

CHAPTER XLII.

Verse 7 to end.—The question between Job and his friends is now decided, and with that decision all the unjust accusations against him are shown to be untrue. Job is what the Divine voice had declared him to be before the great trial of his faith, "My servant, one that feareth God, and escheweth evil." The Accuser is silenced and discomfited. Job's patience has endured to the end, for he has never renounced his faith in God, even in thought. Job is also raised to be an intercessor for his erring friends, and it is said emphatically, that it was at the time of that intercession, which implied Job's entire forgiveness of all their hard and bitter speeches against him, that the Lord turned all his sorrows into joy. Having been thoroughly humbled for his own transgressions, like a true penitent, he knows how to pity and to forgive. It is remarkable that Eliphaz, Bildad and Zophar are unconscious prophets of the happiness and prosperity they lived to see Job possess, affording the most complete vindication of his integrity. Eliphaz says—

"Thou shalt come in full age to the grave,
As a shock of corn cometh up in its season."

Bildad—

"Thy latter end shall greatly increase."

Zophar—

"Thou shalt forget thy misery,
And remember it as waters that pass away."
"A life brighter than noonday shall arise,
Thick darkness shall be as the morning."

Contrary to their expectation, all this was signally fulfilled. Looking then on Job as selected to be a representative of the sufferings of the children of God, though not of their prosperity in this life, we see the vast importance of the book to the Church in the early ages of its passage through a world in which so many mysteries, so many problems of exceeding interest are left unsolved. Job, suddenly bereaved of his children, and deprived of his possessions, tormented by Satan, tempted by his wife, rejected by his kinsmen, insulted by his neighbours, falsely accused by his friends, and (as it seemed at first) forsaken by God in whom he trusted, but at last vindicated, restored and