

CHAPTER 10

Job owns here that he was full of confusion (v. 15), and as he was so was his discourse: he knew not what to say, and perhaps sometimes scarcely knew what he said. In this chapter,

I. He complains of the hardships he was under (v. 1-7), and then comforts himself with this, that he was in the hand of the God that made him, and pleads that (v. 8-13).

II. He complains again of the severity of God's dealings with him (v. 14-17), and then comforts himself with this, that death would put an end to his troubles (v. 18-22).

~~301~~ JOB 10:1-7

THE REPLY OF JOB

Here is,

I. A passionate resolution to persist in his complaint, v. 1. Being daunted with the dread of God's majesty, so that he could not plead his cause with him, he resolves to give himself some ease by giving vent to his resentments. He begins with vehement language: "*My soul is weary of my life*, weary of this body, and impatient to get clear of it, fallen out with life, and displeased at it, sick of it, and longing for death." Through the weakness of grace he went contrary to the dictates even of nature itself. We should act more like men did we act more like saints. Faith and patience would keep us from being weary of our lives (and *cruel to them*, as some read it), even when Providence has made them most wearisome to us; for that is to be weary of God's correction. Job, being weary of his life and having ease no other way, resolves to complain, resolves to speak. He will not give vent to his soul by violent hands, but he will give vent to the bitterness of his soul by violent words. Losers think they may have leave to speak; and unbridled passions, as well as unbridled appetites, are apt to think it an excuse for their excursions that they cannot help them: but what have we wisdom and grace for, but to keep the mouth as with a bridle? Job's corruption speaks here, yet grace puts in a word.

1. He will complain, but he will *leave his complaint upon himself*. He would not impeach God, nor charge him with unrighteousness or unkindness; but, though he knew not particularly the ground of God's controversy with him and the cause of action, yet, in the general, he would suppose it to be in himself and willingly bear all the blame.

2. He will speak, but it shall be the *bitterness of his soul* that he will express, not his settled judgment. If I speak amiss, it is *not I, but sin that dwells in me*, not my soul, but its bitterness.

II. A humble petition to God. He will speak, but the first word shall be a prayer, and, as I am willing to understand it, it is a good prayer, v. 2.

1. That he might be delivered from the sting of his afflictions, which is sin: "*Do not condemn me; do not separate me for ever from thee. Though I lie under the cross, let me not lie under the curse; though I smart by the rod of a Father, let me not be cut off by the sword of a Judge. Thou dost correct me; I will bear that as well as I can; but O do not condemn me!*" It is the comfort of those who are in Christ Jesus that, though they are in affliction, there is *no condemnation to them*, ~~(111)~~ Romans 8:1. Nay, they are *chastened of the Lord that they may not be condemned with the world*, ~~(112)~~ 1 Corinthians 11:32. This therefore we should deprecate above any thing else, when we are in affliction. "However thou art pleased to deal with me, Lord, do not condemn me; my friends condemn me, but do not thou."

2. That he might be made acquainted with the true cause of his afflictions, and that is sin too: Lord, *show me wherefore thou contendest with me*. When God afflicts us he contends with us, and when he contends with us there is always a reason. He is never angry without a cause, though we are; and it is desirable to know what the reason is, that we may repent of, mortify, and forsake the sin for which God has a controversy with us. In enquiring it out, let conscience have leave to do its office and to deal faithfully with us, as ~~(122)~~ Genesis 42:21.

III. A peevish expostulation with God concerning his dealings with him. Now he speaks in the bitterness of his soul indeed, not without some ill-natured reflections upon the righteousness of his God.

1. He thinks it unbecoming the goodness of God, and the mercifulness of his nature, to deal so hardly with his creature as to lay upon him more than

he can bear (v. 3): *Is it good unto thee that thou shouldst oppress?* No, certainly it is not; what he approves no in men (~~288~~Lamentations 3:34-36) he will not do himself. “Lord, in dealing with me, thou seemest to oppress thy subject, to despise thy workmanship, and to countenance thy enemies. Now, Lord, what is the meaning of this? Such is thy nature that this cannot be a pleasure to thee; and such is thy name that it cannot be an honour to thee. Why then dealest thou thus with me? *What profit is there in my blood?*” Far be it from Job to think that God did him wrong, but he is quite at a loss how to reconcile his providences with his justice, as good men have often been, and must wait until the day shall declare it. Let us therefore now harbour no hard thoughts of God, because we shall then see there was no cause for them.

