

CHAPTER 42

Solomon says, “Better is the end of a thing than the beginning thereof,” ²⁰⁰⁸ Ecclesiastes 7:8. It was so here in the story of Job; at the evening-time it was light. Three things we have met with in this book which, I confess, have troubled me very much; but we find all the three grievances redressed, thoroughly redressed, in this chapter, everything set to-rights.

I. It has been a great trouble to us to see such a holy man as Job was so fretful, and peevish, and uneasy to himself, and especially to hear him quarrel with God and speak indecently to him; but, though he thus fall, he is not utterly cast down, for here he recovers his temper, comes to himself and to his right mind again by repentance, is sorry for what he has said amiss, unsays it, and humbles himself before God (v. 1-6).

II. It has been likewise a great trouble to us to see Job and his friends so much at variance, not only differing in their opinions, but giving one another a great many hard words, and passing severe censures one upon another, though they were all very wise and good men; but here we have this grievance redressed likewise, the differences between them happily adjusted, the quarrel taken up, all the peevish reflections they had cast upon one another forgiven and forgotten, and all joining in sacrifices and prayers, mutually accepted of God (v. 7-9).

III. It has troubled us to see a man of such eminent piety and usefulness as Job was so grievously afflicted, so pained, so sick, so poor, so reproached, so slighted, and made the very centre of all the calamities of human life; but here we have this grievance redressed too, Job healed of all his ailments, more honoured and beloved than ever, enriched with an estate double to what he had before, surrounded with all the comforts of life, and as great an instance of prosperity as ever he had been of affliction and patience (v. 10-17). All this is written for our learning, that we, under these and the like discouragements that we meet with, through patience and comfort of this scripture may have hope.

◀881▶ JOB 42:1-6

JOB'S HUMBLE CONFESSION

The words of Job justifying himself were ended, ^{◀884▶}Job 31:40. After that he said no more to that purport. The words of Job judging and condemning himself began, ^{◀880▶}Job 40:4, 5. Here he goes on with words to the same purport. Though his patience had not its perfect work, his repentance for his impatience had. He is here thoroughly humbled for his folly and unadvised speaking, and it was forgiven him. Good men will see and own their faults at last, though it may be some difficulty to bring them to do this. *Then*, when God had said all that to him concerning his own greatness and power appearing in the creatures, *then Job answered the Lord* (v. 1), not by way of contradiction (he had promised not so to answer again, ^{◀885▶}Job 40:5), but by way of submission; and thus we must all answer the calls of God.

I. He subscribes to the truth of God's unlimited power, knowledge, and dominion, to prove which was the scope of God's discourse out of the whirlwind, v. 2. Corrupt passions and practices arise either from some corrupt principles or from the neglect and disbelief of the principles of truth; and therefore true repentance begins in *the acknowledgement of the truth*, ^{◀825▶}2 Timothy 2:25. Job here owns his judgment convinced of the greatness, glory, and perfection of God, from which would follow the conviction of his conscience concerning his own folly in speaking irreverently to him.

1. He owns that God can do every thing. What can be too hard for him that made behemoth and leviathan, and manages both as he pleases? He knew this before, and had himself discoursed very well upon the subject, but now he knew it with application. *God had spoken* it once, and then he heard it twice, that *power belongs to God*; and therefore it is the greatest madness and presumption imaginable to contend with him. "*Thou canst do every thing*, and therefore canst raise me out of this low condition, which I have so often foolishly despaired of as impossible: I now believe thou art able to do this."

2. That *no thought can be withholden from him*, that is,

(1.) There is no thought of ours that he can be hindered from the knowledge of. Not a fretful, discontented, unbelieving thought is in our minds at any time but God is a witness to it. It is in vain to contest with him; for we cannot hide our counsels and projects from him, and, if he discover them, he can defeat them.

(2.) There is no thought of his that he can be hindered from the execution of. *Whatever the Lord pleased, that did he.* Job had said this passionately, complaining of it (~~18213~~ Job 23:13), *What his soul desireth even that he doeth*; now he says, with pleasure and satisfaction, that *God's counsels shall stand*. If God's thoughts concerning us be *thoughts of good, to give us an unexpected end*, he cannot be withheld from accomplishing his gracious purposes, whatever difficulties may seem to lie in the way.

