

CHAPTER 5

Eliphaz, in the foregoing chapter, for the making good of his charge against Job, had vouched a word from heaven, sent him in a vision. In this chapter he appeals to those that bear record on earth, to the saints, the faithful witnesses of God's truth in all ages (v. 1). They will testify,

- I.** That the sin of sinners is their ruin (v. 2-5).
- II.** That yet affliction is the common lot of mankind (v. 6, 7).
- III.** That when we are in affliction it is our wisdom and duty to apply to God, for he is able and ready to help us (v. 8-16).
- IV.** That the afflictions which are borne well will end well; and Job particularly, if he would come to a better temper, might assure himself that God had great mercy in store for him (v. 17-27). So that he concludes his discourse in somewhat a better humour than he began it.

◀JOB 5:1-5

THE ADDRESS OF ELIPHAZ

A very warm dispute being begun between Job and his friends, Eliphaz here makes a fair motion to put the matter to a reference. In all debates perhaps the sooner this is done the better if the contenders cannot end it between themselves. So well assured is Eliphaz of the goodness of his own cause that he moves Job himself to choose the arbitrators (v. 1): *Call now, if there be any that will answer thee; that is,*

- 1.** “If there be any that suffer as thou sufferest. Canst thou produce an instance of any one that was really a saint that was reduced to such an extremity as thou art now reduced to? God never dealt with any that love his name as he deals with thee, and therefore surely thou art none of them.”
- 2.** “If there be any that say as thou sayest. Did ever any good man curse his day as thou dost? Or will any of the saints justify thee in these heats or

passions, or say that these are the spots of God's children? Thou wilt find none of the saints that will be either thy advocates or my antagonists. *To which of the saints wilt thou turn?* Turn to which thou wilt, and thou wilt find they are all of my mind. I have the *communis sensus fidelium* — *the unanimous vote of the faithful* on my side; they will all subscribe to what I am going to say.” Observe,

(1.) Good people are called *saints* even in the Old Testament; and therefore I know not why we should, in common speaking (unless because we must *loqui cum vulgo* — *speak as our neighbours*), appropriate the title to those of the New Testament, and not say St. Abraham, St. Moses, and St. Isaiah, as well as St. Matthew and St. Mark; and St. David the psalmist, as well as St. David the British bishop. Aaron is expressly called *the saint of the Lord*.

(2.) All that are themselves saints will turn to those that are so, will choose them for their friends and converse with them, will choose them for their judges and consult them. See ⁽⁻¹³⁷⁹⁾Psalm 119:79. The saints shall *judge the world*, ⁽⁻¹⁶⁶⁾1 Corinthians 6:1, 2. *Walk in the way of good men* (⁽⁻¹⁰²⁰⁾Proverbs 2:20), *the old way, the footsteps of the flock*. Every one chooses some sort of people or other to whom he studies to recommend himself, and whose sentiments are to him the test of honour and dishonour. Now all true saints endeavour to recommend themselves to those that are such, and to stand right in their opinion.

(3.) There are some truths so plain, and so universally known and believed, that one may venture to appeal to any of the saints concerning them. However there are some things about which they unhappily differ, there are many more, and more considerable, in which they are agreed; as the evil of sin, the vanity of the world, the worth of the soul, the necessity of a holy life, and the like. Though they do not all live up, as they should, to their belief of these truths, yet they are all ready to bear their testimony to them.

Now there are two things which Eliphaz here maintains, and in which he doubts not but all the saints concur with him: —

I. That the sin of sinners directly tends to their own ruin (v. 2): *Wrath kills the foolish man*, his own wrath, and therefore he is foolish for indulging it; it is a fire in his bones, in his blood, enough to put him into a fever. *Envy* is the rottenness of the bones, and so *slays the silly one* that frets himself

with it. “So it is with thee,” says Eliphaz, “while thou quarrellest with God thou doest thyself the greatest mischief; thy anger at thy own troubles, and thy envy at our prosperity, do but add to thy pain and misery: turn to the saints, and thou wilt find they understand their interest better.” Job had told his wife she spoke as the foolish women; now Eliphaz tells him he acted as the foolish men, the silly ones. Or it may be meant thus: “If men are ruined and undone, it is always their own folly that ruins and undoes them. They kill themselves by some lust or other; therefore, no doubt, Job, thou hast done some foolish thing, by which thou hast brought thyself into this calamitous condition.” Many understand it of God's wrath and jealousy. Job needed not be uneasy at the prosperity of the wicked, for the world's smiles can never shelter them from God's frowns; they are foolish and silly if they think they will. God's anger will be the death, the eternal death, of those on whom it fastens. What is hell but God's anger without mixture or period?

