Job's, be wasted; if my God sees it fit, it must be wise, it must be right. Jesus lives, and that's enough. Oh! how sweet his words: 'Am I not better to thee than ten sons?' Yes, precious Lord! thou art indeed in the place of millions of creature-joys; for millions without thee would be nothing; and having thee, I have all things: my joy here, and my portion for ever.

CHAP. XL.

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The Lord having, in the former chapter, thus answered Job, agreeably to his wish, in the opening of this chapter demands Job's reply. Job most humbly gives it: after which the Lord takes up the discourse again, and continues it to the close of this, and through the whole of the next chapter.

MOREOVER the LORD answered Job, and said,

2 Shall he that contendeth with the Almighty instruct *him*? he that reproveth God; let him answer it.

This was a very solemn pause in the discourse; and, when God seemed to wait for an answer, no doubt Job trembled. Reader, it is a solemn thing to draw nigh to God, even when we come to him in the hand of a Mediator. I have often thought, that the first view of God's face, when rising from the bed of death, though coming perfectly safe, and secure of acceptance in the Lord Jesus, and under the cover of his blood and righteousness, yet it must be a most awful, solemn thing. Surely, never was a soul brought into the presence of an holy God, either in grace here or glory hereafter, with lightness. Even in mercies God is awful; and therefore in death, when we come before the Lord, finally and fully to deal with God as our judge, and to receive our final sentence; to put in our humble claim for acceptance in Jesus, must not this be serious, solemn, awful? Oh! how little do they think of such an interview who are ignorant of a Redeemer, and know nothing of the vast importance of his blood and righteousness! David tells us, that he trembled when he thought of God's judgments; and yet David was looking wholly for acceptance in Jesus. Oh! what horrors, must instantly invade that soul, who riseth from the bed of death without that righteousness to justify, that Mediator to intercede, that God-man to redeem? Psalm cxix. 120.

3 ¶ Then Job answered the LORD, and said,

4 Behold, I am vile; what shall I answer thee? I will lay mine hand upon my mouth.

5 Once have I spoken: but I will not answer: yea, twice; but I will proceed no further.

Here is the state to which every truly regenerated and awakened soul

is brought at last. Here grace triumphs, and the sinner casts himself wholly upon God's sovereignty, and mercy in Christ. Reader, do remark with me how very graciously the Lord was now dealing with Job. Here are solemn demands from God, it is true, but none of those cutting acrimonious words which Job's three friends had used; no, nor even like Elihu. Oh, sovereign grace! oh, boundless mercy! how is divine love manifested, and magnified, when proclaimed by God himself in the person and righteousness of the Lord Jesus Christ! Well might David say, *Let me fall into the hand of the Lord, for his mercies are great; and let me not fall into the hand of man.* 2 Sam. xxiv. 14.

6 ¶ Then answered the LORD unto Job out of the whirlwind, and said,

7 Gird up thy loins now like a man: I will demand of thee, and declare thou unto me.

8 Wilt thou also disannul my judgment? Wilt thou condemn me, that thou mayest be righteous?

9 Hast thou an arm like God? or canst thou thunder with a voice like him?

10 Deck thyself now *with* majesty and excellency; and array thyself with glory and beauty.

11 Cast abroad the rage of thy wrath: and behold every one *that is* proud, *and* abase him.

12 Look on every one *that is* proud, *and* bring him low; and tread down the wicked in their place.

13 Hide them in the dust together; *and* bind their faces in secret.

14 Then will I also confess unto thee that thine own right hand can save thee.

There is a great deal of gospel in those verses of the Lord. Is it not in the same way and manner, that the Lord now brings sinners to a sense of sin, when he thus darts conviction into their minds? Oh! how blessed, how condescending, how gracious is it, when God thus sets up a tribunal in the conscience, to make them sensible of the riches of his grace. And what the Lord saith, in the conclusion of this expostulation, is in fact said to every convicted sinner, 'If man could justify himself on those points, then might he as easily save himself.' Reader, do not overlook, I beseech you, what is the most blessed part of this discourse, how by such gracious means the Lord is preparing for the cordial reception of redemption by Jesus.