II. He owns himself to be guilty of that which God had charged him with in the beginning of his discourse, v. 3. "Lord, the first word thou saidst was, *Who is this that darkens counsel by words without knowledge?* There needed no more; that word convinced me. I own *I am the man* that has been so foolish. That word reached my conscience, and set my sin in order before me. It is too plain to be denied, too bad to be excused. I have hidden *counsel without knowledge*. I have ignorantly overlooked the counsels and designs of God in afflicting me, and therefore have quarrelled with God, and insisted too much upon my own justification: *Therefore I uttered that which I understood not,*" that is, "I have passed a judgment upon the dispensations of Providence, though I was utterly a stranger to the reasons of them." Here,

1. He owns himself ignorant of the divine counsels; and so we are all. God's judgments are a great deep, which we cannot fathom, much less find out the springs of. We see what God does, but we neither know why he does it, what he is aiming at, nor what he will bring it to. These are things too wonderful for us, out of our sight to discover, out of our reach to alter, and out of our jurisdiction to judge of. They are things which we know not; it is quite above our capacity to pass a verdict upon them. The reason why we quarrel with Providence is because we do not understand it; and we must be content to be in the dark about it, until the mystery of God shall be finished.

2. He owns himself imprudent and presumptuous in undertaking to discourse of that which he did not understand and to arraign that which he

could not judge of. *He that answereth a matter before he heareth it, it is folly and shame to him.* We wrong ourselves, as well as the cause which we undertake to determine, while we are no competent judges of it.

III. He will not answer, but he will *make supplication to his Judge*, as he had said, ^{<805>}Job 9:15. “*Hear, I beseech thee, and I will speak* (v. 4), not speak either as plaintiff or defendant (^{<802>}Job 13:22), but as a humble petitioner, not as one that will undertake to teach and prescribe, but as one that desires to learn and is willing to be prescribed to. Lord, put no more hard questions to me, for I am not able to answer thee one of a thousand of those which thou hast put; but give me leave to ask instruction from thee, and do not deny it me, do not upbraid me with my folly and self-sufficiency,” ^{<806>}James 1:5. Now he is brought to the prayer Elihu taught him, *That which I see not teach thou me.*

IV. He puts himself into the posture of a penitent, and therein goes upon a right principle. In true repentance there must be not only conviction of sin, but contrition and godly sorrow for it, sorrow *according to God*, ^{<809>}2 Corinthians 7:9. Such was Job's sorrow for his sins.

1. Job had an eye to God in his repentance, thought highly of him, and went upon that as the principle of it (v. 5): “*I have heard of thee by the hearing of the ear* many a time from my teachers when I was young, from my friends now of late. I have known something of thy greatness, and power, and sovereign dominion; and yet was not brought, by what I heard, to submit myself to thee as I ought. The notions I had of these things served me only to talk of, and had not a due influence upon my mind. *But now* thou hast by immediate revelation discovered thyself to me in thy glorious majesty; *now my eyes see thee*; now I feel the power of those truths which before I had only the notion of, and therefore now I repent, and unsay what I have foolishly said.” Note,

(1.) It is a great mercy to have a good education, and to know the things of God by the instructions of his word and ministers. *Faith comes by hearing*, and then it is most likely to come when we hear attentively and with the *hearing of the ear*.

(2.) When the understanding is enlightened by the Spirit of grace our knowledge of divine things as far exceeds what we had before as that by ocular demonstration exceeds that by report and common fame. By the teachings of men God reveals his Son to us; but by the teachings of his

Spirit he reveals his Son in us (^{<R16>}Galatians 1:16), and so *changes us into the same image*, ^{<R18>}2 Corinthians 3:18.

(3.) God is pleased sometimes to manifest himself most fully to his people by the rebukes of his word and providence. “Now that I have been afflicted, now that I have been told of my faults, now my eye sees thee.” *The rod and reproof give wisdom. Blessed is the man whom thou chastenest and teachest.*

2. Job had an eye to himself in his repentance, thought hardly of himself, and thereby expressed his sorrow for his sins (v. 6): *Wherefore I abhor myself, and repent in dust and ashes.* Observe,

(1.) It concerns us to be deeply humbled for the sins we are convinced of, and not to rest in a slight superficial displeasure against ourselves for them. Even good people, that have no gross enormities to repent of, must be greatly afflicted in soul for the workings and breakings out of pride, passion, peevishness, and discontent, and all their hasty unadvised speeches; for these we must be pricked to the heart and be in bitterness. Till the enemy be effectually humbled, the peace will be insecure.

