

THE CHRISTIAN'S REASONABLE SERVICE

in which Divine Truths concerning the

COVENANT OF GRACE

are Expounded, Defended against Opposing Parties,
and their Practice Advocated

as well as

**The Administration of this Covenant in the
Old and New Testaments**

by

WILHELMUS à BRAKEL, Th.F.
Minister of the Gospel in Rotterdam

Volume One

Translated by Bartel Elshout

Edited by Joel R. Beeke

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ΛΟΓΙΚΗ ΛΑΤΡΕΙΑ,
DAT IS
REDELIJKE GODSDIENST

IN WELKEN DE GODDELIJKE WAARHEDEN VAN HET
GENADE-VERBOND
WORDEN VERKLAARD, TEGEN PARTIJEN BESCHERMD EN TOT
BEOEFENING AANGEDRONGEN,
ALSMEDE
DE BEDEELING DES VERBONDS IN HET O. EN N. T.
EN
DE ONTMOETING DER KERK IN HET N. T.
VERTOOND IN EENE VERKLARING VAN DE
OPENBARINGEN VAN JOHANNES

DOOR
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IN LEVEN BEDIENAAR DES GODDELIJKEN WOORDS TE ROTTERDAM.

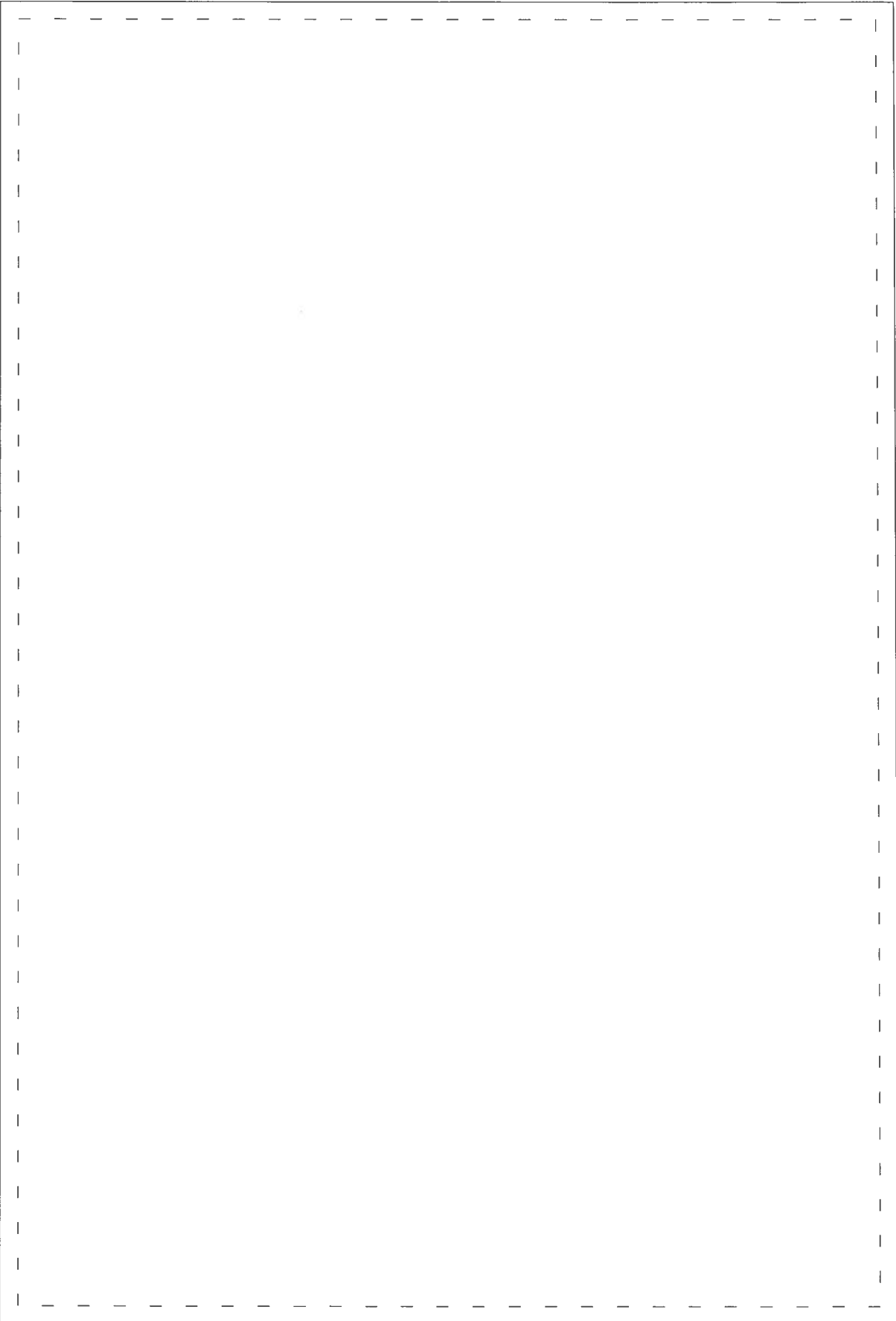
IN DE TEGENWOORDIGE SPELLING,
ONVERANDERD NAAR DE BESTE UITGAVE.