15 ¶ Behold now behemoth, which I made with thee; he eateth grass as an ox.

16 Lo now, his strength *is* in his loins, and his force *is* in the navel of his belly.

17 He moveth his tail like a cedar: the sinews of his stones are wrapped together.

18 His bones *are as* strong pieces of brass; his bones *are* like bars of iron.

19 He *is* the chief of the ways of God: he that made him can make his sword to approach *unto him*.

20 Surely the mountains bring him forth food, where all the beasts of the field play.

21 He lieth under the shady trees, in the covert of the reed, and fens.

22 The shady trees cover him *with* their shadow; the willows of the brook compass him about.

23 Behold, he drinketh up a river, *and* hasteth not: he trusteth that he can draw up Jordan into his mouth.

24 He taketh it with his eyes: *his* nose pierceth through snares.

The Lord here represents, under the history of the largest of land animals, which some suppose to have been the elephant, the sovereignty of his power: and, having described his greatness, strength, and fortitude, points out to Job, that the same power which made, can in a moment unmake him. And the Lord takes occasion from hence to remark his distinguishing grace to man, which was formed from the dust of the earth, in the same day; and no doubt, in the description here given, the Lord designed Job to form suitable conclusions, that if all and every thing resulted from his infinite power and wisdom, surely, there was enough in such views of divine greatness, and divine goodness to induce humble and dutiful submission, even independent of other causes, to the divine will.

REFLECTIONS.

MY soul, hast thou read, and pondered duly over, the instances here brought forward of divine power and sovereignty? and shall not the view induce the greatest lowliness and self-abasement of spirit? Shall any thing arise in the circumstances of thy God's providence towards thee, after such a review as is here set forth, to tempt thee to murmur or repine at sovereign appointments? Oh! for grace to humble thyself as Job did, and to lay thine hand upon thy mouth. Surely the discoveries the Lord makes of himself are not less now, than when he thus graciously condescended to reason with the man of Uz. Think, my soul, of the immense

greatness of the Lord. In this one view, there is sufficient to excite, in every breast, similar sentiments to the Psalmist's, and to say, as he did, *When I consider thy heavens the works of thine hands, the moon and the stars which thou hast ordained; what is man that thou art mindful of him, or the son of man that thou visitest him!* And if we add to these thoughts, the solemn consideration of God's holiness; that the heavens are not clean in his sight, and even his angels he chargeth with folly; surely every man, like the Prophet, may find cause to exclaim, *Woe is me, I am undone, for I am a man of unclean lips, and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips.* And what is there that can bring relief to the soul under impressions like these, except the gracious, merciful, and sweet intimations of divine love, as given to us in the person, relations, office, work, and character, of the Lord Jesus Christ? Oh! thou adored Redeemer! how hast thou softened, to our view, the awful majesty of Heaven, that when at any time we feel the heart overpowered in the recollection of the offended justice and holiness of Jehovah, we may call to mind, and take comfort, that to this High and Lofty One, whose name is Holy, we are authorized to look up, through an Almighty Mediator; and that amidst our offences and short-comings, and pollutions, we have such an advocate with the Father as Jesus Christ the righteous, who is the propitiation for our sins! Hail, blessed Jesus! to thee, Lord, would I come: *in thee would I trust; upon the arm of thy righteousness lean, and here fix all my hopes and assurance of acceptance.* And praised be thy holy name, thou hast said, *All that put their trust in thee shall never be ashamed, nor confounded, world without end.*

CHAP. XLI.

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The Lord is still the speaker, through the whole of this chapter. Having before given an instance of the sovereignty of his power, in the creation and government of the largest of land creatures: in this the Lord assumes the like sovereignty of the sea, in the instance of the Leviathan, the largest of creatures in the ocean. A beautiful description is given of this animal, and this forms the whole of the chapter from beginning to end.

CANST thou draw out leviathan with an hook? or his tongue with a cord *which* thou lettest down?