(2.) Outward expressions of godly sorrow well become penitents; Job repented in dust and ashes. These, without an inward change, do but mock God; but, where they come from sincere contrition of soul, the sinner by them gives glory to God, takes shame to himself, and may be instrumental to bring others to repentance. Job's afflictions had brought him to the ashes (^{<R18>}Job 2:8, he *sat down among the ashes*), but now his sins brought him thither. True penitents mourn for their sins as heartily as ever they did for any outward afflictions, and are in bitterness as for an only son of a first-born, for they are brought to see more evils in their sins than in their troubles.

(3.) Self-loathing is evermore the companion of true repentance. ^{<R18>}Ezekiel 6:9, *They shall loathe themselves for the evils which they have committed.* We must not only be angry at ourselves for the wrong and damage we have by sin done to our own souls, but must abhor ourselves, as having by sin made ourselves odious to the pure and holy God, who cannot endure to look upon iniquity. If sin be truly an abomination to us, sin in ourselves will especially be so; the nearer it is to us the more loathsome it will be.

(4.) The more we see of the glory and majesty of God, and the more we see of the vileness and odiousness of sin and of ourselves because of sin, the more we shall abase and abhor ourselves for it. “Now my eye sees what a God he is whom I have offended, the brightness of that majesty which by wilful sin I have spit in the face of, the tenderness of that mercy which I have spurned at the bowels of; now I see what a just and holy God he is whose wrath I have incurred; wherefore I abhor myself. *Woe is me, for I am undone,*” ^{<2165>} Isaiah 6:5. God had challenged Job to *look upon proud men and abase them*. “I cannot,” says Job, “pretend to do it; I have enough to do to get my own proud heart humbled, to abase that and bring that low.” Let us leave it to God to govern the world, and make it our care, in the strength of his grace, to govern ourselves and our own hearts well.

~~<1817>~~ JOB 42:7-9

GOD'S VINDICATION OF JOB

Job, in his discourses, had complained very much of the censures of his friends and their hard usage of him, and had appealed to God as Judge between him and them, and thought it hard that judgment was not immediately given upon the appeal. While God was catechising Job out of the whirlwind one would have thought that he only was in the wrong, and that the cause would certainly go against him; but here, to our great surprise, we find it quite otherwise, and the definitive sentence given in Job's favour. Wherefore judge nothing before the time. Those who are truly righteous before God may have their righteousness clouded and eclipsed by great and uncommon afflictions, by the severe censures of men, by their own frailties and foolish passions, by the sharp reproofs of the word and conscience, and the deep humiliation of their own spirits under the sense of God's terrors; and yet, in due time, these clouds shall all blow over, and God will *bring forth their righteousness as the light and their judgment as the noon-day,* ^{<1817>} Psalm 37:6. He cleared Job's righteousness here, because he, like an honest man, held it fast and would not let it go. We have here,

I. Judgment given against Job's three friends, upon the controversy between them and Job. Elihu is not censured here, for he distinguished himself from the rest in the management of the dispute, and acted, not as a

party, but as a moderator; and moderation will have its praise with God, whether it have with men or no. In the judgment here given Job is magnified and his three friends are mortified. While we were examining the discourses on both sides we could not discern, and therefore durst not determine, who was in the right; something of truth we thought they both had on their side, but we could not cleave the hair between them; nor would we, for all the world, have had to give the decisive sentence upon the case, lest we should have determined wrong. But it is well that the judgment is the Lord's, and we are sure that his judgment is according to truth; to it we will refer ourselves, and by it we will abide. Now, in the judgment here given,

1. Job is greatly magnified and comes off with honour. He was but one against three, a beggar now against three princes, and yet, having God on his side, he needed not fear the result, though thousands set themselves against him. Observe here,

(1.) When God appeared for him: *After the Lord had spoken these words unto Job, v. 7.* After he had convinced and humbled him, and brought him to repentance for what he had said amiss, then he owned him in what he had said well, comforted him, and put honour upon him; not till then: for we are not ready for God's approbation till we judge and condemn ourselves; but then he thus pleaded his cause, for he that *has torn will heal* us, he that *has smitten will bind us*. The Comforter shall convince, ~~John~~ John 16:8. See in what method we are to expect divine acceptance; we must first be humbled under divine rebukes. After God, by speaking these words, had caused grief, he returned and had compassion, according to the multitude of his mercies; for he will not contend for ever, but will debate in measure, and stay his rough wind in the day of his east wind. Now that Job had humbled himself God exalted him. True penitents shall find favour with God, and what they have said and done amiss shall no more be mentioned against them. Then God is well pleased with us when we are brought to abhor ourselves.