2. He thinks it unbecoming the infinite knowledge of God to put his prisoner thus upon the rack, as it were, by torture, to extort a confession from him, v. 4-6.

(1.) He is sure that God does not discover things, nor judge of them, as men do: He has not *eyes of flesh* (v. 4), for he is a Spirit. Eyes of flesh cannot see in the dark, but darkness hides not from God. Eyes of flesh are but in one place at a time, and can see but a little way; but the *eyes of the Lord are in every place, and run to and fro through the whole earth*. Many things are hidden from eyes of flesh, the most curious and piercing; *there is a path which even the vulture's eye has not seen*: but nothing is, or can be, hidden from the eye of God, to which all things are naked and open. Eyes of flesh see the outward appearance only, and may be imposed upon by a *deceptio visus* — *an illusion of the senses*; but God sees every thing truly. His sight cannot be deceived, for he tries the heart, and is a witness to the thoughts and intents of that. Eyes of flesh discover things gradually, and, when we gain the sight of one thing, we lose the sight of another; but God sees every thing at one view. Eyes of flesh are soon tired, must be closed every night but the keeper of Israel neither slumbers nor sleeps, nor does his sight ever decay. *God sees not as man sees*, that is, he does not judge as man judges, at the best *secundum allegata et probata* — *according to what is alleged and proved*, as the thing appears rather than as it is, and too often according to the bias of the affections, passions, prejudices, and interest; *but we are sure that the judgment of God is according to truth*, and that he knows truth, not by information, but by his own inspection. Men discover secret things by search, and examination of witnesses, comparing evidence and giving conjectures upon it, wheedling

or forcing the parties concerned to confess; but God needs not any of these ways of discovery: *he sees not as man sees*.

(2.) He is sure that as God is not short-sighted, like man, so he is not short-lived (v. 5): “*Are thy days as the days of man, few and evil? Do they roll on in succession, or are they subject to change, like the days of man? No, by no means.*” Men grow wiser by experience and more knowing by daily observation; with them truth is the daughter of time, and therefore they must take time for their searches, and, if one experiment fail, must try another. But it is not so with God; to him nothing is past, nothing future, but every thing present. The days of time, by which the life of man is measured, are nothing to the years of eternity, in which the life of God is wrapped up.

(3.) He therefore thinks it strange that God should thus prolong his torture, and continue him under the confinement of this affliction, and neither bring him to a trial nor grant him a release, as if he must take time to *enquire after his iniquity* and use means to *search after his sin*, v. 6. Not as if Job thought that God did thus torment him that he might find occasion against him; but his dealings with him had such an aspect, which was dishonourable to God, and would tempt men to think him a hard master. “Now, Lord, if thou wilt not consult my comfort, consult thy own honour; do something *for thy great name*, and *do not disgrace the throne of thy glory*,” ^{<24:21>}Jeremiah 14:21.

3. He thinks it looked like an abuse of his omnipotence to keep a poor prisoner in custody, whom he knew to be innocent, only because there was none that could deliver him out of his hand (v. 7): *Thou knowest that I am not wicked*. He had already owned himself a sinner, and guilty before God; but he here stands to it that he was not wicked, not devoted to sin, not an enemy to God, not a dissembler in his religion, that *he had not wickedly departed from his God*, ^{<18:21>}Psalm 18:21. “*But there is none that can deliver out of thy hand*, and therefore there is no remedy; I must be content to lie there, waiting thy time, and throwing myself on thy mercy, in submission to thy sovereign will.” Here see,

(1.) What ought to quiet us under our troubles — that it is to no purpose to contend with Omnipotence.

(2.) What will abundantly comfort us — if we are able to appeal to God, as Job here, “Lord, *thou knowest that I am not wicked*. I cannot say that I

am not wanting, or I am not weak; but, through grace, I can say, *I am not wicked: thou knowest I am not, for thou knowest I love thee.*”

~~1008~~ JOB 10:8-13

THE REPLY OF JOB

In these verses we may observe,

I. How Job eyes God as his Creator and preserver, and describes his dependence upon him as the author and upholder of his being. This is one of the first things we are all concerned to know and consider.

1. That God made us, he, and not our parents, who were only the instruments of his power and providence in our production. *He made us, and not we ourselves. His hands have made and fashioned* these bodies of ours and every part of them (v. 8), and they are *fearfully and wonderfully made*. The soul also, which animates the body, is his gift. Job takes notice of both here.