2 Canst thou put an hook into his nose? or bore his jaw through with a thorn?

3 Will he make many supplications unto thee? will he speak soft *words* unto thee?

4 Will he make a covenant with thee? wilt thou take him for a servant for ever?

5 Wilt thou play with him as *with* a bird? or wilt thou bind him for thy maidens?

6 Shall thy companions make a banquet of him? shall they part him among the merchants?

7 Canst thou fill his skin with barbed irons? or his head with fish-spears?

8 Lay thine hand upon him, remember the battle, do no more.

9 Behold, the hope of him is in vain: shall not *one* be cast down even at the sight of him?

10 None *is so* fierce that dare stir him up; who then is able to stand before me?

I stay not to offer any comment upon this description of the Leviathan, neither shall I enter into an enquiry what animal it is that is here intended by the Leviathan: some have thought that it is the crocodile that is meant to be described; and others conceive that it is the whale: but it appears to me to be of little importance to inquire. It is sufficient that it is a creature of God, and, as such, displays in its formation God's power and sovereignty. And the conclusion to be made from the view of such a wonderful production, is best made in the words of God himself: 'If a man would tremble at the idea of stirring up such a creature, who can be able to stand before God? If the thing created be tremendous, what must the great Creator be?'

11 Who hath prevented me, that I should repay *him*? *whatsoever is* under the whole heaven is mine.

12 I will not conceal his parts, nor his power, nor his comely proportion.

13 Who can discover the face of his garment? or who can come *to him* with his double bridle?

14 Who can open the doors of his face? his teeth *are* terrible round about.

16 *His scales are his* pride, shut up together *as with* a close seal.

16 One is so near to another, that no air can come between them.

17 They are joined one to another, they stick together that they cannot be sundered.

18 By his neesings a light doth shine, and his eyes *are* like the eyelids of the morning.

19 Out of his mouth go burning lamps, *and* sparks of fire leap out.

20 Out of his nostrils goeth smoke, as *out* of a seething-pot or caldron.

21 His breath kindleth coals, and a flame goeth out of his mouth.

22 In his neck remaineth strength, and sorrow is turned into joy before him.

23 The flakes of his flesh are joined together: they are firm in themselves; they cannot be moved.

24 His heart is as firm as a stone; yea, as hard as a piece of the nether *millstone*.

25 When he raiseth up himself, the mighty are afraid: by reason of breakings they purify themselves.

26 The sword of him that layeth at him cannot hold; the spear, the dart, nor the habergeon.

27 He esteemeth iron as straw, *and* brass as rotten wood.

28 The arrow cannot make him flee: sling stones are turned with him into stubble.

29 Darts are counted as stubble: he laugheth at the shaking of a spear.

30 Sharp stones *are* under him: he spreadeth sharp pointed things upon the mire.

31 He maketh the deep to boil like a pot: he maketh the sea like a pot of ointment.

32 He maketh a path to shine after him; *one* would think the deep *to be* hoary.

33 Upon earth there is not his like, who is made without fear.

34 He beholdeth all high *things*: he *is* a king over all the children of pride.

The description here given of the Leviathan is most striking and magnificent. How beautifully the several features of this vast creature is set forth; how grand and lofty the account of him. But after all that is

said of the strength and majesty of the Leviathan, the only creature in God's creation that is said to be made without fear, the highest possible representation of created greatness, yet when we call to mind, that this huge animal lies at the mercy of God, and is as easily destroyed by his Maker as the smallest fly or worm, how astonishingly great and powerful must be the Lord Jehovali; and what an argument ariseth herefrom, both to humble us to the dust of the earth, in token of our nothingness, before the Lord; and, above all things, to seek his favour, *in whose hand all our breath is, and whose are all our ways.* Dan. v. 23.

REFLECTIONS.