(2.) How he appeared for him. It is taken for granted that all his offences are forgiven; for if he be dignified, as we find he is here, no doubt he is justified. Job had sometimes intimated, with great assurance, that God would clear him at last, and he was not made ashamed of the hope.

[1.] God calls him again and again *his servant Job*, four times in two verses, and he seems to take a pleasure in calling him so, as before his

troubles (~~318~~ Job 1:8), “*Hast thou considered my servant Job? Though he is poor and despised, he is my servant notwithstanding, and as dear to me as when he was in prosperity. Though he has his faults, and has appeared to be a man subject to like passions as others, though he has contended with me, has gone about to disannul my judgment, and has darkened counsel by words without knowledge, yet he sees his error and retracts it, and therefore he is my servant Job still.*” If we still hold fast the integrity and fidelity of servants to God, as Job did, though we may for a time be deprived of the credit and comfort of the relation, we shall be restored to it at last, as he was. The devil had undertaken to prove Job a hypocrite, and his three friends had condemned him as a wicked man; but God will acknowledge those whom he accepts, and will not suffer them to be run down by the malice of hell or earth. If God says, *Well done, good and faithful servant*, it is of little consequence who says otherwise.

[2.] He owns that he had *spoken of him the thing that was right*, beyond what his antagonists had done. He had given a much better and truer account of the divine Providence than they had done. They had wronged God by making prosperity a mark of the true church and affliction a certain indication of God's wrath; but Job had done him right by maintaining that God's love and hatred are to be judged of by what is in men, not by what is before them, ~~200~~ Ecclesiastes 9:1. Observe, *First*, Those do the most justice to God and his providence who have an eye to the rewards and punishments of another world more than to those of this, and with the prospect of those solve the difficulties of the present administration. Job had referred things to the future judgment, and the future state, more than his friends had done, and therefore he spoke of God that which was right, better than his friends had done. *Secondly*, Though Job had spoken some things amiss, even concerning God, whom he made too bold with, yet he is commended for what he spoke that was right. We must not only not reject that which is true and good, but must not deny it its due praise, though there appear in it a mixture of human frailty and infirmity. *Thirdly*, Job was in the right, and his friends were in the wrong, and yet he was in pain and they were at ease — a plain evidence that we cannot judge of men and their sentiments by looking in their faces or purses. He only can do it infallibly who sees men's hearts.

[3.] He will pass his word for Job that, notwithstanding all the wrong his friends had done him, he is so good a man, and of such a humble, tender, forgiving spirit, that he will very readily pray for them, and use his interest

in heaven on their behalf: “*My servant Job will pray for you. I know he will. I have pardoned him, and he has the comfort of pardon, and therefore he will pardon you.*”

[4.] He appoints him to be the priest of this congregation, and promises to accept him and his mediation for his friends. “Take your sacrifices to my servant Job, *for him will I accept.*” Those whom God washes from their sins he makes to himself kings and priests. True penitents shall not only find favour as petitioners for themselves, but be accepted as intercessors for others also. It was a great honour that God hereby put upon Job, in appointing him to offer sacrifice for his friends, as formerly he used to do for his own children, ^{<RUB>}Job 1:5. And a happy presage it was of his restoration to his prosperity again, and indeed a good step towards it, that he was thus restored to the priesthood. Thus he became a type of Christ, through whom alone we and our spiritual sacrifices are *acceptable to God*; see ^{<RUB>}1 Peter 2:5. “*Go to my servant Job, to my servant Jesus*” (from whom for a time he hid his face), “put your sacrifices into his hand, make use of him as your Advocate, for him will I accept, but, out of him, you must expect to be dealt with according to your folly.” And, as Job prayed and offered sacrifice for those that had grieved and wounded his spirit, so Christ prayed and died for his persecutors, and ever lives *making intercession for the transgressors.*

2. Job's friends are greatly mortified, and come off with disgrace. They were good men and belonged to God, and therefore he would not let them lie still in their mistake any more than Job, but, having humbled him by a discourse out of the whirlwind, he takes another course to humble them. Job, who was dearest to him, was first chidden, but the rest in their turn. When they heard Job talked to, it is probable, they flattered themselves with a conceit that they were in the right and Job was in all the fault, but God soon took them to task, and made them know the contrary. In most disputes and controversies there is something amiss on both sides, either in the merits of the cause or in the management, if not in both; and it is fit that both sides should be told of it, and made to see their errors. God addresses this to Eliphaz, not only as the senior, but as the ringleader in the attack made upon Job. Now,