DERDE DRUK
EERSTE DEEL.



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CHAPTER SIXTY-SIX

Patience

Contentment and self-denial engender patience, which in Greek is ὑπομονή (hupomone). It is a compound consisting of ὑπό (hupo) — which occasionally means through, sometimes under, and sometimes over — and μένω (meno), which means to remain. The combination yields ὑπομένω (hupomeno; that is, to remain, to remain steadfast, to persevere), and also ὑπομονή (hupomone) or patience. It means as much as: to overcome suffering, to remain the same during suffering, to move beyond suffering, and to remain steadfast. In our language it is a derivative of patient, which in turn is a derivative of the Latin verb pati, to suffer. Patience is thus the ability to endure suffering.

Patience is the believer's spiritual strength which he has in God whereby he, in the performance of his duty, willingly, with composure, joyfully, and steadfastly endures all the vicissitudes of life, having a hope that the outcome will be well.

Patience is to be strong in God. Spiritual valor or strength which we discussed in chapter 62 consists of the following: 1) a trusting in God's help, whereby one courageously undertakes his duty; 2) steadfastness, whereby one continues and perseveres in his duty; 3) patience, whereby one repels all that comes against this duty, so that it is no impediment. Patience is thus a type of strength or valor. Valor is a courageous disposition whereby the believer perceives the vicissitudes of life as being capable of hindering him. He not only understands the necessity of conquering them, but also of bringing glory to his Lord. As a champion he thus overcomes these circumstances. The patient person derives such strength from God. Spiritual life is feeble, the body is tender and readily suffers if not well, the flesh is evil and would readily

succumb under discomfoting events. However, the patient person takes hold of the strength of the Lord, and in this strength proceeds. "Blessed is the man whose strength is in Thee" (Psa. 84:5); "Through God we shall do valiantly" (Psa. 60:12). The exercise of patience is a task of great magnitude. It is valiant to endure affliction well, to take hold of God's strength, and to be engaged by reason of this strength. It brings matters to a glorious end.

The subject — that is, the seat of this virtue — *is the soul of the believer*. The unconverted are entirely incapable of being patient. They do indeed also endure affliction — yes, they encounter severe trials. Some who are motivated either by glory, or by the unavoidability of the circumstances can endure them manfully, doing so without any display of fear, anxiety, or pain. They cannot be patient, however, since they do not have a divine duty in view, desiring to uphold this duty and to perform it well. They do not derive their help from God through Christ, and they have no hope that the outcome will be well, for there are no promises for them. Therefore even though they steel themselves in their affliction, they are not patient. However, patience is the ornament of a Christian. A believer views himself as being reconciled with God, and considers all affliction to come to him from God in order to promote his welfare. He has promises that the outcome will be glorious and therefore only believers exercise patience. "Here is the patience of the saints" (Rev. 14:12). In order to demonstrate that no one can be patient except he be a believer, faith and patience are frequently conjoined (cf. Titus 2:2; 2 Tim. 3:10; 2 Th. 1:4). Patience most particularly resides in the soul. This virtue neither consists in a boasting with the mouth, nor in a restraint of one's gestures, but is of an internal nature which in turn manifests itself externally. It is through the custom, not so much of suffering, but of continually exercising herself to possess this virtue, that the soul will acquire a patient disposition and propensity; the soul will then be patient. "In your patience possess ye your souls" (Luke 21:19). An impatient person does not have control over his heart; it is of no use to him. However, a patient person has his heart under control and makes use of it as such, permitting no inordinate thoughts and motions to be entertained in the heart relative to affliction.

