

“Take, my brethren, the prophets, who have spoken in the name of the Lord, for an example of suffering affliction, and of patience. Behold, we count them happy which endure. Ye have heard of the patience of Job, and have seen the end of the Lord; that the Lord is very pitiful, and of tender mercy.” (James 5:10-11.)

“O that thou wouldest hide me in the grave, that thou wouldest keep me in secret, until thy wrath be past, that thou wouldest appoint me a set time, and remember me! If a man die, shall he live again? All the days of my appointed time will I wait till my change come. Thou shalt call, and I will answer thee: thou wilt have a desire to the work of thy hands.” (Job 14:13-15.)

Before undertaking to expound these words of Job, we must search out the true meaning. There are two general senses of these three general important verses, which are given by some of the most notable interpreters of Scripture, and they are exceedingly different from each other. The first is this: Some suppose that under the extremity of his anguish Job longed after death here, as he does in some other parts of this book, and desired that God would cut him off from the land of the living, and hide him in the grave, or at least take him away from the present stage of action, and conceal him in some retired and solitary place dark as the grave is till all the days which might be designed for his pain and sorrow were finished; and that God would appoint him a time for his restoration to health and happiness again in this world and raise him to the possession of it, by calling him out of that dark and solitary place of retreat; and then Job would answer him and appear with pleasure at such a call of providence.

Others give this sense of the words: That though the pressing and overwhelming sorrows of this good man constrained him to long for death, and he entreated of God that he might be sent to the grave as a hiding-place, and thus be delivered from his present calamities, yet he had some divine glimpse of a resurrection or living again, and he hopes for the happiness of a future state when God should call him out of the grave. He knew that the blessed God would have a desire to restore the work of his own hands to life again, and Job would answer the call of his God into a resurrection with holy pleasure and joy.

There are four or five reasons which incline me to prefer this latter sense of the words, and to show that the comforts and hopes which Job aspires to in this place are only to be derived from a resurrection to final happiness. The express words of the text are these:

1. **“O that thou wouldest hide me in the grave!”** Not in a darksome place LIKE a grave; and where the literal sense of the words is plain and agreeable to the context, there is no need of making metaphors to explain them. There is nothing that can encourage us to suppose that Job had any hope of happiness in this world again, after he was gone down to the grave; and therefore he would not make so unreasonable a petition to the great God. This seems to be too foolish and too hopeless a request for us to put into the mouth of so wise and good a man.

2. He seems to limit the continuance of man in the state of death to the duration of the heavens. Man lieth down, and riseth not till the heavens be no more (v. 12) Not absolutely forever does Job desire to be hidden in the grave, but until the dissolution of all these visible things, these heavens and this earth, and the GREAT RISING-DAY for the sons of men. And especially when he adds, These words seem to have a plain aspect toward the resurrection. And more especially when he

adds again, ***“They shall not awake, nor raised out of their sleep,”*** In Scripture the Brutes (i.e., the non elect, all reprobates, i.e. whose names are not written in the Lamb’s book of life from the foundation of the world.) I say, In Scripture, the Brutes are never said to sleep, because they shall never rise again; but this is a frequent word used to signify the death of man; both in the Old Testament and in the New, because he only lies down in the grave for a season, as in a bed of sleep, in order to awake and arise hereafter.

3. In other places of this book, Job gives us some evident hints of his hope of a resurrection, especially that divine passage and prophecy when he spoke as one surrounded with a vision of glory, and filled with the light and joy of faith. (**Job 19:25.**) ***“I know that my Redeemer liveth, and that he shall stand at the latter day upon the earth: and though after my skin worms destroy this body, yet in my flesh shall I see God: whom I shall see for myself, and mine eyes shall behold, and not another, though my reins be consumed within me.”*** But in many parts of this book the good man lets us know that he had no manner of hope of any restoration to health and peace in this life. (**Job 7:6,7,8.**); to wit: ***“My days...are spent without hope...mine eyes shall no more see good. The eye of him that hath seen me shall see me no more: thine eyes are upon me, and I am not.”*** Verse 21: ***“Now shall I sleep in the dust; thou shalt seek me in the morning, and I shall not be.”*** **Job 17:15:** ***“Where is now my hope? As for my hope, who shall see it?”*** He and his hope seemed to go down to the bars of the pit together, and to rest in the dust. And if Job had no hope of a restoration in this world, then his hopes must point to the resurrection of the dead.