II. That their prosperity is short and their destruction certain, v. 3-5. He seems here to parallel Job's case with that which is commonly the case of wicked people.

1. Job had prospered for a time, seemed confirmed, and was secure in his prosperity; and it is common for foolish wicked men to do so: *I have seen them taking root* — planted, and, in their own and others' apprehension, fixed, and likely to continue. See ^{<2412>}Jeremiah 12:2; ^{<4835>}Psalm 37:35, 36. We see worldly men taking root in the earth; on earthly things they fix the standing of their hopes, and from them they draw the sap of their comforts. The outward estate may be flourishing, but the soul cannot prosper that takes root in the earth.

2. Job's prosperity was now at an end, and so has the prosperity of other wicked people quickly been.

(1.) Eliphaz foresaw their ruin with an eye of faith. Those who looked only at present things blessed their habitation, and thought them happy, blessed it long, and wished themselves in their condition. But Eliphaz cursed it, suddenly cursed it, as soon as he saw them begin to take root, that is, he plainly foresaw and foretold their ruin; not that he prayed for it (*I have not desired the woeful day*), but he prognosticated it. *He went into the sanctuary, and there understood their end* and heard their doom read (^{<4927>}Psalm 73:17, 18), that the *prosperity of fools will destroy them,*

Proverbs 1:32. Those who believe the word of God can see a *curse in the house of the wicked* (Proverbs 3:33), though it be ever so finely and firmly built, and ever so full of all good things; and they can foresee that the curse will, in time, infallibly consume it with the timber thereof, and the stones thereof, Zechariah 5:4.

(2.) He saw, at length, what he had foreseen. He was not disappointed in his expectation concerning him; the event answered it; his family was undone, and his estate ruined. In these particulars he plainly and very invidiously reflects on Job's calamities.

[1.] His children were crushed, v. 4. They thought themselves safe in their eldest brother's house, but were *far from safety*, for they were *crushed in the gate*. Perhaps the door or gate of the house was highest built, and fell heaviest upon them, *and there was none to deliver them* from perishing in the ruins. This is commonly understood of the destruction of the families of wicked men, by the execution of justice upon them, to oblige them to restore what they have ill-gotten. They leave it to their children; but the descent shall not bar the entry of the rightful owners, who will crush their children, and cast them by due course of law (and there shall be none to help them), or perhaps by oppression, Psalm 109:9, etc.

[2.] His estate was plundered, v. 5. Job's was so. The hungry robbers, the Sabeans and Chaldeans, ran away with it, and swallowed it; and this, says he, I have often observed in others. What has been got by spoil and rapine has been lost in the same way. The careful owner hedged it about with thorns, and then thought it safe; but the fence proved insignificant against the greediness of the spoilers (if hunger will break through the stone walls, much more through thorn hedges), and against the divine curse, which will go through the thorns and briers, and *burn them together*, Isaiah 27:4.

JOB 5:6-16

THE ADDRESS OF ELIPHAZ

Eliphaz, having touched Job in a very tender part, in mentioning both the loss of his estate and the death of his children as the just punishment of his sin, that he might not drive him to despair, here begins to encourage him, and puts him in a way to make himself easy. Now he very much changes

his voice (⁴⁸⁰Galatians 4:20), and speaks in the accents of kindness, as if he would atone for the hard words he had given him.

I. He reminds him that no affliction comes by chance, nor is to be attributed to second causes: It *doth not come forth of the dust*, nor *spring out of the ground*, as the grass doth, v. 6. It doth not come of course, at certain seasons of the year, as natural productions do, by a chain of second causes. The proportion between prosperity and adversity is not so exactly observed by Providence as that between day and night, summer and winter, but according to the will and counsel of God, when and as he thinks fit. Some read it, *Sin comes not forth out of the dust, nor iniquity of the ground*. If men be bad, they must not lay the blame upon the soil, the climate, or the stars, but on themselves. *If thou scornest, thou alone shalt bear it*. We must not attribute our afflictions to fortune, for they are from God, nor our sins to fate, for they are from ourselves; so that, whatever trouble we are in, we must own that God sends it upon us and we procure it to ourselves: the former is a reason why we should be very patient, the latter why we should be very penitent, when we are afflicted.