The object of patience is *all the vicissitudes of life*, that is, all manner of affliction. The tribulations, both bodily and spiritual, of the righteous are many — those that come upon them without human intervention, as well as those that come their way by means of men — be it during a peaceful time for the church or during time of persecution for the Word's sake. Some tribulations are light, some

are more severe, others are dreadful, and there can even be a cruel death. They are all grievous to man and are capable of both assaulting faith and tossing it to and fro — and if it were possible, to drive out hope, love, and other virtues, as well as their manifestations. Patience opposes this, doing so not to be delivered from affliction (for that would be in vain), but in order to endure it. The patient believer will not allow himself to be deterred from his virtuous intentions and their manifestations. He will neither permit himself to exercise these virtues in a lesser degree of holiness nor with less boldness. Thus, the soul perseveres in her affliction and continues to endure her affliction; yes, she prevails that much more strenuously and derives strength from her weakness. In view of this, patience is called “the enduring of the same sufferings” (2 Cor. 1:6). This is neither to suggest that one finds delight in affliction, nor that a person may and must not pray for deliverance; rather, he must suffer in subjection to the will of God.

The Essence or Nature of Patience

The essence or nature of patience consists in the enduring of affliction willingly, with composure, joyfully, and steadfastly.

(1) *We endure* affliction if we take the cross upon ourselves as being laid upon us by the Lord (Mat. 16:24), follow Jesus with that cross, and perform our duty as between God and the soul only, as well as toward our neighbor. With that cross one proceeds — even if it were from Jerusalem to Golgotha — in order to die. Irrespective of whether it is a wooden, iron, or leaden cross, believers do not wish to exchange it. They desire to have it, for it suits them best, and they thus carry it to heaven.

(2) It is a *willing* enduring of affliction. Affliction is certainly contrary to natural desire and it can oppress the soul and body to such an extent that tears will burst forth from our eyes. Nevertheless, such endurance is not forced; it is not of a compulsory nature. Rather, patience embraces this and is willing because the Lord wills it. The Lord’s will is the soul’s will — irrespective of whether this is Mt. Tabor or Golgotha. God’s will is God’s will, and this renders everything welcome and delightful. “... the spirit indeed is willing” (Mat. 26:41); “The cup which My Father hath given Me, shall I not drink it?” (John 18:11).

(3) It is exercised with *composure or a quietness of spirit*. Patience precludes murmuring, discouragement — and if our affliction is inflicted by men, it also precludes wrath and vengefulness. It does not trouble the soul as a storm would do to a sea, but the soul permits the waves and billows to go over her. Such a soul is as a smooth beach upon

which the waves, so to speak, playfully run dead; or she is as a rock which remains immovable and breaks up the sea as it bears down upon it. David endured all manner of affliction in this manner. "Truly my soul waiteth upon God" (Psa. 62:1). The church is exhorted to conduct herself as such. "It is good for a man that he bear the yoke in his youth. He sitteth alone and keepeth silence, because He hath borne it upon him. He putteth his mouth in the dust" (Lam. 3:27-29).

(4) Yes, not only does the patient soul maintain composure, but she even *rejoices* in affliction, be it that she already enjoys the blessed fruit of this, receives many comforts from the Lord, or suffers for the sake of godliness and for the name of the Lord. This was the wish expressed by the apostle toward the Colossians; namely, that they would be "strengthened with all might... unto all patience and longsuffering with joyfulness" (Col. 1:11). Concerning the Thessalonians he says: You have "received the word in much affliction, with joy of the Holy Ghost" (1 Th. 1:6), and concerning himself he says: "I am exceeding joyful in all our tribulation" (2 Cor. 7:4).