(1.) The body is *made as the clay* (v. 9), cast into shape, into this shape, as the clay is formed into a vessel, according to the skill and will of the potter. We are earthen vessels, mean in our original, and soon broken in pieces, *made as the clay. Let not therefore the thing formed say unto him that formed it, Why hast thou made me thus?* We must not be proud of our bodies, because the matter is from the earth, yet not dishonour our bodies, because the mould and shape are from the divine wisdom. The formation of human bodies in the womb is described by an elegant similitude (v. 10, *Thou hast poured me out like milk, which is coagulated into cheese*), and by an induction of some particulars, v. 11. Though we come into the world naked, yet the body is itself both clothed and armed. The skin and flesh are its clothing; the bones and sinews are its armour, not offensive, but defensive. The vital parts, the heart and lungs, are thus clothed, not to be seen — thus fenced, not to be hurt. The admirable structure of human bodies is an illustrious instance of the wisdom, power, and goodness of the Creator. What a pity is it that these bodies should be instruments of unrighteousness which are capable of being temples of the Holy Ghost!

(2.) The soul is the life, the soul is the man, and this is the gift of God: *Thou hast granted me life*, breathed into me the breath of life, without which the body would be but a worthless carcase. God is the Father of spirits: he made us living souls, and endued us with the power of reason; he gave us *life and favour*, and life is a favour — a great favour, more than meat, more than raiment — a distinguishing favour, a favour that puts us into a capacity of receiving other favours. Now Job was in a better mind than he was when he quarrelled with life as a burden, and asked, *Why died I not from the womb?* Or by life and favour may be meant life and all the comforts of life, referring to his former prosperity. Time was when he walked in the light of the divine favour, and thought, as David, that through that favour his mountain stood strong.

2. That God maintains us. Having lighted the lamp of life, he does not leave it to burn upon its own stock, but continually supplies it with fresh oil: *“Thy visitation has preserved my spirit*, kept me alive, protected me from the adversaries of life, the death we are in the midst of and the dangers we are continually exposed to, and blessed me with all the necessary supports of life and the daily supplies it needs and craves.”

II. How he pleads this with God, and what use he makes of it. He reminds God of it (v. 9): *Remember, I beseech thee, that thou hast made me*. What then? Why,

1. “Thou hast made me, and therefore thou hast a perfect knowledge of me (^{<400>}Psalm 139:1-13), and needest not to examine me by scourging, nor to put me upon the rack for the discovery of what is within me.”

2. “Thou hast made me, as the clay, by an act of sovereignty; and wilt thou by a like act of sovereignty unmake me again? If so, I must submit.”

3. “Wilt thou destroy the work of thy own hands?” It is a plea the saints have often used in prayer, *We are the clay and thou our potter*, ^{<260>}Isaiah 64:8. *Thy hands have made me and fashioned me*, ^{<400>}Psalm 119:73. So here, *Thou madest me*; and wilt thou destroy me (v. 8), *wilt thou bring me into dust again?* v. 9. “Wilt thou not pity me? Wilt thou not spare and help me, and stand by *the work of thy own hands?* ^{<400>}Psalm 138:8. Thou madest me, and knowest my strength; wilt thou then suffer me to be pressed above measure? Was I made to be made miserable? Was I preserved only to be reserved for these calamities?” If we plead this with ourselves as an inducement to duty, “God made me and maintains me, and

therefore I will serve him and submit to him,” we may plead it with God as an argument for mercy: *Thou hast made me, new-make me; I am thine, save me.* Job knew not how to reconcile God's former favours and his present frowns, but concludes (v. 13), “*These things hast thou hidden in thy heart.* Both are according to the counsel of thy own will, and therefore undoubtedly consistent, however they seem.” When God thus strangely changes his way, though we cannot account for it, we are bound to believe there are good reasons for it hidden in his heart, which will be manifested shortly. It is not with us, or in our reach, to assign the cause, but I *know that this is with thee.* Known unto God are all his works.

⌂ JOB 10:14-22

THE REPLY OF JOB

Here we have,

I. Job's passionate complaints. On this harsh and unpleasant string he harps much, in which, though he cannot be justified, he may be excused. He complained not for nothing, as the murmuring Israelites, but had cause to complain. If we think it looks ill in him, let it be a warning to us to keep our temper better.