II. He reminds him that trouble and affliction are what we have all reason to expect in this world: *Man is brought to trouble* (v. 7), not as man (had he kept his innocency he would have been born to pleasure), but as sinful man, as *born of a woman* (⁴⁸¹Job 14:1), who was in the transgression. Man is born in sin, and therefore born to trouble. Even those that are born to honour and estate are yet born to trouble in the flesh. In our fallen state it has become natural to us to sin, and the natural consequence of that is affliction, (⁴⁸²Romans 5:12. There is nothing in this world we are born to, and can truly call our own, but sin and trouble; both are as the sparks that fly upwards. Actual transgressions are the sparks that fly out of the furnace of original corruption; and, being called *transgressors from the womb*, no wonder that we *deal very treacherously*, (⁴⁸³Isaiah 48:8. Such too is the frailty of our bodies, and the vanity of all our enjoyments, that our troubles also thence arise as naturally as *the sparks fly upwards* — so many are they, so thick and so fast does one follow another. Why then should we be surprised at our afflictions as strange, or quarrel with them as hard, when they are but what we are born to? Man is born to *labour* (so it is in the margin), is sentenced to eat his bread in the sweat of his face, which should inure him to hardness, and make him bear his afflictions the better.

III. He directs him how to behave himself under his affliction (v. 8): *I would seek unto God; surely I would:* so it is in the original. Here is,

1. A tacit reproof to Job for not seeking to God, but quarrelling with him: “Job, if I had been in thy case, I would not have been so peevish and passionate as thou art. I would have acquiesced in the will of God.” It is easy to say what we would do if we were in such a one's case; but when it comes to the trial, perhaps it will be found not so easy to do as we say.

2. Very good and seasonable advice to him, which Eliphaz transfers to himself in a figure: “For my part, the best way I should think I could take, if I were in thy condition, would be to apply to God.” Note, We should give our friends no other counsel than what we would take ourselves if we were in their case, that we may be easy under our afflictions, may get good by them, and may see a good issue of them.

(1.) We must by prayer fetch in mercy and grace from God, seek to him as a Father and friend, though he contend with us, as one who is alone able to support and succour us. His favour we must seek when we have lost all we have in the world; to him we must address ourselves as the fountain and Father of all good, all consolation. *Is any afflicted? let him pray.* It is heart's-ease, a salve for every sore.

(2.) We must by patience refer ourselves and our cause to him: *To God would I commit my cause;* having spread it before him, I would leave it with him; having laid it at his feet, I would lodge it in his hand. “*Here I am, let the Lord do with me as seemeth him good.*” If our cause be indeed a good cause, we need not fear committing it to God, for he is both just and kind. Those that would seek so as to speed must refer themselves to God.

IV. He encourages him thus to seek to God, and commit his cause to him. It will not be in vain to do so, for he is one in whom we shall find effectual help.

1. He recommends to his consideration God's almighty power and sovereign dominion. In general, he *doeth great things* (v. 9), great indeed, for he can do any thing, he doth do every thing, and all according to the counsel of his own will — great indeed, for the operations of his power are,

(1.) *Unsearchable*, and such as can never be fathomed, can never be found out *from the beginning to the end*, ^{<2181>}Ecclesiastes 3:11. The works of nature are mysterious; the most curious searches come far short of full discoveries and the wisest philosophers have owned themselves at a loss. The designs of Providence are much more deep and unaccountable, ^{<513>}Romans 11:33.

(2.) *Numerous*, and such as can never be reckoned up. He doeth great things *without number*; his power is never exhausted, nor will all his purposes ever be fulfilled till the end of time.

(3.) They are *marvellous*, and such as never can be sufficiently admired; eternity itself will be short enough to be spent in the admiration of them. Now, by the consideration of this, Eliphaz intends,

[1.] To convince Job of his fault and folly in quarrelling with God. We must not pretend to pass a judgment upon his works, for they are unsearchable and above our enquiries; nor must we strive with our Maker, for he will certainly be too hard for us, and is able to crush us in a moment.

[2.] To encourage Job to seek unto God, and to refer his cause to him. What more encouraging than to see that he is one to whom power belongs? He can do great things and marvellous for our relief, when we are brought ever so low.