4. If we turn these verses here, as well as that noble passage in **Job 19** to the more evangelical sense of a resurrection, the truths which are contained in the one and the other are all supported by the language of the New Testament. The express words of both these texts are much more naturally and easily applied to the evangelical sense without any strain and difficulty... Job had been speaking (**Job 14:7**) that there is hope of a tree when it is cut down when it shall sprout again, visibly, and bring forth boughs; but when man gives up the ghost he is no more visible upon earth: WHERE IS HE? Job does not deny his future existence, but only intimates that he does not appear in the place where he was; and in the following verses he does not say a dying man shall never rise, or never be awakened out of his sleep, but asserts that he arises not till the dissolution of these heavens and these things; and by calling death a sleep he supposes an awaking time, though it may be distant. Then he proceeds to long for death, ***“O that thou wouldst hide me in the grave! that thou wouldst keep me secret till thy wrath be past! Till these times and seasons of sorrow be ended, which seems to be the effect of divine anger or wrath; but then I entreat thou wouldst appoint me a set time for my tarrying in the grave, and remember me in order to raise me again; then with a sort of surprise of faith and pleasure he adds, “If a man die, shall he live again? Shall these dry bones live?”*** And he answers in the language of hope. ***“All of the days of that appointed time of thine I will wait, till that glorious change shall come. Thou shalt call from Heaven, and I will answer thee from the dust of death. I will appear at thy call, and say, Here am I; thou wilt have a desire to the work of thy hands, to raise me again from the dead, whom thou hast made from clay, and fashioned me into life.”***

From the words thus expounded, we may draw these several Observations, and make a short Reflection upon each of them as we pass along. To wit: O&R #1. This world is a place wherein good men are exposed to great calamities, and they are ready to think the anger or wrath of God appears in them. O&R #2. The grave is God’s known hiding-place for His people. O&R #3. God has appointed a set time in His own counsels for all His children to continue in death. O&R #4. The lively view of a happy resurrection, and a well-grounded hope of this blessed change, is a

Sunday, December 16, 2012

Sermon Outline...page 3

solid and divine comfort to the saints of God, under all trials of every kind both in life and death. O&R #5. The saints of God who are resting in their beds of dust will arise joyfully at the call of their heavenly Father. O&R #6. God takes delight in His works of nature, but much more when they are dignified and adorned by the operation of divine grace. O&R #7. How much are we indebted to God for the revelation of the New Testament, which teaches us to find out the blessings which are contained in the Old, and to fetch out the glories and treasures which are concealed there?

This mortal life and this present state of things, as surrounded with crosses and disappointments; the loss of our dearest friends, as well as our own pains and sicknesses, have so much anguish and misery attending them that they seem to be the seasons of divine wrath, and they grieve and pain the spirit of many a pious man, under a sense of the anger of his God. It must be confessed in general that misery is the effect of sin, for sin and sorrow came into the world together. It is granted also, that God sometimes afflicts His people in anger, and corrects them in His hot displeasure, when they have sinned against Him in a remarkable manner; but this is not always the case. The great God was not really angry with Job when He suffered him to fall into such complicated distresses; for it is plain that while He delivered him up into the hands of Satan to be afflicted, He vindicates and honors him with a divine testimony concerning his piety.