(5) The patient person endures affliction *with steadfastness*. One can have much courage prior to affliction being inflicted, and courageously accept it. If, however, we experience the reality of affliction, and it seems to last quite long, one would desire to cast away this troublesome burden and avoid it—even if would have to sin in doing so. And if we cannot rid ourselves of it, everything is turned upside down within and without, and impatience with all its consequences gets the upper hand. However, patience does not impose limits upon the Lord as to what the measure ought to be, or how long it ought to last. The patient believer is satisfied with the goodness and wisdom of the Lord. He proposes to himself that it may be all his life, for so precious is salvation to him. If deliverance comes earlier than that, he rejoices, and if not, it is also well. He thus endures in patience until his affliction comes to an end. "But let patience have her perfect work" (James 1:4). This is neither to suggest that patience itself is perfect in the godly, nor that it renders something perfect. Rather, one designates something perfect (or complete¹) to which the finishing touches have been applied, even though someone else could have performed this task in a far more excellent manner. In like manner, patience adds the finishing touches to our affliction; that is, it lasts as long as the affliction lasts and will not separate itself

¹ The Dutch word "volmaakt" can be rendered both as "perfect" and "complete" in English.

from affliction prior to that. Such is the exhortation to the congregation of Smyrna: "Be thou faithful unto death" (Rev. 2:10).

(6) Patience endures affliction with *a hope of a good outcome*. In this instance the proverb is true: *Hope is the comfort of affliction*. Patience cannot exist without hope. When there is no longer hope, patience will no longer be exercised. There is no patience in hell due to the absence of hope. Hope supports patience. "But if we hope for that we see not, then do we with patience wait for it" (Rom. 8:25). We err when we define our hope in a good outcome too narrowly, that is, within a certain time frame and by reason of such circumstances. This frequently miscarries, since the Lord's ways are not our ways. The patient person therefore holds to the promises of God in an unrestricted sense; namely, that the Lord will not suffer us to be tempted above that we are able; but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that we may be able to bear it (1 Cor. 10:13); that affliction will bring forth the peaceable fruits of righteousness (Heb. 12:11); that it will be to our advantage in order that we may become partakers of His holiness (Heb. 12:10); that the crown of life will be awarded in consequence of this (Rev. 2:10); and that upon much affliction a greater measure of glory ensues (Rev. 7:14). The patient person hopes upon these promises and anticipates their fulfillment. Jesus is his example in this, "who for the joy that was set before Him endured the cross" (Heb. 12:2). The apostle therefore calls patience the "patience² of hope" (1 Th. 1:3).

The cause of patience is not to be found in man himself. A natural man may clench his teeth, control himself, remain silent, suppress all emotions, and, control himself by way of reason — all this in order to reap the glory of being steadfast. However, he will not be able to make himself patient. Also a godly person will not be able to bring this about in his own strength. The Lord must work it in him and He is therefore called "the God of patience" (Rom. 15:5). The Lord grants the godly faith and gives them a lively view that He inflicts this affliction upon them with His fatherly hand. He secretly sustains them by strengthening the inner man. In their affliction He comforts them much according to the soul and permits them to taste His grace. He causes them to perceive the lightness, advantage, and transitory nature of affliction. He shows them how advantageous and glorious the outcome

² The word "patience" in this text is rendered as "endurance" in the Statenvertaling. There is thus an obvious verbal relationship in the Statenvertaling between Hebrews 12:2 and 1 Thessalonians 1:3.

will be. This causes them to be quiet and encouraged. They are then willing to suffer, and tribulation will then work patience, and that experience and hope which maketh not ashamed.