READER, among many special improvements to be made, under divine teaching, from this chapter, there are two very striking lessons, which I pray the Lord, the Holy Ghost, to impress with his grace on my mind and yours. The one is, if beasts of prey, and animals of slaughter, become so formidable to our apprehension, since the fall, that their terror make us afraid, think how dreadful it must be to fall into the hands of offended justice, whose power as infinitely transcends these his creatures, as the great Creator transcends the thing created. And yet doth not every sinner literally expose himself to the tremendous judgment of incensed Heaven, who, despising the only plan of salvation revealed from Heaven by the Lord Jesus Christ, sets up a fancied righteousness of his own, and doth, to all intents and purposes, count *the blood of the covenant an unholy thing, and doth despite unto the Spirit of Grace.*

The other improvement from the perusal of this chapter is, to take comfort and the surest confidence in the power, sovereignty, grace, and goodness, of this Almighty God, if in the way he himself hath graciously appointed, (even in the name and righteousness of the Lord Jesus Christ), we have sought his favour, and cast ourselves wholly upon his free grace in Jesus. Oh! how sure, how eternally sure and safe must be those who have a God in Christ for their confidence! Did the Lord create *Behemoth*, and the *Leviathan*? Doth he feed them, and sustain them, appoint their bounds of their time and existence? And will he not feed, sustain, comfort, and determine the bounds of his people's habitation? Oh! my soul, cast all thy care upon thy God in Christ, for he careth for thee! 'Fear not,' he hath said, 'I am with thee.' And surely if the Lord governs with such care the greatest powers in earth and sea, the devils also must be subject to his power, and dare not resist his command. Precious Jesus! let these views add another argument to make my soul perfectly happy under thy protection. I am thine, O Lord, and thou wilt save me: thou wilt have respect to the works of thine hands. I am thine, O Lord, both by creation and redemption; and therefore thou wilt have regard to the purchase of thy blood and righteousness. Henceforth I cast my soul, and all I have, and am, upon thee; *for thou hast redeemed me, O Lord, thou God of truth.*

CHAP. XLII.

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This chapter brings us to the close of Job's history, in which we find the testimony which the Holy Ghost gave by his servant James, to be true. The end of the Lord concerning him is, that the Lord is very pitiful and gracious. Job submitteth himself to God. The Lord having reproved his servant for what was in him wrong, now prefers his cause in what he was right, and in making the three friends of Job submit themselves. The Lord blesseth the close of Job's life more than the beginning. Job's age and death.

THEN Job answered the LORD, and said,
 2 I know that thou canst do every thing,
 and that no thought can be withholden from thee.

3 Who is he that hideth counsel without knowledge? therefore have I uttered that I understood not; things too wonderful for me, which I knew not.

4 Hear, I beseech thee, and I will speak: I will demand of thee, and declare thou unto me.

5 I have heard of thee by the hearing of the ear: but now mine eye seeth thee.

6 Wherefore I abhor *myself*, and repent in dust and ashes.

We have here Job's dutiful submission, and the very humble acknowledgment of himself before God. Nothing can display more fully the state of a true penitent before the Lord. In the expressions Job makes use of, the very inside of his heart seems to be turned out to view. Self-loathing, and self-abhorring, are among the highest tokens of the real contrition which passed within. But what I beg the Reader particularly to observe with me is, the striking difference Job makes between human and divine teaching. All that men can say, all the preaching in the world, without God the spirit condescends to instruct; will end just where it began, in the hearing of the ear. But if God takes up the cause, then, and not before, the Lord carries conviction to the heart. Reader, do you know the vast difference? Hath God the spirit been your teacher? Hath it induced these blessed effects, like Job? Are you brought down in the deepest humiliation of soul, and is Jesus exalted to your view, and all human greatness come to nothing? Isaiah ii. 17.

7 ¶ And it was so, that after the LORD had spoken these words unto Job, the LORD said to Eliphaz the Temanite, My wrath is kindled against thee, and against thy two friends: for ye

have not spoken of me *the thing that is right*, as my servant Job *hath*.

Observe how this is worded. The Lord doth not give sentence against those three men, until that he had first spoken to his servant Job: but, after that the Lord had brought Job into the state the Lord had intended, then, and not before, he proceeds to the reproof of Job's three friends. So that Job was cleared from hypocrisy though found in sin; and the Lord acknowledged him for his servant. Sweet consideration! though, as Elias was, a man of like passions, yet accepted in Jesus.