“There is none like him in the earth, a perfect and an upright man, one that feareth God, and escheweth evil.”(Job 1:8)

Nor was He angry with his Son Jesus Christ, when it pleased the Father to bruise him and put him to grief, when he made his soul an offering for sin, and he was stricken, smitten of God and afflicted. (Isa. 53.) To these we may add Paul, the best of the apostles, the greatest of Christians, who was abundant in labors and sufferings beyond all the rest. See a dismal catalog of his calamities (2 Cor. 11:23, et seq.) What variety of wretchedness, what terrible persecutions from men, what repeated strokes of distress came upon him by the providence of God, which appeared like the effects of divine wrath and anger! But they were plainly designed for more divine and blessed purposes, both with regard to God, with regard to himself, and to all the succeeding ages of the Christian church. God does not always smite His people to punish sin and show His anger; but these sufferings are often appointed for the trial of their Christian virtues and graces, for the exercise of their humility and their patience, for the proof of their steadfastness in religion, for the honor of the grace of God in them, and for the increase of their own future weight of glory.

***“Blessed is the man that endures temptation(!): for when he is tried, he shall receive the crown of life, which the Lord hath promised to them that love him.”
(James 1:12)***

“The devil shall cast some of you into prison, that ye may be tried; and ye shall have tribulation ten days: be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life.”(Rev. 2:10)

“For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory.”(2 Cor. 4:17)

However, upon the whole, this world is a very troublesome and painful place to the children of God. They are subject here to many weaknesses and sins, temptations and follies; they are in danger of new defilements; they go through many threatening perils and many real sorrows, which either are the effects of the displeasure of God, or at least carry an appearance of divine anger in them. But there is a time when these shall be finished, and sorrow shall have its last period. There is a time when these calamities will be overpassed, and shall return no more forever.

Now we are talking about my transition period. We are talking about the spirits of just men made perfect. We are talking about a wonderful resort, a place of great comfort for them. God's power is able to raise you from the dead, and is pledged to do so.

"The righteous is taken away from the evil to come."(Isa. 57:1)

The last trumpet will sound, the last day will come, and the dead will rise. God our heavenly Father beholds this evil advancing forward through all the present smiles of nature, and all the peaceful circumstances that surround us. He hides His children in the grave from a thousand sins, and sorrows, and distresses of this life, which they foresaw not. Even when they are actually beset behind and before, so that there seems to be no natural way for their escape, God calls them aside into the chambers of death. Abraham with his wife Sara will shake off the dust of Machpelah's cave and come forth.

***"Come, my people, enter thou into thy chambers, and shut thy doors about thee: hide thyself as it were, for a little moment, until the indignation be overpast."
(Isa. 26:20)***

"But I would not have you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning them which are asleep, that ye sorrow not, even as others which have no hope. For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so them also which sleep in Jesus will God bring with him. For this we say unto you by the word of the Lord, that we which are alive and remain unto the coming of the Lord shall not prevent them which are asleep. For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first: Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord. Wherefore comfort one another with these words."(1 Thes. 4:13-18)

Jesus Christ, had but three days appointed Him to dwell in this hiding-place, and He rose again at the appointed hour. Other good men, who were gone to their grave not long before Him, arose again at the resurrection of Christ and made a visit to many in Jerusalem. Their appointed hiding-place was but for a short season. And all the children of God shall be remembered in their proper seasons, in faithfulness to His Son, to whom He has given them. The Head is raised to the mansions of glory, and the members must not forever lie in dust. Then let all the saints of God wait with patience for the appointed time of their change.

***"Behold, I show you a mystery; We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed, In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump: for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed. For the corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality. So when this corruptible shall have put on incorruption, and this mortal shall have put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, Death is swallowed up in victory. O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory? The sting of death is sin; and the strength of sin is the law."
(1 Cor. 15:51-56)***

The "appointed time" in Job is supposed to signify warfare in the Hebrew; as a sentinel, when he is fixed to his post by his general, waits there till he has orders for his release. This clause may refer either to dying or rising again, for either of them is a great and important change passing upon human nature, either from life to death or death to life.

I love you. Amen.