The purpose and result of patience is that believers may execute their duty well. The patient person does not end in his affliction, his suitable disposition, in enduring his affliction well, and in the manifestation of a patient disposition. He has something much higher in view. He possesses his soul in patience in order not to be hindered in his performance, but rather to be more capable of carrying out his task. He does so by his own personal godly exercises, by letting his light shine forth, by manifesting a godly walk among men, by being an example to others, by leading others to Christ, and by boldly confessing Him. That is his objective, and that he seeks. He perceives that affliction would hinder him in this if he were not to behave himself well. He furthermore perceives that in behaving well, his affliction will be to his advantage in pursuing his objective. He therefore strives for patience. Consequently, taking up the cross and following Christ are conjoined: "If any man will come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow Me" (Mat. 16:24). This is also true for patience and running the race: "Let us run with patience the race that is set before us" (Heb. 12:1). Patience and other virtues are likewise conjoined: "And the Lord direct your hearts into the love of God, and into the patient waiting for Christ" (2 Th. 3:5); "Add to your faith virtue; and to virtue knowledge; and to knowledge temperance; and to temperance patience; and to patience godliness; and to godliness brotherly kindness; and to brotherly kindness charity" (2 Pet. 1:5-7).

The Conviction of the Unconverted

This truth as presented to you is sufficient to convince the unconverted that they are void of this virtue. Whether they are entirely insensitive, or have a gentle disposition, or are able to endure a sickness well, or do so either by bearing up under it by way of reason while perceiving that they cannot be relieved from affliction anyhow and thus exercise patience, or in order to get glory from steeling themselves and being strong — all of this does not constitute patience. From that which has been said they will be able to perceive that their patience is not spiritual strength in God, as being their God in Christ, and that their patience does not issue forth from faith in Christ nor from their union with Him. They will perceive that they do not endure affliction willingly, with composure, joyfully, steadfastly, as having a hope for a good outcome, to

make them holier, and to lead them to felicity. The reason for this is that they have no basis for appropriating a single promise to themselves. They will perceive that they do not desire patience in order to be more fit to exercise all manner of virtues. Even if some have the appearance of being patient, they are, nevertheless, generally irritable and fretful. They become more wicked and ungodly, and their wrath is expressed toward God Himself; they are as ungodly Israel in the wilderness. At one time they had no bread, then no meat, and then again no water — and they would therefore immediately murmur, depart from God, insist on returning to Egypt, and even blaspheme God. When God chastises such, they will revolt more and more (Isa. 1:5). If God does not help, they say, “Behold, this evil is of the LORD; what should I wait for the LORD any longer?” (2 Ki. 6:33). They wish to be delivered from their affliction at any cost: *Flectere si nequeo superos, Acheronta movebol;* that is, *If God does not want to help me, I shall ask for the help of the devil.* Thus, they proceed from wickedness to wickedness until they have brought themselves into hell where patience does not exist.

The Impatience of the Godly

Having had the nature of patience presented to them, the godly will be able to observe on the one hand that they possess this virtue in principle; however, they will also observe on the other hand how much impatience is still to be found within them. When a spiritual cross comes upon them, when it becomes dark, when God hides His countenance and withholds His comforting influences, when He appears to neither hear their prayers nor immediately to grant the desires of their soul, then they are at once discouraged, unbelieving, and irritable. When they are surrounded by all manner of bodily afflictions, and their afflictions are of long duration and of an excessive nature, then where is their patience?

Then, with Jonah, they are peevish (Jonah 4:8), and are as discouraged as Israel was, saying, “The LORD hath forsaken me, and my Lord hath forgotten me” (Isa. 49:14). They immediately despair and think, “There is no hope” (Jer. 2:25); “My strength and my hope is perished from the LORD” (Lam. 3:18). If their affliction lasts long and is excessive, their faith falters and they think that all this comes upon them in wrath. Thus, they complain, “Will the Lord cast off for ever? and will He be favorable no more? Is His mercy clean gone for ever? doth His promise fail for evermore? Hath God forgotten to be gracious? hath He in anger shut up His tender mercies?” (Psa. 77:7-9).