(1.) God tells them plainly that they had *not spoken of him the thing that was right, like Job*, that is, they had censured and condemned Job upon a false hypothesis, had represented God fighting against Job as an enemy

when really he was only trying him as a friend, and this was not right. Those do not say well of God who represent his fatherly chastisements of his own children as judicial punishments and who cut them off from his favour upon the account of them. Note, It is a dangerous thing to judge uncharitably of the spiritual and eternal state of others, for in so doing we may perhaps condemn those whom God has accepted, which is a great provocation to him; it is offending his little ones, and he takes himself to be wronged in all the wrongs that are done to them.

(2.) He assures them he was angry with them: *My wrath is kindled against thee and thy two friends*. God is very angry with those who despise and reproach their brethren, who triumph over them, and judge hardly of them, either for their calamities or for their infirmities. Though they were wise and good men, yet, when they spoke amiss, God was angry with them and let them know that he was.

(3.) He requires from them a sacrifice, to make atonement for what they had said amiss. They must bring each of them *seven bullocks, and each of them seven rams*, to be offered up to God for a *burnt-offering*; for it should seem that, before the law of Moses, all sacrifices, even those of atonement, were wholly burnt, and therefore were so called. They thought they had spoken wonderfully well, and that God was beholden to them for pleading his cause and owed them a good reward for it; but they are told that, on the contrary, he is displeased with them, requires from them a sacrifice, and threatens that, otherwise, he will deal with them after their folly. God is often angry at that in us which we are ourselves proud of and sees much amiss in that which we think was done well.

(4.) He orders them to go to Job, and beg of him to offer their sacrifices, and pray for them, otherwise they should not be accepted. By this God designed,

[1.] To humble them and lay them low. They thought that they only were the favourites of Heaven, and that Job had no interest there; but God gives them to understand that he had a better interest there than they had, and stood fairer for God's acceptance than they did. The day may come when those who despise and censure God's people will court their favour, and be *made to know that God has loved them*,  Revelation 3:9. The foolish virgins will beg oil of the wise.

[2.] To oblige them to make their peace with Job, as the condition of their making their peace with God. *If thy brother has aught against thee* (as Job had a great deal against them), *first be reconciled to thy brother and then come and offer thy gift*. Satisfaction must first be made for wrong done, according as the nature of the thing requires, before we can hope to obtain from God the forgiveness of sin. See how thoroughly God espoused the cause of his servant Job and engaged in it. God will not be reconciled to those that have offended Job till they have first begged his pardon and he be reconciled to them. Job and his friends had differed in their opinion about many things, and had been too keen in their reflections one upon another, but now they were to be made friends; in order to that, they are not to argue the matter over again and try to give it a new turn (that might be endless), but they must agree in a sacrifice and a prayer, and that must reconcile them: they must unite in affection and devotion when they could not concur in the same sentiments. Those who differ in judgments about minor things are yet one in Christ the great sacrifice, and meet at the same throne of grace, and therefore ought to love and bear with one another. Once more, observe, When God was angry with Job's friends, he did himself put them in a way to make their peace with him. Our quarrels with God always begin on our part, but the reconciliation begins on his.

II. The acquiescence of Job's friends in this judgment given, v. 9. They were good men, and, as soon as they understood what the mind of the Lord was, they did as he commanded them, and that speedily and without gainsaying, though it was against the grain to flesh and blood to court him thus whom they had condemned. Note, Those who would be reconciled to God must carefully use the prescribed means and methods of reconciliation. Peace with God is to be had only in his own way and upon his own terms, and they will never seem hard to those who know how to value the privilege, but they will be glad of it upon any terms, though ever so humbling. Job's friends had all joined in accusing Job, and now they join in begging his pardon. Those that have sinned together should repent together. Those that appeal to God, as both Job and his friends had often done, must resolve to stand by his award, whether pleasing or displeasing to their own mind. And those that conscientiously observe God's commands need not doubt of his favour: *The Lord also accepted Job*, and his friends in answer to his prayer. It is not said, He accepted *them* (though that is implied), but, He accepted *Job* for them; so he has *made us accepted in the beloved*, ~~406~~ Ephesians 1:6; ~~407~~ Matthew 3:17. Job did not

insult over his friends upon the testimony God had given concerning him, and the submission they were obliged to make to him; but, God being graciously reconciled to him, he was easily reconciled to them, and then God accepted him. This is that which we should aim at in all our prayers and services, to be accepted of the Lord; this must be the summit of our ambition, not to have praise of men, but to please God.