2. He gives some instances of God's dominion and power.

(1.) God doeth great things in the kingdom of nature: *He gives rain upon the earth* (v. 10), put here for all the gifts of common providence, all the *fruitful seasons* by which he *filleteth our hearts with food and gladness*, ^{<447>}Acts 14:17. Observe, When he would show what great things God does he speaks of his giving rain, which, because it is a common thing, we are apt to look upon as a little thing, but, if we duly consider both how it is produced and what is produced by it, we shall see it to be a great work both of power and goodness.

(2.) He doeth great things in the affairs of the children of men, not only enriches the poor and comforts the needy, by the rain he sends (v. 10), but, in order to the advancing of those that are low, he *disappoints the devices of the crafty*; for v. 11 is to be joined to v. 12. Compare with ^{<415>}Luke 1:51-53. He hath *scattered the proud in the imagination of their hearts*,

and so hath *exalted those of low degree, and filled the heart with good things*. See,

[1.] How he frustrates the counsels of the proud and politic, v. 12-14. There is a supreme power that manages and overrules men who think themselves free and absolute, and fulfils its own purposes in spite of their projects. Observe, *First*, The froward, that walk contrary to God and the interests of his kingdom, are often very crafty; for they are the seed of the old serpent that was noted for his subtlety. They think themselves wise, but, at the end, will be fools. *Secondly*, The Froward enemies of God's kingdom have their devices, their enterprises, and their counsels, against it, and against the loyal faithful subjects of it. They are restless and unwearied in their designs, close in their consultations, high in their hopes, deep in their politics, and fast-linked in their confederacies, ^{<BIB>}Psalm 2:1, 2. *Thirdly*, God easily can, and (as far as is for his glory) certainly will, blast and defeat all the designs of his and his people's enemies. How were the plots of Ahithophel, Sanballat, and Haman baffled! How were the confederacies of Syria and Ephraim against Judah, of Gebal, and Ammon, and Amalek, against God's Israel, the kings of the earth and the princes against the Lord and against his anointed, broken! The hands that have been stretched out against God and his church have not performed their enterprise, nor have the weapons formed against Sion prospered. *Fourthly*, That which enemies have designed for the ruin of the church has often turned to their own ruin (v. 13): *He takes the wise in their own craftiness, and snares them in the work of their own hands*, ^{<BIB>}Psalm 7:15, 16; 9:15, 16. This is quoted by the apostle (^{<BIB>}1 Corinthians 3:19) to show how the learned men of the heathen were befooled by their own vain philosophy. *Fifthly*, When God infatuates men they are perplexed, and at a loss, even in those things that seem most plain and easy (v. 14): *They meet with darkness even in the day-time: nay (as in the margin), They run themselves into darkness* by the violence and precipitation of their own counsels. See ^{<BIB>}Job 12:20, 24, 25.

[2.] How he favours the cause of the poor and humble, and espouses that. *First*, He exalts the humble, v. 11. Those whom proud men contrive to crush he raises from under their feet, and sets them in safety, ^{<BIB>}Psalm 12:5. The lowly in heart, and those that mourn, he advances, comforts, and makes to *dwell on high, in the munitions of rocks*, ^{<BIB>}Isaiah 33:16. Sion's mourners are the sealed ones, marked for safety, ^{<BIB>}Ezekiel 9:4. *Secondly*, He delivers the oppressed, v. 15. The designs of the crafty are to ruin the

poor. Tongue, and hand, and sword, and all, are at work in order to this; but God takes under his special protection those who, being poor and unable to help themselves, being his poor and devoted to his praise, have committed themselves to him. He saves them from the mouth that speaks hard things against them and the hand that does hard things against them; for he can, when he pleases, tie the tongue and wither the hand. The effect of this is (v. 16),

1. That weak and timorous saints are comforted: *So the poor*, who began to despair, *has hope*. The experiences of some are encouragement to others to hope the best in the worst of times; for it is the glory of God to send help to the helpless and hope to the hopeless.
2. That daring threatening sinners are confounded: *Iniquity stops her mouth*, being surprised at the strangeness of the deliverance, ashamed of its enmity against those who appear to be the favourites of Heaven, mortified at the disappointment, and compelled to acknowledge the justice of God's proceedings, having nothing to object against them. Those that domineered over God's poor, that frightened them, menaced them, and falsely accused them, will not have a word to say against them when God appears for them. See ~~<3708>~~ Psalm 76:8, 9; ~~<3711>~~ Isaiah 26:11; ~~<3716>~~ Micah 7:16.