They stumble in regard to God’s providence (Prov. 30:9) and

accuse the Lord of hardness, saying, "Thou art become cruel to me: with Thy strong hand Thou opposest Thyself against me" (Job 30:21). Then they will question whether the Lord's dealings are right, would demand an account of Him as to why He deals thus with them, and *contend with the Almighty* (Job 40:2). At times despair surfaces, so that the soul chooses strangling and death above life (Job 7:15). "Oh that I might have my request; and that God would grant me the thing that I long for! Even that it would please God to destroy me; that He would let loose His hand, and cut me off! What is my strength, that I should hope? and what is mine end, that I should prolong my life?" (Job 6:8-9, 11).

Seeing the prosperity of the wicked, resentment arises in the heart, and they say, "Behold, these are the ungodly, who prosper in the world; they increase in riches. For all the day long have I been plagued, and chastened every morning" (Psa. 73:12-14). When they observe that many of the godly prosper in the world, they are envious and think, "Why do I not fare as they do?" If their cross is inflicted upon them by man, they become angry, vengefulness surfaces, and, as a dog, they bite the stone being cast at them.

At times God's children, to their shame and grief, become conscious of such turbulence; and, they rightfully ought to be ashamed and grieved, for:

(1) While being impatient, many sins merge together. An impatient person is a breeding ground for all manner of corruptions which grievously pollute the soul. There is unbelief toward God's promises, lovelessness and stubbornness toward God's will, pride (as if they were superior), envy and vengefulness toward their neighbor, and a holding in esteem the things of this world.

(2) They render themselves unfit to serve the Lord and to edify their neighbor. They offend those that are weak, and cause the world to mock with godliness.

(3) They bring heavier judgments upon themselves, for the Lord will prevail when He executes judgment. They are the cause that their affliction is of longer duration, is more severe, and does not yield the benefit it otherwise would.

(4) They themselves remain restless and anxious due to seeing their sins continually, and not being able to shake off the cross. "Who hath hardened himself against Him, and hath prospered?" (Job 9:4). Therefore refrain from impatience, and rather "humble yourselves under the mighty hand of God, that He may exalt you in due time" (1 Pet. 5:6); "Despise not the chastening of the LORD; neither be weary of His correction" (Prov. 3:11).

Believers Exhorted to Be Patient

Believers, possess therefore your souls in patience. Give heed to the following motives in order that you may be stirred up to that end.

First, it is your desire to obey the Lord, is it not? How frequently have you not offered yourself to the Lord, saying, "Lord, what wilt Thou have me to do?" The Lord, however, commands you to be patient, and therefore listen to this exhortation as coming from the very mouth of the Lord. The Lord Jesus says to you, "In your patience possess ye your souls" (Luke 21:19); and the apostle says, "(Be)...patient in tribulation" (Rom. 12:12); "Let us run with patience the race that is set before us" (Heb. 12:1); "But let patience have her perfect work" (James 1:4).

Secondly, it is a matter of absolute necessity, and you cannot do without it. "For ye have need of patience, that, after ye have done the will of God, ye might receive the promise" (Heb. 10:36). There is no other way to heaven except by way of tribulations. You can neither avoid nor sidestep them. On the other hand, there is much work to be done by you in order to promote your sanctification, without which no one will see the Lord. How will you persevere (for you wish to persevere and you will persevere until you are in heaven) except by way of patience? This causes us to accept affliction, not to hinder us in our way, but that it render us fit for the performance of our duty. Therefore strive for this as being absolutely necessary. Exercise yourself in this until you develop a habitual disposition in this respect.

Thirdly, consider where your affliction originates. It does not originate with yourself, for you love yourself too much for this. It does not originate with men, for they cannot so much as move without the will of God, nor pull one of your hairs out. Rather, it is the Lord Himself who sends this upon you — the sovereign Lord whose hand none can stay and to whom no one can say, "What doest Thou?" It is your reconciled Father in Christ who sends this upon you in His wisdom, goodness, and love, doing so to your advantage. "For whom the Lord loveth He chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom He receiveth" (Heb. 12:6). Would you then render opposition to the Lord? This is indeed neither your desire nor are you able to do so. "Shall we not much rather be in subjection unto the Father of spirits, and live?" (Heb. 12:9). Say rather, "I will bear the indignation of the LORD" (Micah 7:9); "I opened not my mouth; because Thou didst it" (Psa. 39:9). That will be well-pleasing to the Lord.