8 Therefore take unto you now seven bullocks and seven rams, and go to my servant Job, and offer up for yourselves a burnt offering; and my servant Job shall pray for you: for him will I accept: lest I deal with you *after your folly*, in that ye have not spoken of me *the thing which is right*, like my servant Job.

9 So Eliphaz the Temanite and Bildad the Shuhite *and* Zophar the Naamathite went, and did according as the LORD commanded them: the LORD also accepted Job.

Reader, observe into what an high rank Job is exalted. He is to be an intercessor at the sacrifice. But how an intercessor, unless as Aaron had been, as a type of the ever-blessed Jesus? *For there is but one Mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus.* 1 Timothy ii. 5. And Reader, do not overlook how very strikingly in this instance Job typified the Lord Jesus; for as the Lord had long hid his face, as it were, from Job, so the Lord Jesus was under the hidings of the Father, when, in the days of his flesh, on the cross he cried out, *My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?* Matt. xxvii. 46.

10 ¶ And the LORD turned the captivity of Job, when he prayed for his friends: also the LORD gave Job twice as much as he had before.

11 Then came there unto him all his brethren, and all his sisters, and all they that had been of his acquaintance before, and did eat bread with him in his house: and they bemoaned him, and comforted him over all the evil that the LORD had brought upon him: every man also gave him a piece of money, and every one an earring of gold.

12 So the LORD blessed the latter end of Job more than his beginning: for he had fourteen

thousand sheep, and six thousand camels, and a thousand yoke of oxen, and a thousand she asses.

See how the Lord turned his affliction into joy. Believers in Jesus should never lose sight of God's power, and God's promises. The deepest afflictions are but the seed-time of a joyful harvest. To a child of God, there is no one event of his life but what the Lord is directing that event to good. Jesus is everlastingly pursuing the invariable object of his love concerning them. Doth a kind and affectionate earthly parent constantly pursue, without any departure from that plan, his children's good? Well then may we suppose that Jesus, whose wisdom and whose love are both engaged for this one purpose, is always doing that which shall ultimately accomplish it.

13 He had also seven sons and three daughters.

14 And he called the name of the first, Jemima; and the name of the second, Kezia; and the name of the third, Kerenhappuch,

15 And in all the land were no women found so fair as the daughters of Job: and their father gave them inheritance among their brethren.

It is remarkable that Job should have a second family of children, and the same in number and in sex as he had before. But this was God's grace and love. The names of his daughters are given, because they were not without signification. *Jemima* signified *the day*; perhaps in allusion to a new day broke in upon Job's soul. *Kezia* signified a *fragrant spice*. Poor Job in his sorrows had been upon a dunghill. *Kerenhappuch* meant *plenty*: and plentiful indeed were his supplies. The beauty of those women is spoken of also. This suited the old dispensation before the gospel. We read of the wives of the Patriarchs being fair, *Sarah*, and *Rebekah*, and *Rachel*; but no mention is made in the New Testament of the beauty of women. The beauty of holiness is the spiritual adorning, both of men and women, in the Gospel Church, and that is all *in* and *from* Jesus. Of him we truly read, that *he was fairer than the sons of men, because grace was poured into his lips*: and in him his Church is fair also. Psm. xlv. 2. Song iv. 7.

16 ¶ After this lived Job an hundred and forty years, and saw his sons, and his sons' sons, even four generations.

17 So Job died, *being* old and full of days.

And thus end the lives of all: like Moses, and all the faithful gone before, having served in his day and generation, he fell asleep, and was gathered to his fathers, and saw corruption. Precious Jesus! here, as in every other point of view of real importance, we are led to contemplate thee, whose years fail not, but who abidest a priest for ever, and art the same yesterday, to day, and for ever.

R E F L E C T I O N S.