~~<3717>~~ JOB 5:17-27

THE ADDRESS OF ELIPHAZ

Eliphaz, in this concluding paragraph of his discourse, gives Job (what he himself knew not how to take) a comfortable prospect of the issue of his afflictions, if he did but recover his temper and accommodate himself to them. Observe,

- I. The seasonable word of caution and exhortation that he gives him (v. 17): “*Despise not thou the chastening of the Almighty. Call it a chastening, which comes from the father's love and is designed for the child's good. Call it the chastening of the Almighty, with whom it is madness to contend, to whom it is wisdom and duty to submit, and who will be a God all-sufficient (for so the word signifies) to all those that trust in him. Do not despise it;*” it is a copious word in the original.

1. "Be not averse to it. Let grace conquer the antipathy which nature has to suffering, and reconcile thyself to the will of God in it." We need the rod and we deserve it; and therefore we ought not to think it either strange or hard if we feel the smart of it. Let not the heart rise against a bitter pill or potion, when it is prescribed for our good.

2. "Do not think ill of it; do not put it from thee (as that which is either hurtful or at least not useful, which there is not occasion for nor advantage by) only because for the present it is not joyous, but grievous." We must never scorn to stoop to God, nor think it a thing below us to come under his discipline, but reckon, on the contrary, that God really magnifies man when he thus *visits and tries him*, ^{<307>}Job 7:17, 18.

3. "Do not overlook and disregard it, as if it were only a chance, and the production of second causes, but take great notice of it as the voice of God and a messenger from heaven." More is implied than is expressed: "*Reverence the chastening of the Lord*; have a humble awful regard to this correcting hand, and tremble when the lion roars, ^{<308>}Amos 3:8. Submit to the chastening, and study to answer the call, to answer the end of it, and then you reverence it." When God by an affliction draws upon us for some of the effects he has entrusted us with we must honour his bill by accepting it, and subscribing it, resigning him his own when he calls for it.

II. The comfortable words of encouragement which he gives him thus to accommodate himself to his condition, and (as he himself had expressed it) to receive evil at the hand of God, and not despise it as a gift not worth the accepting.

1. If his affliction was thus borne,

(1.) The nature and property of it would be altered. Though it looked like a man's misery, it would really be his bliss: *Happy is the man whom God correcteth* if he make but a due improvement of the correction. A good man is happy though he be afflicted, for, whatever he has lost, he has not lost his enjoyment of God nor his title to heaven. Nay, he is happy because he is afflicted; correction is an evidence of his sonship and a means of his sanctification; it mortifies his corruptions, weans his heart from the world, draws him nearer to God, brings him to his Bible, brings him to his knees, works him for, and so is working for him, a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory. *Happy therefore is the man whom God correcteth*, ^{<312>}James 1:12.

(2.) The issue and consequence of it would be very good, v. 18.

[1.] Though *he makes sore* the body with sore boils, the mind with sad thoughts, yet he *binds up* at the same time, as the skilful tender surgeon binds up the wounds he had occasion to make with his incision-knife. When God makes sores by the rebukes of his providence he binds up by the consolations of his Spirit, which oftentimes abound most as afflictions do abound, and counterbalance them, to the unspeakable satisfaction of the patient sufferers.

[2.] Though *he wounds*, yet *his hands make whole* in due time; as he supports his people, and makes them easy under their afflictions, so in due time he delivers them, and makes a way for them to escape. All is well again; and he comforts them *according to the time wherein he afflicted them*. God's usual method is first to wound and then to heal, first to convince and then to comfort, first to humble and then to exalt; and (as Mr. Caryl observes) he never makes a wound too great, too deep, for his own cure. *Una eademque manus vulnus opemque tulit* — *The hand that inflicts the wound applies the cure*. God tears the wicked and goes away; let those heal that will, if they can (^{<354>}Hosea 5:14); but the humble and penitent may say, *He has torn and he will heal us*, ^{<361>}Hosea 6:1. This is general, but,

2. In the following verses Eliphaz addresses himself directly to Job, and gives him many precious promises of great and kind things which God would do for him if he did but humble himself under his hand. Though then they had no Bibles that we know of, yet Eliphaz had sufficient warrant to give Job these assurances, from the general discoveries God had made of his good will to his people. And, though in every thing which Job's friends said they were not directed by the Spirit of God (for they spoke both of God and Job some things that were not right), yet the general doctrines they laid down expressed the pious sense of the patriarchal age, and as St. Paul quoted v. 13 for canonical scripture, and as the command v. 17 is no doubt binding on us, so these promises here may be, and must be, received and applied as divine promises, and we may *through patience and comfort of this part of scripture have hope*. Let us therefore give diligence to make sure our interest in these promises, and then view the particulars of them and take the comfort of them.