1. He complains of the strictness of God's judgment and the rigour of his proceedings against him, and is ready to call it *summum jus — justice bordering on severity.*

(1.) That he took all advantages against him: “*If I sin, then thou markest me,* v. 14.(1.) If I do but take one false step, misplace a word, or cast a look awry, I shall be sure to hear of it. Conscience, thy deputy, will be sure to upbraid me with it, and to tell me that this gripe, this twitch of pain, is to punish me for that.” If God should thus mark iniquities, we should be undone; but we must acknowledge the contrary, that, though we sin, God does not deal in extremity with us.

(2.) That he prosecuted those advantages to the utmost: *Thou wilt not acquit me from my iniquity.* While his troubles he could not take the comfort of his pardon, nor hear that voice of joy and gladness; so hard is it

to see love in God's heart when we see frowns in his face and a rod in his hand.

(3.) That, whatever was his character, his case at present was very uncomfortable, v. 15.

[1.] If he be wicked, he is certainly undone in the other world: *If I be wicked, woe to me.* Note, A sinful state is a woeful state. This we should each of us believe, as Job here, with application to ourselves: “*If I be wicked, though prosperous and living in pleasure, yet woe to me.*” Some especially have reason to dread double woes if they be wicked. “I that have knowledge, that have made a great profession of religion, that have been so often under strong convictions, and have made so many fair promises — I that was born of such good parents, blessed with a good education, that have lived in good families, and long enjoyed the means of grace — *if I be wicked, woe, and a thousand woes, to me.*”

[2.] If he be *righteous*, yet he dares not *lift up his head*, dares not answer as before, ^{<805>}Job 9:15. He is so oppressed and overwhelmed with his troubles that he cannot look up with any comfort or confidence. Without were fightings, within were fears; so that, between both, he was full of confusion, not only confusion of face for the disgrace he was brought down to and the censures of his friends, but confusion of spirit; his mind was in a constant hurry, and he was almost distracted, ^{<885>}Psalm 88:15.

2. He complains of the severity of the execution. God (he thought) did not only punish him for every failure, but punish him in a high degree, v. 16, 17. His affliction was,

(1.) Grievous, very grievous, marvellous, exceedingly marvellous. God *hunted him* as a lion, *as a fierce lion* hunts and runs down his prey. God was not only strange to him, but *showed himself marvellous upon him*, by bringing him into uncommon troubles and so making him prodigy, a wonder unto many. All wondered that God would inflict and that Job could bear so much. That which made his afflictions most grievous was that he felt God's *indignation* in them; it was this that made them taste so bitter and lie so heavy. They were God's *witnesses* against him, tokens of his displeasure; this made the sores of his body wounds in his spirit.

(2.) It was growing, still growing worse and worse. This he insists much upon; when he hoped the tide would turn, and begin to ebb, still it flowed

higher and higher. His affliction increased, and God's indignation in the affliction. He found himself no better, no way better. These witnesses were renewed against him, that, if one did not reach to convict him, another might. *Changes and war* were against him. If there was any change with him, it was not for the better; still he was kept in a state of war. As long as we are here in this world we must expect that the clouds will return after the rain, and perhaps the sorest and sharpest trials may be reserved for the last. God was at war with him, and it was a great change. He did not use to be so, which aggravated the trouble and made it truly marvellous. God usually shows himself kind to his people; if at any time he shows himself otherwise, it is *his strange work, his strange act*, and he does in it show himself marvellous.

3. He complains of his life, and that ever he was born to all this trouble and misery (v. 18, 19): "If this was designed for my lot, *why was I brought out of the womb*, and not smothered there, or stifled in the birth?" This was the language of his passion, and it was a relapse into the same sin he fell into before. He had just now called life a *favour* (v. 12), yet now he calls it a *burden*, and quarrels with God for giving it, or rather laying it upon him. Mr. Caryl gives this a good turn in favour of Job. "We may charitably suppose," says he, "that what troubled Job was that he was in a condition of life which (as he conceived) hindered the main end of his life, which was the glorifying of God. His harp was hung on the willow-tress, and he was quite out of tun for praising God. Nay, he feared lest his troubles should reflect dishonour upon God and give occasion to his enemies to blaspheme; and therefore he wishes, *O that I had given up the ghost!* A godly man reckons that he lives to no purpose if he do not live to the praise and glory of God." If that was his meaning, it was grounded on a mistake; for we may *glorify the Lord in the fires*. But this use we may make of it, not to be over-fond of life, since the case has been such sometimes, even with wise and good men, that they have complained of it. Why should we dread giving up the ghost, or covet to be seen of men, since the time may come when we may be ready to wish we had given up the ghost and no eye had seen us? Why should we inordinately lament the death of our children in their infancy, that *are as if they had not been*, and are *carried from the womb to the grave*, when perhaps we ourselves may sometimes wish it had been our own lot?