~~800~~ JOB 42:10-17

JOB'S RENEWED PROSPERITY

You have heard of the patience of Job (says the apostle, ~~801B~~ James 5:11) *and have seen the end of the Lord*, that is, what end the Lord, at length, put to his troubles. In the beginning of this book we had Job's patience under his troubles, for an example; here, in the close, for our encouragement to follow that example, we have the happy issue of his troubles and the prosperous condition to which he was restored after them, which confirms us in counting those happy which endure. Perhaps, too, the extraordinary prosperity which Job was crowned with after his afflictions was intended to be to us Christians a type and figure of the glory and happiness of heaven, which the afflictions of this present time are working for us, and in which they will issue at last; this will be more than double to all the delights and satisfactions we now enjoy, as Job's after-prosperity was to his former, though then he was the greatest of all the men of the east. He that rightly endures temptation, when he is tried, shall receive a *crown of life* (~~801D~~ James 1:12), as Job, when he was tried, received all the wealth, and honour, and comfort, which here we have an account of.

I. God returned in ways of mercy to him; and his thoughts concerning him *were thoughts of good and not of evil, to give the expected* (nay, the *unexpected*) *end*, ~~801E~~ Jeremiah 29:11. His troubles began in Satan's malice, which God restrained; his restoration began in God's mercy, which Satan could not oppose. Job's sorest complaint, and indeed the sorrowful accent of all his complaints, on which he laid the greatest emphasis, was that God appeared against him. But now God plainly appeared for him, and *watched over him to build and to plant, like as he had* (at least in his apprehension) *watched over him to pluck up and to throw down*, ~~801F~~ Jeremiah 31:28. This

put a new face upon his affairs immediately, and every thing now looked as pleasing and promising as before it had looked gloomy and frightful.

1. God *turned his captivity*, that is, he redressed his grievances and took away all the causes of his complaints; he loosed him from the bond with which Satan had now, for a great while, bound him, and delivered him out of those cruel hands into which he had delivered him. We may suppose that now all his bodily pains and distempers were healed so suddenly and so thoroughly that the cure was next to miraculous: *His flesh became fresher than a child's, and he returned to the days of his youth*; and, what was more, he felt a very great alteration in his mind; it was calm and easy, and the tumult was all over, his disquieting thoughts had all vanished, his fears were silenced, and the consolations of God were now as much the delight of his soul as his terrors had been its burden. The tide thus turned, his troubles began to ebb as fast as they had flowed, just then *when he was praying for his friends*, praying over his sacrifice which he offered for them. Mercy did not return when he was disputing with his friends, no, not though he had right on his side, but when he was praying for them; for God is better served and pleased with our warm devotions than with our warm disputations. When Job completed his repentance by this instance of his *forgiving men their trespasses*, then God completed his remission by turning his captivity. Note, We are really doing our business when we are praying for our friends, if we pray in a right manner, for in those prayers there is not only faith, but love. Christ has taught us to pray with and for others in teaching us to say, *Our Father*; and, in seeking mercy for others, we may find mercy ourselves. Our Lord Jesus has his exaltation and dominion there, where he *ever lives making intercession*. Some, by the turning of Job's captivity, understand the restitution which the Sabeans and Chaldeans made of the cattle which they had taken from him, God wonderfully inclining them to do it; and with these he began the world again. Probably it was so; those spoilers had *swallowed down his riches*, but they were forced to *vomit them up again*, ^{<815>}Job 20:15. But I rather understand this more generally of the turn now given.

2. God doubled his possessions: *Also the Lord gave Job twice as much as he had before*. It is probable that he did at first, in some way or other, intimate to him that it was his gracious purpose, by degrees, in due time to bring him to such a height of prosperity that he should have twice as much as ever he had, for the encouraging of his hope and the quickening of his

industry, and that it might appear that this wonderful increase was a special token of God's favour. And it may be considered as intended,

(1.) To balance his losses. He suffered for the glory of God, and therefore God made it up to him with advantage, and allowed him more than interest upon interest. God will take care that none shall lose by him.