(1.) It is here promised that as afflictions and troubles recur supports and deliverances shall be graciously repeated, be it ever so often: *In six*

troubles he shall be ready to deliver thee; yea, and in seven, v. 19. This intimates that, as long as we are here in this world, we must expect a succession of troubles, that the clouds will return after the rain. After six troubles may come a seventh; after many, look for more; but out of them all will God deliver those that are his, ^{<381>}2 Timothy 3:11; ^{<384>}Psalms 34:19. Former deliverances are not, as among men, excuses from further deliverances, but earnestings of them, ^{<399>}Proverbs 19:19.

(2.) That, whatever troubles good men may be in, *there shall no evil touch them*; they shall do them no real harm; the malignity of them, the sting, shall be taken out; they may hiss, but they cannot hurt, ^{<391>}Psalms 91:10. *The evil one toucheth not God's children*, ^{<385>}1 John 5:18. Being kept from sin, they are kept from the evil of every trouble.

(3.) That, when desolating judgments are abroad, they shall be taken under special protection, v. 20. Do many perish about them for want of the necessary supports of life? They shall be supplied. *“In famine he shall redeem thee from death; whatever becomes of others, thou shalt be kept alive*, ^{<383>}Psalms 33:19. *Verily, thou shalt be fed*, nay, even *in the days of famine thou shalt be satisfied*, ^{<388>}Psalms 37:3, 19. *In time of war*, when thousands fall on the right and left hand, he shall redeem thee *from the power of the sword*. If God please, it shall not touch thee; or if it wound thee, if it kill thee, it shall not hurt thee; it can but kill the body, nor has it power to do that unless it be given from above.”

(4.) That, whatever is maliciously said against them, it shall not affect them to do them any hurt, v. 21. *“Thou shalt not only be protected from the killing sword of war, but shalt be hidden from the scourge of the tongue*, which, like a scourge, is vexing and painful, though not mortal.” The best men, and the most inoffensive, cannot, even in their innocence, secure themselves from calumny, reproach, and false accusation. From these a man cannot hide himself, but God can hide him, so that the most malicious slanders shall be so little heeded by him as not to disturb his peace, and so little heeded by others as not to blemish his reputation: and the remainder of wrath God can and does restrain, for it is owing to the hold he has of the consciences of bad men that the scourge of the tongue is not the ruin of all the comforts of good men in this world.

(5.) That they shall have a holy security and serenity of mind, arising from their hope and confidence in God, even in the worst of times. When dangers are most threatening they shall be easy, believing themselves safe;

and they *shall not be afraid of destruction*, no, not when they see it coming (v. 21), nor *of the beasts of the field* when they set upon them, nor of men as cruel as beasts; nay, *at destruction and famine thou shalt laugh* (v. 22), not so as to despise any of God's chastenings or make a jest of his judgments, but so as to triumph in God, in his power and goodness, and therein to triumph over the world and all its grievances, to be not only easy, but cheerful and joyful, in tribulation. Blessed Paul laughed at destruction when he said, *O death! where is thy sting?* when, in the name of all the saints, he defied all the calamities of this present time to *separate us from the love of God*, concluding that *in all these things we are more than conquerors*, ^{<885}Romans 8:35, etc. See ^{<872}Isaiah 37:22.

(6.) That, being at peace with God, there shall be a covenant of friendship between them and the whole creation, v. 23. “When thou walkest over thy grounds thou shalt not need to fear stumbling, for *thou shalt be at league with the stones of the field*, not to dash thy foot against any of them, nor shalt thou be in danger from *the beasts of the field*, for they shall all be at peace with thee;” compare ^{<885}Hosea 2:18, *I will make a covenant for them with the beasts of the field*. This implies that while man is at enmity with his Maker the inferior creatures are at war with him; but *tranquillus Deus tranquillat omnia* — *a reconciled God reconciles all things*. Our covenant with God is a covenant with all the creatures that they shall do us no hurt but be ready to serve us and do us good.