Fourthly, when considering affliction itself, its nature is not such that you should sin relative to it by way of impatience.

(1) Affliction is *light*; the fear of it is ten times greater than the affliction itself. This is unanimously confessed by all who have experienced it, and you will have to admit this as well. Paul calls his great tribulations — to which ours cannot be compared — “light afflictions” (2 Cor. 4:17). The reason for their severity is due to your failure to submit yourself to it, for if the apostle judges them to be light, then how do you dare to call them severe? Do not bodily afflictions pertain to the body only? Should you then be so concerned about your body which is but dust and will become dust — and which will also be glorified? Therefore do not act as if a piece of straw is that heavy.

(2) Your affliction is but *for a short season*; it readily passes by. What is past is past, what is future is not yet upon you, and you do not know what will or will not come. You only have the present. And even that will pass momentarily. Even if the same affliction would last your entire life, it would also not be long, for your life itself is short, it being nothing more than vapor. Such is therefore also true for all affliction in this world. Paul calls it “our light affliction, which is but for a moment” (2 Cor. 4:17). Peter says: “Though now for a season, if need be, ye are in heaviness” (1 Pet. 1:6). Should you then be impatient concerning affliction which so readily passes by?

(3) The *extent* of this affliction has been determined. It will last that long — not any shorter or longer. It will be that severe, and this severity will be neither more nor less than the Lord has ordained. The Lord restricted the devil as to the measure in which he could touch Job; he could not add one ounce to it (Job 1-2). Job acknowledged this: “For He performeth the thing that is appointed for me” (Job 23:14). Irrespective of whether you are fretful, discouraged, and desirous to escape it and cast it off, it will remain with you to the end. Is it then not better to take it upon you patiently and to endure it?

Fifthly, affliction is very beneficial; it is medicine for the soul.

(1) It humbles the soul in light of committed sins. “I, even I, will tear and go away; I will take away, and none shall rescue him... till they acknowledge their offence” (Hosea 5:14-15). It causes the soul to be as a weaned child. “Surely I have behaved and quieted myself, as a child that is weaned of his mother: my soul is even as a weaned child” (Psa. 131:2). It causes the soul to take pleasure in submitting to the Lord's chastisement. “...if then their uncircumcised hearts be humbled, and they then accept of the punishment of their iniquity” (Lev. 26:41); “Humble yourselves therefore under the mighty hand of God” (1 Pet. 5:6). It causes the soul to be ashamed.

"Thou hast chastised me, and I was chastised... Surely after that I was turned, I repented; and after that I was instructed, I smote upon my thigh: I was ashamed" (Jer. 31:18-19). It causes the soul to withdraw itself and to be weaned from all things. "I watch, and am as a sparrow alone upon the house top" (Psa. 102:7).

(2) It will cause us to cautiously guard against sin and to strive for holiness. "I shall go softly all my years in the bitterness of my soul" (Isa. 38:15). This is God's objective: "For they verily for a few days chastened us after their own pleasure; but He for our profit, that we might be partakers of His holiness" (Heb. 12:10). This was David's experience, "It is good for me that I have been afflicted; that I might learn Thy statutes" (Psa. 119:71). The prophet bears witness to this: "For when Thy judgments are in the earth, the inhabitants of the world will learn righteousness" (Isa. 26:9). Affliction causes the graces in the soul to be lively and active. It is then that prayer-life revives. "LORD, in trouble have they visited Thee, they poured out a prayer when Thy chastening was upon them" (Isa. 26:16). *Necessity teaches us how to pray*. He who is not able to pray ought to become either a sailor or a married man. Faith will then be revived. When Abraham endured a trial of the greatest magnitude, he believed "against hope... in hope" (Rom. 4:18). David says concerning himself, "I had fainted, unless I had believed to see the goodness of the LORD in the land of the living" (Psa. 27:13). Then hope is strengthened. "Why art thou cast down, O my soul? and why art thou disquieted in me? hope thou in God: for I shall yet praise Him for the help of His countenance" (Psa. 42:5). Then love is revived. "Many waters cannot quench love, neither can the floods drown it" (Song of Sol. 8:7). The moon and the stars are seen best when the sun is absent. It is such with love. In bearing the cross the godly perceive that missing the Lord is what weighs them down the most, and when the Lord is near, that their affliction is no affliction. Then they have enough and would rather enjoy communion with God with the cross, than to be estranged from Him without the cross. Believers, since all these matters are indeed your delight and are the desires of your heart, why then would you not also desire the way by which you obtain these matters? And if you desire the way of affliction for its benefits, it behooves you patiently to take this affliction upon you and to endure it as being a wholesome — although bitter — medicine.