(2.) To recompense his patience and his confidence in God, which (notwithstanding the workings of corruption) he did not cast away, but still held fast, and that is it which has *a great recompence of reward*,

^{<805>}Hebrews 10:35. Job's friends had often put their severe censure of Job upon this issue, *If thou wert pure and upright, surely now he would awake for thee*, ^{<806>}Job 8:6. But he does not awake for thee; therefore thou art not upright. "Well," says God, "though your argument be not conclusive, I will even by that demonstrate the integrity of my servant Job; his latter end shall greatly increase, and by that it shall appear, since you will have it so, that it was not for any injustice in his hands that he suffered the loss of all things." Now it appeared that Job had reason to bless God for taking away (as he did, ^{<812>}Job 1:21), since it made so good a return.

II. His old acquaintance, neighbours, and relations, were very kind to him, v. 11. They had been estranged from him, and this was not the least of the grievances of his afflicted state; he bitterly complained of their unkindness, ^{<803>}Job 19:13, etc. But now they visited him with all possible expressions of affection and respect.

1. They put honour upon him, in coming to dine with him as formerly, but (we may suppose) privately bringing their entertainment along with them, so that he had the reputation of feasting them without the expense.

2. They sympathized with him, and showed a tender concern for him, such as becomes brethren. They bemoaned him when they talked over all the calamities of his afflicted state, and comforted him when they took notice of God's gracious returns to him. They wept for his griefs, and rejoiced in his joys, and proved not such miserable comforters as his three friends, that, at first, were so forward and officious to attend him. These were not such great men nor such learned and eloquent men as those, but they proved much more skilful and kind in comforting Job. God sometimes chooses the foolish and weak things of the world, as for conviction, so for comfort.

3. They made a collection among them for the repair of his losses and the setting of him up again. They did not think it enough to say, *Be warmed, Be filled*, but gave him such things as would be of use to him, ^{<3926>}James 2:16. *Every one gave him a piece of money* (some more, it is likely, and some less, according to their ability) *and every one an ear-ring of gold* (an ornament much used by the children of the east), which would be as good as money to him: this was a superfluity which they could well spare, and the rule is, That our abundance must be a supply to our brethren's necessity. But why did Job's relations now, at length, show this kindness to him?

(1.) God put it in their hearts to do so; and every creature is that to us which he makes it to be. Job had acknowledged God in their estrangement from him, for which he now rewarded him in turning them to him again.

(2.) Perhaps some of them withdrew from him because they thought him a hypocrite, but, now that his integrity was made manifest, they returned to him and to communion with him again. When God was friendly to him they were all willing to be friendly too, ^{<4374>}Psalms 119:74, 79. Others of them, it may be, withdrew because he was poor, and sore, and a rueful spectacle, but now that he began to recover they were willing to renew their acquaintance with him. Swallow-friends, that are gone in winter, will return in the spring, though their friendship is of little value.

(3.) Perhaps the rebuke which God had given to Eliphaz and the other two for their unkindness to Job awakened the rest of his friends to return to their duty. Reproofs to others we should thus take as admonitions and instructions to us.

4. Job *prayed for his friends*, and then they flocked about him, overcome by his kindness, and every one desiring an interest in his prayers. The more we pray for our friends and relations the more comfort we may expect in them.

III. His estate strangely increased, by the blessing of God upon the little that his friends gave him. He thankfully received their courtesy, and did not think it below him to have his estate repaired by contributions. He did not, on the one hand, urge his friends to raise money for him; he acquits himself from that (^{<362>}Job 6:22), *Did I say, Bring unto me or give me a reward of your substance?* Yet what they brought he thankfully accepted, and did not upbraid them with their former unkindnesses, nor ask them

why they did not do this sooner. He was neither so covetous and griping as to ask their charity, nor so proud and ill-natured as to refuse it when they offered it; and, being in so good a temper, God gave him that which was far better than their money and ear-rings, and that was his blessing, v. 12. The Lord comforted him now according to the days wherein he had afflicted him, and *blessed his latter end more than his beginning*. Observe,

1. *The blessing of the Lord makes rich*; it is he that gives us power to get wealth and gives success in honest endeavours. Those therefore that would thrive must have an eye to God's blessing, and never to out of it, no, not into the warm sun; and those that have thriven must not sacrifice to their own net, but acknowledge their obligations to God for his blessing.

2. That blessing can make very rich and sometimes makes good people so. Those that become rich by getting think they can easily make themselves very rich by saving; but, as those that have little must depend upon God to make it much, so those that have much must depend upon God to make it more and to double it; else *you have sown much and bring in little*, ^{<3006>}Haggai 1:6.