II. Job's humble requests. He prays, 1. That God would *see his affliction* (v. 15), take cognizance of his case, and take it into his compassionate

consideration. Thus David prays (^{<1258>}Psalm 25:18), *Look upon my affliction and my pain*. Thus we should, in our troubles, refer ourselves to God, and may comfort ourselves with this, that he knows our souls in adversity.

2. That God would grant him some ease. If he could not prevail for the removal of his trouble, yet might he not have some intermission? “Lord, let me not be always upon the rack, always in extremity: *O let me alone, that I may take comfort a little!* v. 20. Grant me some respite, some breathing-time, some little enjoyment of myself.” This he would reckon a great favour. Those that are not duly thankful for constant ease should think how welcome one hour's ease would be if they were in constant pain. Two things he pleads: —

(1.) That life and its light were very short: “*Are not my days few?* v. 20. Yes, certainly they are, very few. Lord, let them not be all miserable, all in the extremity of misery. I have but a little time to live; let me have some comfort of life while it does last.” This plea fastens on the goodness of God's nature, the consideration of which is very comfortable to an afflicted spirit. And, if we would use this as a plea with God for mercy (“*Are not my days few?* Lord, pity me”), we should use it as a plea with ourselves, to quicken us to duty: “*Are not my days few?* Then it concerns me to redeem time, to improve opportunities, what my hand finds to do to do it with all my might, that I may be ready for the days of eternity, which shall be many.”

(2.) That death and its darkness were very near and would be very long (v. 21, 22): “Lord, give me some ease before I die,” that is, “lest I die of my pain.” Thus David pleads (^{<1373>}Psalm 13:3), “*Lest I sleep the sleep of death,* and then it will be too late to expect relief; for *wilt thou show wonders to the dead?*” ^{<1380>}Psalm 88:10. “Let me have a little comfort before I die, that I may take leave of this world calmly, and not in such confusion as I am now in.” Thus earnest should we be for grace, and thus we should plead, “Lord, renew me in the inward man; Lord, sanctify me before I die, for otherwise it will never be done.” See how he speaks here of the state of the dead.

[1.] It is a fixed state, whence we shall not return ever again to live such a life as we now live, ^{<1370>}Job 7:10. At death we must bid a final farewell to this world. The body must then be laid where it will lie long, and the soul

adjudged to that state in which it must be for ever. That had need be well done which is to be done but once, and done for eternity.

[2.] It is a very melancholy state; so it appears to us. Holy souls, at death, remove to a land of light, where there is no death; but their bodies they leave to a *land of darkness and the shadow of death*. He heaps up expressions here of the same import to show that he has as dreadful apprehensions of death and the grave as other men naturally have, so that it was only the extreme misery he was in that made him wish for it. Come and let us look a little into the grave, and we shall find, *First*, That there is no order there: it is *without any order*, perpetual night, and no succession of day. All there lie on the same level, and there is no distinction between prince and peasant, but *the servant is there free from his master*, ~~Job~~ Job 3:19. No order is observed in bringing people to the grave, not the eldest first, not the richest, not the poorest, and yet every one in his own order, the order appointed by the God of life. *Secondly*, That there is no light there. In the grave there is thick darkness, darkness that cannot be felt indeed, yet cannot but be feared by those that enjoy the light of life. In the grave there is no knowledge, no comfort, no joy, no praising God, no working out our salvation, and therefore no light. Job was so much ashamed that others should see his sores, and so much afraid to see them himself, that the darkness of the grave, which would hide them and huddle them up, would upon that account be welcome to him. Darkness comes upon us; and therefore let us walk and work while we have the light with us. The grave being a land of darkness, it is well we are carried thither with our eyes closed, and then it is all one. The grave is a land of darkness to man; our friends that have gone thither we reckon removed into darkness, ~~Psalm~~ Psalm 88:18. But that it is not so to God will appear by this, that the dust of the bodies of the saints, though scattered, though mingled with other dust, will none of it be lost, for God's eye is upon every grain of it and it shall be forth-coming in the great day.