Sixthly, patience is a precious ornament and a profitable disposition for a believer. A patient soul is a soul which is childlike, willing, quiet, meek, self-denying, believes, hopes, and loves God. Therefore the patient person is precious and pleasant in God's

sight and a suitable object for God's mercies. God also does not leave Himself without witness to such by manifesting His mercy, love, support, comfort, and help for their deliverance. "...God, that comforteth those that are cast down" (2 Cor. 7:6); "Who comforteth us in all our tribulation" (2 Cor. 1:4); "But let it be the hidden man of the heart, in that which is not corruptible, even the ornament of a meek and quiet spirit, which is in the sight of God of great price" (1 Pet. 3:4).

Patience renders the cross lighter, so that one can bear it with ease. One will possess his soul, so that inordinate desires are held in check — and the intellect and will shall be under his control in order to utilize them in harmony with God's will. In this manner they will reap all the benefits from affliction which we have enumerated above, for affliction as such does not engender these benefits, but they are brought forth through patience in affliction. The Lord is then glorified by us, our neighbors become convinced of the power of godliness, and the godly will thereby be strengthened in their afflictions, being encouraged to bear them also with patience. Then the present affliction and chastisement will have their appropriate effect, and "afterward it yieldeth the peaceable fruit of righteousness unto them which are exercised thereby" (Heb. 12:11). One will then rejoice when the Lord has removed the cross and will thank the Lord for this. "I know, O LORD, that Thy judgments are right, and that Thou in faithfulness hast afflicted me" (Psa. 119:75); "O LORD, I will praise Thee: though Thou wast angry with me, Thine anger is turned away, and Thou comfortedst me" (Isa. 12:1).

Seventhly, hold before yourself the examples of the Lord Jesus and the saints so that you may be stirred up to imitate them in their patience. The Lord Jesus, being such a glorious example for us in our entire walk, is also exemplary in patience. "...yet He opened not His mouth: He is brought as a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before her shearers is dumb, so He openeth not His mouth" (Isa. 53:7); "...but if, when ye do well, and suffer for it, ye take it patiently, this is acceptable with God. For even hereunto were ye called: because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that ye should follow His steps" (1 Pet. 2:20-21).

Add to this the example of all other saints who have gone before you. "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).

Since all those who are now bearers of the crown have been bearers of the cross, you must emulate them in the bearing of the cross in order that, with them, you may inherit the crown of life.

(1) Be sensitive concerning your cross and be on guard against hardness.

(2) Cease from having esteem for all that is to be found in this perishing world. Consider the brevity of time which as yet is left you for affliction.

(3) Consider that the way to heaven is the way of affliction, and that we cannot walk upon this way except by way of patience.

(4) Be continually engaged in exercising faith in the promises and have hope therein that all will certainly come to pass.

(5) Persevere in reading the Word, which has been written for us to teach us patience and to comfort us (Rom. 15:4).

(6) Continually pray for patience (Rom. 15:5). If with such patience you may exercise yourself in all things — also in the least, — you will increase while you are thus engaged. “And the Lord direct your hearts into the love of God, and into the patient waiting for Christ” (2 Th. 3:5).