3. The last days of a good man sometimes prove his best days, his last works his best works, his last comforts his best comforts; for his path, like that of the morning-light, shines more and more to the perfect day. Of a wicked man it is said, *His last state is worse than his first* (^{<0115>}Luke 11:26), but of the upright man, *His end is peace*; and sometimes the nearer it is the clearer are the views of it. In respect of outward prosperity God is pleased sometimes to make the latter end of a good man's life more comfortable than the former part of it has been, and strangely to outdo the expectations of his afflicted people, who thought they should never live to see better days, that we may not despair even in the depths of adversity. We know not what good times we may yet be reserved for in our latter end. *Non, si male nunc, et olim sic erit — It may yet be well with us, though now it is otherwise*. Job, in his affliction, had wished to be *as in months past*, as rich as he had been before, and quite despaired of that; but God is often better to us than our own fears, nay, than our own wishes, for Job's possessions were doubled to him; the number of his cattle, his sheep and camels, his oxen and she-asses, is just double here to what it was, ^{<3006>}Job 1:3. This is a remarkable instance of the extent of the divine providence to things that seem minute, as this of the exact number of a man's cattle, as also of the harmony of providence, and the reference of

one event to another; for *known unto God are all his works, from the beginning to the end*. Job's other possessions, no doubt, were increased in proportion to his cattle, lands, money, servants, etc. So that if, before, he was the greatest of all the men of the east, what was he now?

IV. His family was built up again, and he had great comfort in his children, v. 13-15. The last of his afflictions that are recorded (Job 1), and the most grievous, was the death of all his children at once. His friends upbraided him with it (~~xxxiv~~ Job 8:4), but God repaired even that breach in process of time, either by the same wife, or, she being dead, by another.

1. The number of his children was the same as before, *seven sons and three daughters*. Some give this reason why they were not doubled as his cattle were, because his children that were dead were not lost, but gone before to a better world; and therefore, if he have but the same number of them, they may be reckoned doubled, for he has two fleeces of children (as I may say) *mahanaim* — *two hosts*, one in heaven, the other on earth, and in both he is rich.

2. The names of his daughters are here registered (v. 14), because, in the significations of them, they seemed designed to perpetuate the remembrance of God's great goodness to him in the surprising change of his condition. He called the first *Jemima* — *The day* (whence perhaps *Diana* had her name), because of the shining forth of his prosperity after a dark night of affliction. The next *Kezia*, a spice of a very fragrant smell, because (says bishop Patrick) God had healed his ulcers, the smell of which was offensive. The third *Keren-happuch* (that is *Plenty restored*, or *A horn of paint*), because (says he) God had wiped away the tears which fouled his face, ~~xxxv~~ Job 16:16. Concerning these daughters we are here told,

(1.) That God adorned them with great beauty, *no women so fair as the daughters of Job*, v. 15. In the Old Testament we often find women praised for their beauty, as Sarah, Rebekah, and many others; but we never find any women in the New Testament whose beauty is in the least taken notice of, no, not the virgin Mary herself, because the beauty of holiness is that which is brought to a much clearer light by the gospel.

(2.) That their father (God enabling him to do it) supplied them with great fortunes: *He gave them inheritance among their brethren*, and did not turn them off with small portions, as most did. It is probable that they had some extraordinary personal merit, which Job had an eye to in the extraordinary

favour he showed them. Perhaps they excelled their brethren in wisdom and piety; and therefore, that they might continue in his family, to be a stay and blessing to it, he made them co-heirs with their brethren.

V. His life was long. What age he was when his troubles came we are nowhere told, but here we are told he lived 140 years, whence some conjecture that he was 70 when he was in his troubles, and that so his age was doubled, as his other possessions.

1. He lived to have much of the comfort of this life, for he saw his posterity to the fourth generation, v. 16. Though his children were not doubled to him, yet in his children's children (and those are the crown of old men) they were more than doubled. As God appointed to Adam another seed instead of that which was slain (^{<0025}Genesis 4:25), so he did to Job with advantage. God has ways to repair the losses and balance the griefs of those who are written childless, as Job was when he had buried all his children.

2. He lived till he was satisfied, for he died full of days, satisfied with living in this world, and willing to leave it; not peevishly so, as in the days of his affliction, but piously so, and thus, as Eliphaz had encouraged him to hope, he *came to his grave like a shock of corn in his season.*