AND now, farewell Job. We have seen, in thy most instructive history, the blessed truth confirmed, that the end of the Lord, in the events of his servants' ministry and lives upon earth, is very pitiful and gracious. Sweetly, under the Holy Ghost's divine teaching, do we learn from hence, that the Lord is righteous in all his ways, and holy in all his works; and especially in the lives of his servants, that he ordereth and arrangeth all things as shall best promote his gracious designs in the furtherance of his own glory and his people's happiness. Satan may be permitted to exercise a certain degree of power; but how painful soever this may be, during the operation, to flesh and blood, the whole must and shall minister to the enemy's disgrace, to God's faithful servants comfort, and to the display of the divine wisdom, love, and goodness. No temptation shall overtake them but what is common to man, and with every temptation the Lord will make a way to escape, until at length *the God of peace will bruise Satan under their feet.*

But before I take a last farewell of Job, let me look once more, and behold in how many things he bore a striking resemblance to my adorable Redeemer. Yes, thou blessed man of Uz, surely the Holy Spirit graciously intended to teach the Church, in thy history, somewhat, however faint in the outlines, of what the Church for ever must be delighted to dwell upon; of Him who is the first and last, and never-ceasing object of her affection. Was Job the greatest man of all the East? And what was Jesus, the wisdom-man, set up from everlasting, but the greatest of all, and Lord of all, that in all things he might have the pre-eminency? Was Job perfect and upright before God, one that feared God, and eschewed evil? And what wert thou, thou blessed Jesus, in thy human nature, but holy, harmless, and undefiled, separate from sinners, and made higher than the heavens? Was Job suddenly brought from a state of affluence to a state of poverty and sorrow? And can we overlook thee, thou adorable Lord Jesus, who, though rich, yet for our sakes didst become poor, that we through thy poverty might be made rich? Did Satan assault Job in his affliction, and buffet him in every direction? And can we forget thine unequalled temptations, O thou Prince of Sufferers, when from the river Jordan to the garden, and the cross, Satan furiously made his attack on thee, though in thy holy nature he could find no part vulnerable to his fiery darts? But oh! precious Jesus, what were the conflicts of the man of Uz compared to thine thou man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief? What persecution, from false friends, in Job's history, can bear resemblance to thine, when thou enduredst such a contradiction of sinners against thyself, lest thy people should be weary and faint in their minds? Many of thy faithful servants, through thy grace enabling them, have done virtuously, but thou excellest them all. Yes, blessed Jesus! in all things it becometh thee to have the pre-eminence, in suffering as in glory, that thou mightest be *the first-born among many brethren.* It is sweet and precious to follow the teachings of the Holy Ghost, and to trace, in the lives of thy people, in those early ages of thy Church, any outlines of character as typical of thee. It is highly profitable to eye Job shadowing forth some faint resemblance of thee in his original greatness, with which his history begins! in his humiliation, in his interceding for his friends, and in

his final exaltation. But oh ! blessed Lord, enable me to look through all these shades to thy bright manifestations, when coming from thy glory in heaven, and tabernacled upon earth in substance of our flesh, thou didst pass through sorrows, sufferings, reproaches, persecution ; bearing our sins in thine own body on the tree, and dying the just for the unjust, to bring us unto God. Hail, thou Almighty Jesus ! now hath God our Father turned thy captivity, and blessed thee above thy fellows. Now hath he constituted and appointed thee as the Great High Priest and Intercessor for all thy redeemed ; and thee, and them in thee, he accepts. And now hath he given thee a family of both Jew and Gentile, to bless thy name, to sing thy praise, and to adore thee for ever. And now shall every knee bend before thee, and every tongue confess, that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

I cannot close this part of my feeble labours, without desiring to fall down before the mercy seat in thankfulness for such distinguishing mercy as hath been manifested in permitting so unhallowed a pen to be thus employed, imploring pardon and forgiveness for all that is here offered. I find cause, at every review, to take shame in the consciousness how far, how very far short it comes of the divine original. Blessed Master, I would say, manifest thine accustomed compassion to the errors of this humble work. Preserve all that read it from injury in the perusal : and, if it shall please thee to commission it for good but to one of thine, to the sovereignty of thy grace shall be all the glory, in condescending to make use of so poor an instrument to so great a service, *to work in thy people both to will and to do according to thy good pleasure.*