(7.) That their houses and families shall be comfortable to them, v. 24. Peace and piety in the family will make it so. “*Thou shalt know* and be assured *that thy tabernacle is and shall be in peace*; thou mayest be confident both of its present and its future prosperity.” *That peace is thy tabernacle* (so the word is); peace is the house in which those dwell who dwell in God, and are at home in him. “*Thou shalt visit*” (that is, enquire into the affairs of) “*thy habitation*, and take a review of them, *and shalt not sin.*”

[1.] God will provide a settlement for his people, mean perhaps and movable, a cottage, a tabernacle, but a fixed and quiet habitation. “Thou shalt not sin,” or *wander*; that is, as some understand it, “thou shalt not be a fugitive and a vagabond” (Cain's curse), “but shalt dwell in the land, and verily, not uncertainly as vagrants, shalt thou be fed.”

[2.] Their families shall be taken under the special protection of the divine Providence, and shall prosper as far as is for their good.

[3.] They shall be assured of peace, and of the continuance and entail of it. “Thou shalt know, to thy unspeakable satisfaction, that peace is sure to thee and thine, having the word of God for it.” Providence may change, but the promise cannot.

[4.] They shall have wisdom to govern their families aright, to order their affairs with discretion, and to look well to the ways of their household, which is here called *visiting their habitation*. Masters of families must not be strangers at home, but must have a watchful eye over what they have and what their servants do.

[5.] They shall have grace to manage the concerns of their families after a godly sort, and not to sin in the management of them. They shall call their servants to account without passion, pride, covetousness, worldliness, or the like; they shall look into their affairs without discontent at what is or distrust of what shall be. Family piety crowns family peace and prosperity. The greatest blessing, both in our employments and in our enjoyments, is to be kept from sin in them. When we are abroad it is comfortable to hear that our tabernacle is in peace; and when we return home it is comfortable to visit our habitation with satisfaction in our success, that we have not failed in our business, and with a good conscience, that we have not offended God.

(8.) That their posterity shall be numerous and prosperous. Job had lost all his children; “but,” says Eliphaz, “if thou return to God, he will again build up thy family, and thy seed shall be many and as great as ever, and thy offspring increasing and flourishing *as the grass of the earth* (v. 25), and thou shalt know it.” God has blessings in store for the seed of the faithful, which they shall have if they do not stand in their own light and forfeit them by their folly. It is a comfort to parents to see the prosperity, especially the spiritual prosperity, of their children; if they are truly good, they are truly great, how small a figure soever they may make in the world.

(9.) That their death shall be seasonable, and they shall finish their course, at length, with joy and honour, v. 26. It is a great mercy,

[1.] To live to a full age, and not to have the number of our months cut off in the midst. If the providence of God do not give us long life, yet, if the grace of God give us to be satisfied with the time allotted us, we may be said to come to a full age. That man lives long enough that has done his work and is fit for another world.

[2.] To be willing to die, to come cheerfully to the grave, and not to be forced thither, as he whose soul was required of him.

[3.] To die seasonably, as the corn is cut and housed when it is fully ripe; not till then, but then not suffered to stand a day longer, lest it shed. Our times are in God's hand; it is well they are so, for he will take care that those who are his shall die in the best time: however their death may seem to us untimely, it will be found not unseasonable.

3. In the last verse he recommends these promises to Job,

(1.) As faithful sayings, which he might be confident of the truth of: “*Lo, this we have searched, and so it is.* We have indeed received these things by tradition from our fathers, but we have not taken them upon trust; we have carefully searched them, have compared spiritual things with spiritual, have diligently studied them, and been confirmed in our belief of them from our own observation and experience; and we are all of a mind that so it is.” Truth is a treasure that is well worth digging for, diving for; and then we shall know both how to value it ourselves and how to communicate it to others when we have taken pains in searching for it.

(2.) As well worthy of all acceptance, which he might improve to his great advantage: *Hear it, and know thou it for thy good.* It is not enough to hear and know the truth, but we must improve it, and be made wiser and better by it, receive the impressions of it, and submit to the commanding power of it. *Know it for thyself* (so the word is), with application to thyself, and thy own case; not only “This is true,” but “this is true concerning me.” That which we thus hear and know for ourselves we hear and know for our good, as we are nourished by the meat which we digest. That is indeed a good sermon to us which does us good.